

# Farmers Wanted For Markets; Growers Are In 'Driver's Seat'

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — As far as making money, "you're in the driver's seat," said Paul Hauser, produce grower from Oxford.

Farm market managers control their own income because they can control their own prices and adjust what they sell to the demands of the market.

Hauser, like several farm market managers, knows how challenging and rewarding having a farm market can be.

Hauser was one of three producers who spoke on a growers-only farm market panel in January at the New Holland Vegetable Day at Yoder's Restaurant in New Holland.

Ed Herrmann, grower and Solanco Young Farmers Association director, sets up a table with his own produce in flea markets near Washington, D.C.

The high-scale, upbeat market moves produce very fast. "The prices are worth the trouble of going down there," he told those who attended the vegetable day.

The customers can pay top dollar for items. "Know who your customer is and explore that," said Herrmann.

Bob Pierson is urging farmers to participate in growers-only markets near Philadelphia. He said demand for them is growing, and their numbers con-

tinue to grow.

In 1980, there were only 100 farmers' markets in the state. That number expanded 10-fold to 1,755 markets in 1994 and 2,746 markets in 1998.

Importantly, customers don't care what the produce looks like, but how it tastes. So, like Hauser and other farmers, Pierson urges market managers to offer free "taste tests" of produce grown.

The Farmers' Market Trust is looking for farmers to sell their highest quality fruits and vegetables. The Trust is looking for farmers who can come to the city for 4-6 hours a week from June through October.

Some farmers averaged sales of more than \$1,000 per day at the markets during peak weeks in 1999, Pierson noted. Farmers averaged \$625 per day for all of 1999. Sales in 1999 were up 28 percent over 1998.

This year the Trust will operate markets in Philadelphia and Chester, in addition to Camden, N.J. A new market will open on South Street in Philadelphia at 2nd Street.

Another successful market is Clark Park, of which several area growers participate.

The markets accept vouchers from the Women, Infants, and Children Program, which grants \$20 in spending to each senior who purchases food from a farm market vendor.

About \$300,000 of WIC



At the grower panel at the New Holland Vegetable Day, from left, Larry Yager, Penn State marketing agent and panel moderator; Paul Hauser, grower from Oxford; Ed Herrmann, grower and Solanco Young Farmers Association adviser; and Bob Pierson, Farmers' Market Trust. Photo by Andy Andrews

money has been allocated for use and can be spent at farmers' markets in Philadelphia, Pierson noted.

For more information about the farmers' market opportunities, call Pierson at (800) 417-9499 or (215) 568-0830 ext. 25.

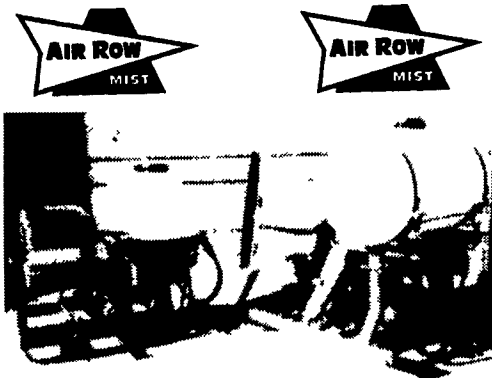
Linda Boyer, a producer in Narvon Township, noted that, since growers offer a variety of produce, particularly tasty heirloom varie-

ties, they can "double and triple sales. . . sometimes even more," she said.

For specialty items, buyers are willing to pay \$2-3 a pound for heirloom tomatoes.

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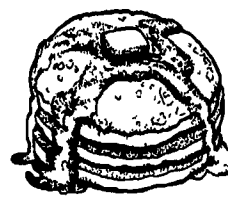
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