

Time To Harvest Black Walnuts

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Cumberland Co. Correspondent
SHIPPENSBURG (Cumberland Co.)—Fall is coming and so is the time to harvest one of the nation's least-known cash crops—black walnuts.

While most people still don't know it, there is money in those shells, said David A. Martin of Shippensburg.

Martin should know because he is the Pennsylvania field representative for the Hammons Products Company, a Missouri-based firm that is the leading processor of black walnuts in the United States.

The company he represents bought approximately 802,000 pounds of walnuts in Pennsylvania last fall and it would like to be able to get even more this year, Martin said.

Collecting the walnuts, which can be found all over the place, is a good and quick way to make some extra cash, he said.

"This crop grows at no cost," Martin said. "Just bring them to one of the buying stations in the hull as you pick them up."

At the stations, of which Hammons has 15 in this state, they are run through a hulling machine and bagged.

"When you leave, the money is in your pocket," Martin said.

"For years they went to waste," he said of the walnuts, "except what was harvested for home use. Today, there is a commercial market for them."

Martin said that market has been building steadily since Hammons was founded in 1945 by a small grocery store owner named Ralph Hammons.

Today, Hammons is still family-owned and managed and is the processor of most of the nation's eastern black walnuts.

The hulls and the meat of the

nuts both are used.

The meat, of course, is used in foods from ice cream to baked goods. It also can be used as an additive to animal feeds to improve the coat.

The shells are used for metal cleaning and processing, for sealing during oil well drilling, in paints and in explosives and cosmetic cleaners.

Martin said the Shippensburg region alone supplied 65,800 pounds of walnuts to Hammons last year. Other big supply areas included Myerstown with 99,400 pounds, Kutztown with 130,700 pounds, Lancaster with 79,500 pounds, East Earl with 98,950 pounds, Christiana with 47,000 pounds, Turbotsville with 33,000 pounds, and Waynesboro with 26,000 pounds.

Hammons needs at least 30 million pounds of walnuts annually to meet its needs.

According to Martin, the going price he is paying for walnuts this year is 10 cents a pound. His station at 9077 Possum Hollow Road on the outskirts of Shippensburg opened for business on Oct. 1.

Hammons is hoping to increase the number of stations in Pennsylvania to 25 this fall. Martin said that anyone who wants to have a station founded near them, and if they are not already within 15 miles of an existing station, should call him for information at (717) 532-3989.

"When the warm summer days turn into cool autumn weather it is time to harvest walnuts," Martin said. "Boy Scouts, church groups, anyone who wants to make some money can pick them."

"The walnuts grow in back yards, fence rows, pastures, wood lots and along the roads," he said. "Try and beat the squirrels."

Gruber Judges Alaska State Fair

PALMER, Alaska — Henry Gruber, veteran livestock judge from New Tripoli, Pa., recently returned from what he considered to be the most unique assignment in his 38-year history in judging.

He judged all the open class livestock entries at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer, Alaska. Species judged included sheep, goats, dairy cattle, beef cattle, swine and even a reindeer class, which was really more of an evaluation type situation than actual judging. Henry has judged in excess of 400 fairs over the years.

Gruber said he was impressed with the quality of the show. He would rank it with a good county fair in Pennsylvania. All animals were Alaska produced animals. He judged 192 head in the open class competition. The 4-H animal would come in for the second half of the fair.

One unique class was the adult showmanship event. In each species, this event was held and then the finals were held with the beef, sheep, dairy, swine and goat showmen competing against each other. The prize this year was a beautifully embroidered jacket, which was awarded to the swine showman.

The Alaska State Fair is the largest event in the State of Alaska and draws nearly 300,000 people during its eleven day run. It is located in the small town of Palmer, which has a population of 4,000. The fair is managed by Sara Jensen, a Pennsylvania native from Radnor. The expressly agriculture fair has two buildings jammed full of competitive exhibits, such as quilting, baked goods and crafts, one building with flow-

ers and then a very large building where the poultry, vegetables, grains, rabbits and all other livestock are housed, including ag trade

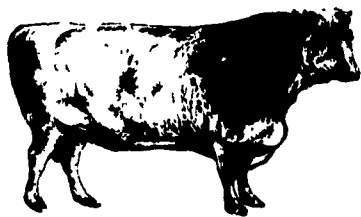
show exhibits. The fair is located in the Matanuska Valley, which is the most fertile farming area in Alaska.



Judge Henry Gruber, in white hat, judges the showmanship class at the Alaska State Fair.



Gruber evaluates reindeer at a Palmer, Alaska farm.



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