

## Asgrow explains tomato developments

KALAMAZOO, MI. — Representatives of California's tomato processors and growers were recently given a tour of Asgrow Seed Company's trial planting of experimental hybrid tomatoes at the company's Processing Tomato Field Day, held at the company's Pacific Coast Breeding Station at San Juan Bautista, California.

The group heard a report on Asgrow's development of methods to vigorize and coat seed to improve its performance, par-

ticularly under adverse conditions, from Mary Beth Vertovec, seed coating project leader who also coordinates trial plantings of coated and vigorized seed.

Ms. Vertovec showed the tomato growers and processors greenhouse plantings of vigorized and non-vigorized seeds, pointing out the greater uniformity of emergence and quicker emergence of the treated and coated seed. She said differences are even more evident when the seed is planted under stress con-

ditions, such as low temperature.

"In February trial plantings, there was as much as four days difference between emergence between the treated and non-treated seed," she said.

Dr. Jakob Vos, Asgrow's director of worldwide seed production, told the group of the company's ongoing efforts and procedures to assure that seed produced by Asgrow is of the highest quality possible in the categories of genetic, physiological, physical and

pathological quality.

Mel Hansen, Asgrow sales consultant specializing in processing tomatoes, outlined observations of this year's performance of Asgrow Hybrids 896 and 898, which were introduced last year, and have now undergone their first year of commercial growing.

Hybrid's 896's standing as an early tomato, with maturity at 110 to 115 days has been well established this year, Hansen said, noting that it makes the hybrid a good candidate for replantings as well as first early plantings.

Growers and processors also found that Hybrid 896 peels easily,

and that yields of 30 to 35 tons per acre are common, Hansen said. "The tomato has high solids for a peeler class tomato, with readings in the 5.0 to 5.5 range. Growers who tried 896 this year also learned that the fruit has good vine holding capability."

Hansen said Hybrid 896, which is field tolerant to Verticillium wilt, race 1; and Fusarium wilt, race 1, should be planted in double rows on good soil. "The vine of Hybrid 896 is small, and does not have the cover needed when planted in a single row," he explains.

Hybrid 898 can be grown on a wide range of soils, including mineral, peat and soil with high clay content, and can be grown in all areas of California except, perhaps, the desert areas, Hansen told the audience.

"This hybrid can be grown in either double or single rows, it has an excellent root system," he continued.

Hybrid 898 matures in about 118-120 days in California, Hansen said. Yields ranged from 34 to 42 tons per acre in the major tomato growing districts, he reported. "Hybrid 898 typically has solids in the 5.5-plus range. The hybrid also has multiple disease resistance, including resistance to race II of Fusarium." It has also demonstrated good field holding capacity, and growers found this season that it has a very manageable vine that often requires no training to remain up on the bed, he said.

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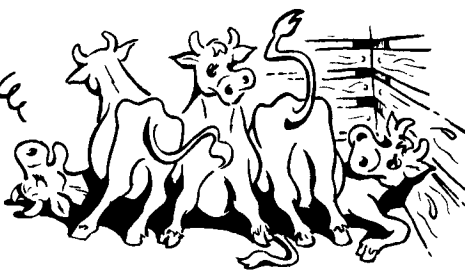
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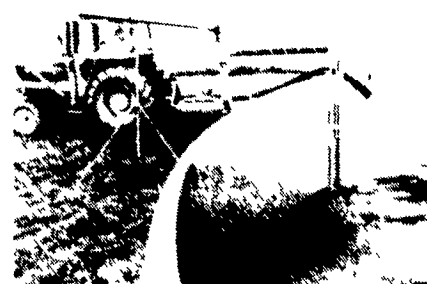


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