

Field Tours Of PSU's Research Plots

UNIVERSITY PARK — Visitors to Penn State's Ag Progress Days will once again have the opportunity to see field research in action. The guided bus tour will take you through some of Penn State's most extensive field research on horticultural and agronomic crops.

Of course, it's not possible to see all of the College of Agriculture's research plots—that would take days. What you will see is an overview of more than 80 projects in progress at the Rock Springs Research Center.

You'll get a glimpse, for example, of the tree fruit nursery, which contains 30 stoolbeds of various sizes. These are controlling rootstocks for dwarf or semidwarf apple trees.

Plant growth regulators are an important part of the fruit tree research at Rock Springs. Growth regulators are being studied as a means to reduce shoot elongation, promote flowering and enhance cropping. This year 17 treatments are being studied in more than 50 plots.

After touring through the fruit research plots you will see some vegetable research and demonstration plots—including new asparagus varieties, dwarf muskmelons and growth regulator studies on tomatoes.

Close to the farm offices are several gourmet vegetables being evaluated for appearance, taste, yield and marketability. Many of the vegetables came from European seed houses.

Behind the specialty vegetables is a super sweet corn variety evaluation trial. Varieties that have been

bred to enhance sugar levels in the kernels are being tested this year.

You'll also see plots where growth regulators are enabling researchers to get more pumpkins per patch. These plants are also standing up better to adverse weather conditions. Penn State is a recognized leader in nutrition and

fertility of commercial vegetables.

In plots behind the crabapple orchard, environmental conditions are being monitored and fed into a computer that analyzes the information and determines when conditions are favorable for the development of two important defoliation diseases of tomatoes—early

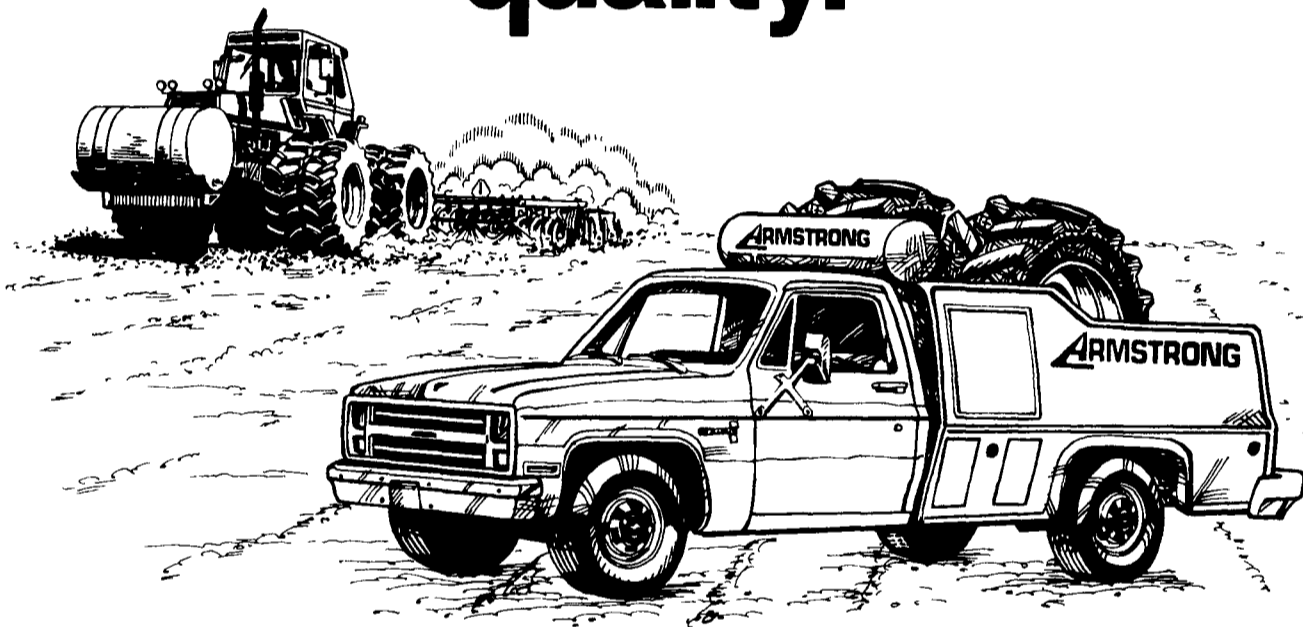
blight and late blight. The computer program tells when fungicide coverage is most important.

You will also see a vegetable disease nursery being developed for studying the effect of environmental conditions on vegetable diseases. Vegetables to be studied include beans, tomatoes, peppers,

muskmelons, watermelons, cabbage, carrots, celery and sweet corn.

Finally, you'll see some disease-free raspberry studies, moveable greenhouses to study effects of acid rain and evergreens that are part of an eight-year study of Christmas trees.

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