

# Kid's KOrner

## Pumpkin Patch Fun

WOMELSDORF (Berks Co.) — More than 150 kindergarten children searched thousands of pumpkins that grow at MAP Farms in Womelsdorf to find a perfect pumpkin. With the help of Pumpkin Lady Sally Royer and owners of MAP Farms, Michael and Martene Firestine, the children found a favorite pumpkin to take home for Halloween.

A bus took the children from the Conrad Weiser School District to the farm. Then the children took a bumpy hayride to the vine-filled pumpkin patch.

For some, the search took longer than it did others. But each child returned with a pumpkin and a grin from ear to ear.

After another bumpy hayride to the farm, the Pumpkin Lady distributed milk, lemonade, and cookies.

The Firestines told the children about the different kinds of pumpkins raised in the field. The larger pumpkins with dark ribbing are called Happy Jack, which are mostly used to carve Jack-O-Lanterns. The smaller pumpkins

are called Spookies, which can be used to make faces and to make pies, cookies, and cakes.

The children learned that making Jack-O-Lanterns are a Halloween tradition. "If you feel happy, you will probably carve a happy face," Mr. Firestine told the children. "If you are feeling sad, maybe you will carve a sad face," he said.

The children returned to school where they drew pictures of their visit to the pumpkin patch. Then they took the pumpkins home where they will either use the pumpkin for decoration or help their mother make cookies, pies, or cake from it.

For more than 10 years, school classes have been visiting MAP Farms to choose a pumpkin. Mr. Firestine, who heads the agriculture lending group at Lebanon Valley Bank, said he and his co-workers enjoy getting acquainted with the children.

"The children are so tickled with the pumpkins and we enjoy the opportunity to provide them with a day of fun," said Mrs. Firestine.



"What do you think of this pumpkin?" the Pumpkin Lady asked two girls who were searching for the perfect pumpkin.



This little fellow can barely carry the pumpkin he chose to take home.



Children enjoyed the bumpy hayride that took them to the pumpkin patch.



The Pumpkin Lady came to the rescue when pumpkins were too heavy for the kindergarteners to carry.



Before the children searched the pumpkin patch, Michael Firestine explained the difference between pumpkins called Happy Jacks and Spookies.