

Tobacco Demand, Prices Up At Paradise Auction

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\$225,249; of the Pennsylvania 41 cigar type, average price paid was \$1.32 per pound, for sales of \$85,788.

Bales of tobacco were ready to auction off in the sales barn, arriving as early as last Saturday. The

barn, which takes up about 30,000 square feet of space, was nearly jammed with tobacco.

Sales will be held every Monday and Wednesday before the Christmas and New Year's holiday, according to Donna Probst, and may move to every Monday and

Thursday until mid-February.

More than eight buyers were on hand for the sale, many from the south, including Eastern, from Rocky Mountain, North Carolina and Miller, from Wilson, North Carolina. Buyers also came from Nashville, Tennessee; Petersburg, Virginia; Pennsylvania; Maryland; and Florida.

About 400 growers were on hand at the event, said Probst. Auctioneer for the event was Mitch Ashby of Leasburg, N.C.

The Maryland-type tobacco that Pennsylvania has been producing for the last 10 to 15 years, said Probst, "is a substitute for tobaccos that are produced in the south. And it is used in a blend with tobaccos that come from the south."

Probst said the 609 type is blended, primarily because the south produces about 450 to 500 million pounds more per year of tobacco in the south than in the north.

"We still have farmers willing to produce tobacco, which is a high intensive labor crop," he said. "And our farmers generally have large families, produce their labor, and do not have to hire outside labor."

For the last 3 to 4 years, according to Probst, "we've been gaining export value greatly. Export markets haven't always been open to U.S. domestic tobacco. Now, tobacco has a worldwide demand greater than ever."



Donna Probst, of the Paradise Tobacco Auction, tallies up the sales of tobacco after the sale Monday.

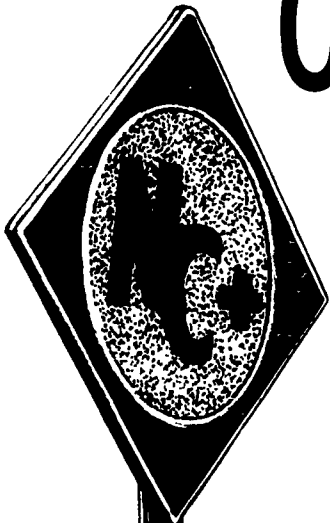


About 400 growers were on hand for the opening of tobacco auction season on Monday. Maryland type 609 tobacco reached a high of \$1.62 a pound at the auction.



Mitch Ashby of Leasburg, North Carolina, auctioned off about 305,000 pounds of tobacco at the Paradise Sales Barn on Monday.

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