Dan Martin's Perspective

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Martins borrowed everything.

"We weren't scared of failure, Dan recalled. We didn't have as many stresses then and farmers weren't losing their farms."

Then, farmers could let their feed bills go to the end of the year. We used cash flow to pay hired man. Every year we paid up. Although our income was peanuts, our costs were only a fraction of it. Today farmers must lay out so much money for crops, fertilizers and sprays before they get a crop. Costs have increased, but income has not increased."

Martin added, "We lacked fear and had determination. We worked until midnight."

For 13 years, Martin farmed on shares. In 1959 he bought the farm. After purchasing the farm, he said, "We got a sense of security, we did not have before, but we didn't know how we'd ever get the farm paid."

But Martin believes they had a lot going for them. He said, "We had our first hired man for 11 years. We raised tobacco and steers. The first year they purchased one cow for their own use of milk. Rather than pay a dollar to have it hauled, Dan walked it three miles home. The following year, he purchased 12 cows.

He compares today with then and said, "Now you can't start small in dairying. Milk companies won't bother to pick up milk."

Martin has a partnership with son Dave in their 168-acre dairy operation plus 50,000 broilers.

"All in all," Martin said, "The Lord's been good to us. We are in good health and have the ability to manage what we've undertaken."

He wishes other farmers could have the same chance for success. "Let's work to preserve the farmer," he said, "and push for higher prices on commodities."

Drilling A Hole Improves Frozen Corn On The Cob

ITHACA, N.Y. — By simply drilling a pencil-sized hole lengthwise through the center of an ear of corn, processors can keep the quality of frozen corn-on-the-cob much closer to fresh, a Cornell University food scientist has found. The hole allows corn-on-the-cob to be cooked more quickly before freezing. Rapid cooking preserves texture and flavor and more effectively deactivates enzymes in the cob that damage the kernels' flavor over time.

A major processor of frozen foods is engineering a large-scale version of the technique in hopes of making corn-on-the-cob a more popular, year-round addition to menus.

C.Y. Lee, a professor of food science and technology at Cornell's Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva, N.Y., was studying the chemistry of natural enzymes blamed for bad taste in corn, when he discovered the treatment, which preserves qualities of fresh sweet corn for months while reducing blanching times.

Cornell University is seeking a patent on the technique, which was reported July 11 at the International Conference on Technical Innovations in Freezing and Refrigeration of Fruits and Vegetables, in Davis, Calif.

"It takes only 3 to 4 minutes of cooking to maintain fresh corn's sweetness and tender texture — if you eat it right away," said Lee. "However, frozen corn-on-the-cob develops a cardboard-like, earthy smell after about six months, principally because it is blanched for less than 4 or 5 minutes before freezing. This blanching is enough to cook the corn, but not enough to deactivate natural enzymes that reactivate over time and cause a stale, rancid flavor."

Lee discovered that these enzymes are peroxidase and lipoxygenase and that they are found mostly on the outside portion of the cob and in the bottom sections of the corn kernels. In normal frozen-food processing, corn-on-the-cob cooks from the outside in. By the time enough heat activates the flavor-robbing enzymes in the outer cob and lower kernels, most of the corn is on its way to becoming mush.

"The cardboard flavor can be eliminated by cooking frozen corn for 13 to 14 minutes in boiling water, but then you get a soggy, watery product," the food scientist noted.

Theorizing that heating corn-on-the-cob in "stereo" would cook the corn faster, Lee improved on nature by drilling the holes. While Cornell's food science laboratory has almost every kind of food processing equiment, it didn't have a corn-cob driller, so Lee used a machine shop drill press. He bored pencil-sized holes through the length of corn ears, blanched the ears in scalding water for a range of times and froze them.

Every few months the food scientist assembled taste-testing panels to try the reheated frozen corn. Comparing corn from drilled ears (with shorter initial cooking times) to corn (cooked longer) from ears without holes, the taste testers said the texture of drilled-ear corn was closest to that of fresh corn-on-the-cob. They rated the overall taste of drilled-ear corn as slightly better than corn from ears without holes.

"Our sense of a food's quality involves taste, smell and the so-called mouth feeling — and that includes texture," Lee noted. "Except for better texture, there is not much difference in quality from drilling holes in the ears. Where we have succeeded is in improving processing techniques for frozen sweet corn-on-the-cob by cutting the blanching time by half."

Drilling holes in millions of corn cobs should be no problem for commercial frozen food processors, where machines cut ears to standard lengths, Lee said. One Rochester, N.Y., food processor, Comstock Foods Inc., is jointly working with Lee. Other research support came from New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

There's just one problem, according to Lee. His test panels liked corn when it was sliced from ears with holes before serving. But the same corn, when served on hollow ears, was rated lower.

"I think there's some sort of psychological factor at work," he said.

Vision And Driving

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre) — As we age there are some normal changes in our eyes. It is common for people who experience these changes to become concerned about their independence and mobility, particularly their continued ability to drive a car.

According to Dr. Barbara Davis, Aging Specialist at Penn State University, it is unlikely that most older adults will need to give up their cars. But she stresses it is essential to have a thorough eye exam at least yearly by a qualified optometrist or ophthalmologist, as vision porblems do increase with age.

As you grow older, one or more of the following vision changes could occur and affect your driving:

* difficulty in changing focus for near and far objects;
* need for additional light to see clearly;
* greater susceptibility to glare from sun and headlights;
* slower reaction time;
* less ability to see to the side when looking ahead;

Driving tips:

* Wear proper glasses for day and night driving. Use good quality sunglasses in sunlight; do not wear tinted lenses or sunglasses at night.
* Avoid glasses with wide temple pieces (they impair side vision).
* Keep your glasses clean.
* Watch ahead, beside, and behind you as you drive. Use the rear view mirror frequently.
* Drive at the approximate speed of the traffic around you.
* Drive a car with a clear windshield. Tinted windshields can reduce the amount of light entering the eye. A clear windshield and use of good sunglasses in sunlight is preferable.
* Keep headlights adjusted and keep headlights, taillights, and windshield (inside and outside) clean.
* Always fasten safety belts and shoulder straps.

Drugs and driving.

Know the side effects of any drug you take before getting behind the wheel. The following drugs can affect your vision when driving; non-prescription cold and sinus remedies, sleeping pills, tranquilizers, sedatives, pain killers, some prescription drugs, and even extensive use of aspirin.

Information for this article is adapted from "Driving Tips For Older Americans" - American Optometric Association. If you would like additional information please contact Debra Bryant, Penn State Extension Agent at 717-253-5970 x 239.