

# Nature Gives, And Nature Takes Away

(Continued from Page A1)

ple awoke to hear winds "that sounded just like a freight train was going through the bedroom," Kathy Hartung said.

Local media reports claim winds reached 75 miles per hour that night.

When it was over, the Hartungs had calf hutches spread for half a mile. They found alive the one calf that was living in a hutch.

But nothing could save the 600 acres of corn the Hartungs were raising.

"We're lucky if we have 50 acres still standing," Kathy Hartung said.

Their farm supports three families—Bob Hartung is in a partnership with his two sons, Bob Jr. and Thomas.

Kathy Hartung said her family has gone on with the daily milkings and other chores, but they remain in a state of shock.

"It's almost like a death in the family," she said.

The ground the Hartungs own and the fields they rent adjoin each other in a straight line. The wind "went right down the road," she said.

Bob Hartung estimates the loss

at \$60,000—"and that's being conservative," Kathy Hartung said.

Gerry Martin was doing some counting that July 16 morning, too. And what he found was less than 10 stalks left standing on 19 acres that averaged 14-foot high rows the night before.

Martin said he lost 65 percent of the 250 acres he had in corn.

"Mine was just in tassel and just about to shoot an ear," he said. "We had the right amount of rain and an excellent growing season. This would've been the best crop I've ever seen."

Instead, Martin spent the past two weeks shredding the stalks that were left and replanting the fields in sorghum.

Martin has to wait for the corn to cure down before he can determine whether it will be safe to feed to his cows. His nutritionist told him the nitrates may be too high. The shredded stalks also pose a toxin danger because of the dirt the shredder picked up.

Kathy Hartung said her family's insurance company will cover one-third of the loss. But if the family tries to salvage what's left for silage, "the company's going

to deduct it from the payment," she said.

"To me, that's rubbing salt in the wound," Hartung said.

Area fruit growers find themselves facing similar circumstances.

At Bingham's Orchard, the Kriner family is weighing the economics of letting insurance pay for their damaged fruit or selling it to canneries for juice and other products.

"We've had two nasty hail storms that completely wiped out our crop," said Tammy Kriner.

Jill Hughey, assistant manager of Mountain Brook Orchard, said peaches there are so damaged "We probably won't even harvest them."

Mountain Brook has 400 acres of apples also and half of that crop is gone, Hughey said.

She is hopeful for a decent return on apples sold for juice. But

this year's sales receipts will fall far below what her family usually grosses in its retail market, Hughey said.

The Kriners—who are working on their fifth generation in the fruit business—have commanded as much as \$15 a bushel for top-quality peaches in the past, Tammy Kriner said.

"We're not going to have any of that fruit for our customers this year," Kriner said.

The Kriners plan to buy fruit for their retail market from local growers who survived the storm unscathed.

But the family is worried about the long-term effects of a third lost peach crop.

In 1993, construction on Pa. Route 30 kept customers away—in spite of a bumper crop, Tammy Kriner said. Last year, the family—like most orchards in the region—had no peach crop to speak of because of the unusually hard winter.

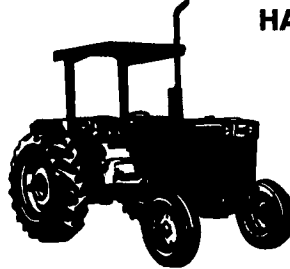
"You can't have too many years like that," she said.

Sales are down already because "customers know they can get clean fruit elsewhere," Kriner said.

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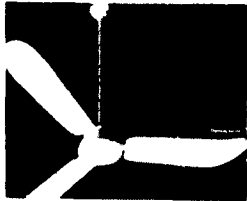
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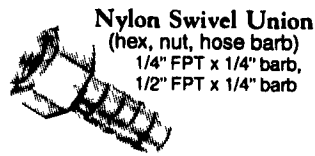
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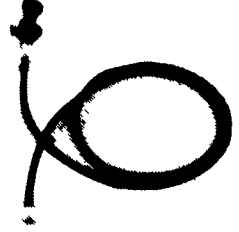
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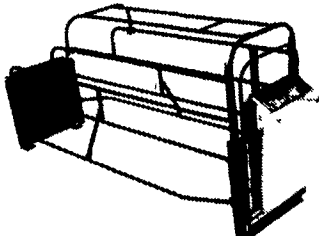


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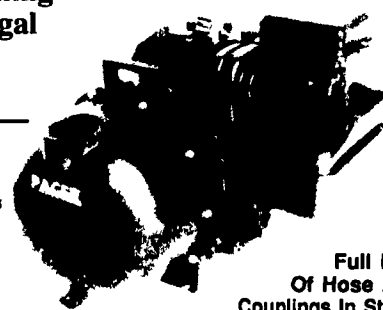
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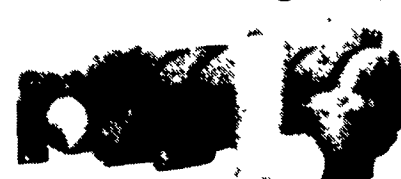
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