

Grower & Marketer

Promoting The Eastern Vegetable, Fruit, Nursery, And Direct Marketing Industries

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, December 11, 1999



Tomato Council Ensures Uniform Pack

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
CEDARVILLE, N.J. — If you want to market Jersey fresh, there are some things you simply have to do.

For those bringing tomatoes to the New Jersey Tomato Council, be informed: your tomatoes are rotated under a camera, sorted by size, matched by color, and a PLU label is applied.

All this is to ensure a "very uniform pack," said Philip E. Neary, general manager of the Council.

Neary spoke to about 45 growers and agri-industry representatives in mid-July during a tour of the council's processing center in Cedarville. Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association (PVGA) conducted the summer field trip to

the Council, the Vineland Produce Auction, Seabrook Brothers packing, and farms in the Cumberland County, N.J. area.

The Council, established in 1993, strives to promote, pack, and sell fresh tomatoes grown by its 15 farmer-members from seven counties in New Jersey. Associates are from Cumberland County and other areas surrounding.

The Council's packing facility handles all stake-tomato production in New Jersey. The processing line employs computer-controlled optical sizing and color sorting, in addition to gentle handling features.


The line can pack up to 1,000 25-pound boxes. Fifty employees handle various tasks,

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Photo by Andy Andrews



Calendar

Tuesday, December 14

New England Vegetable and Berry Conference and Trade Show, Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, Mass., thru Dec. 16.

Agribusiness Economic Outlook Conference, Cornell University, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

2000

Tuesday, January 4

Solanco Young Farmer Program, Money Management in the Ag Enterprise, Solanco High School, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 8

Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 13.

Tuesday, January 11

Farmers' Market Association

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HortiCountry

by
Tim Elkner
Lancaster County
Horticulture Agent



STARTING RIGHT WITH DRIP IRRIGATION

The drought of 1999 will probably result in more drip irrigation systems on farms. If you have limited water available on your farm, then perhaps a drip system would even make irrigation possible.

Besides conserving water, drip irrigation will also allow you to irrigate regardless of weather conditions. In addition, drip irrigation does not wet the plant foliage and thus does not promote disease development.

Fertilizers can also be applied through the drip system. By properly timing the application of nutrients, maximum yields can be harvested

without excessive fertilizer use.

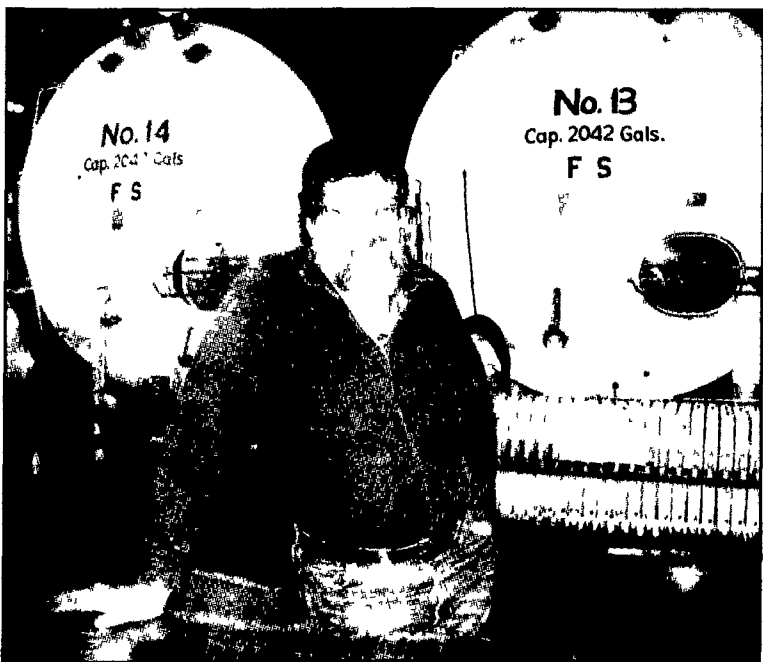
However, to realize all of the benefits of drip irrigation, the system must be properly designed. You can consult a professional to help you design a system or you can do it yourself. Many growers have successfully designed and installed their own drip systems. If you are the type to undertake this challenge, consider the following tips from Dorota Haman and Allen Smajstria from the agricultural engineering department at the University of Florida.

First — the length of lateral lines should not exceed the manufacturer's recommendations for that particular type of drip tape. Lines that are too

long will cause uneven watering and poor application uniformity. Emitters at the ends of the lines will be putting out less water than the emitters at the beginning of the line. This will result in uneven fertilizer applications through the system as well as possible plant stress in the poorly watered areas.

Next — be sure all mains and submains are sized to prevent excessive pressure losses and velocities. Large variations in pressure again can result in uneven water application and the resulting problems mentioned above. Water velocities that are too high can result in a pressure wave or water hammer

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Bill Gulvin, winemaker for Nissley Vineyards, Bainbridge, has been pressing grapes into fine wines for 24 years. Gulvin said the glory about East winemaking is "the variety." See story page 12. Photo by Andy Andrews