

Pennsylvania Produce Consolidation, Distribution Center



Master Grower Award winner was Kreider Farms. From left, Randy Kreider; James Kohl, vice president of Furman Foods; and Clyde Kreider.

Tomato Growers

(Continued from Page 1)

who produce outstanding yields of quality tomatoes for processing. Penn State and Furman Foods, Northumberland, sponsor the award program.

Top growers honored were:

- Class 1, more than 100 acres, to Aaron Hawbaker, with a harvest of 1,712 tons on 106.3 acres for a 32.23 tons per acre average, 58 percent A Grade, with a ranking (tons per acre of usable A grade) at 17.95.
- Class 2, 60-100 acres, Cliff Charles, with 3,459 tons harvested at 79.5 acres, 43.52 tons per acre, 58 percent A Grade with a 24.48 ranking.
- Class 3, 45-60 acres,

Kreider Mulch Farms, with 2,012 tons harvested, at 57.4 acres, with 35.06 tons per acre at 59 percent A Grade, with a ranking of 19.65.

- Class 4, 30-45 acres, Roger H. Rovenolt, with 1,267 harvested tons, 44.2 acres, at 28.67 tons per acre, with 69 percent A Grade at a ranking of 19.19.

- Class 5, 15-30 acres, Eric Charles, with a harvest of 876 tons, at 17.8 acres, with a 49.22 tons per acre harvest, with 57 percent A Grade at 27.49 ranking.

- Class 6, less than 15 acres, Vincent Metzler, with 514 tons harvested at 13 acres, with 39.55 tons per acre, 58 percent A Grade, at a ranking of 22.02.



James Kohl honored John Everett, right, with a special Industry Award at the tomato luncheon.

Michael R. Blume
VF Express, LLC
Harrisburg
The Proposal

With support from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, VF Express, LLC will establish a Pennsylvania Produce Consolidation and Distribution Center (PPCDC).

Local growers will deliver graded and packed produce to Verdelli Farms in Harrisburg, where it will be cooled and delivered to retailers, wholesalers, and food service companies throughout the state of Pennsylvania and neighboring States.

VF Express will be the entity to operate the PPCDC providing farmers, retailers, wholesalers and food service companies an easier and more efficient way to promote and sell more Pennsylvania produce. This program will also provide farmers a means to properly cool their product through a vacuum cooling system.

A pilot program has been approved for the summer of 2002 VF Express will lease a vacuum cooling system for the duration of eight weeks (June 30-August 24). A grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is being sought to help underwrite a portion of the cost of the vacuum-cooling system. The unit will be placed at Verdelli Farms in Harrisburg.

The Verdelli Team

Verdelli Farms, Inc., the largest produce processor on the East Coast, formed two new companies during the past year. VF Transportation, LLC and VF Express, LLC were formed to provide more value to Verdelli's current customers and to further their strong presence on the East Coast. VF Transportation provides transportation needs to Verdelli and non-Verdelli customers alike, from Maine to Florida. VF Express is a "forward distribution" company assisting shippers and growers in providing retailers, wholesalers, and food service companies

an efficient and more effective way of obtaining fresh produce daily.

Commonwealth Of Pennsylvania

The state of Pennsylvania is the number one state in the nation for farmland preservation. By supporting the next generation of farmers, Pennsylvania should maintain its strong hold on farmland preservation.

Now in its fourth season, the "Simply Delicious" Pennsylvania Produce promotion is stronger than ever.

More than 600 Pennsylvania farmers are supporting this promotion. With 800 retail supermarkets and many more food service companies operating in Pennsylvania, the need to continue promoting Pennsylvania produce exists.

PPCDC Goals

The PPCDC will continue to build the awareness of Pennsylvania produce. By assisting farmers in cooling, selling and delivering their crops, and by providing retailers, wholesalers, and food service companies an efficient and effective way to purchase and receive properly cooled Pennsylvania produce, support will increase. With increased support, awareness will grow.

Through the PPCDC, VF Express will work diligently in returning the farmers fair and equitable returns for their crops. The PPCDC will also work in creating a demand for Pennsylvania produce in neighboring states. These goals will help assist the State in retaining their status on farmland preservation.

Marketing Options For 2002

The pilot program will begin on June 30 and conclude on Aug. 24. VF Express encourages all farmers to partake in this year's pilot program. A successful program will be a determining factor in the growth for the following season. VF Express will provide all farmers three marketing options to benefit from this year's pilot program.

- Option 1: Selected interested farmers will release

their Corn to VF Express on consignment. VF Express will sell the corn returning the farmers 80 percent of the sale price. VF Express will retain 20 percent of the sale price to cover administrative costs, warehousing costs, transportation costs, cooling costs, and selling fees.

- Option 2: VF Express will facilitate the cooling of the farmer's product at a rate of \$20 per pallet. Fee includes administrative costs, warehousing costs and cooling costs.

- Option 3: VF Express will facilitate the cooling of the farmer's product, then deliver the product to their customer(s) in Pennsylvania. A fee of \$85 per pallet will be charged to cover administrative costs, warehousing costs, transportation costs, and cooling costs.

Receiving, Cooling Schedules

All products are to be delivered to Verdelli Farms, 7505 Grayson Road, Harrisburg, by appointment only. Delivery and Cooling appointments must be made the day prior (or earlier) by calling VF Express. Farmers requesting their products to be cooled and delivered, will have their products delivered to their customer(s) on the day after the product is received (unless otherwise stated at time appointment is scheduled). Cooling cycle runs 30 minutes for six pallets. Appointments will be honored on first call basis or on the retailers' product demands.

Contacts

For more information, or to schedule appointments, please contact VF Express, LLC:

- Jana Verdelli, Executive Assistance — Phone: (717) 558-4278; e-mail: janav@vf-express.com; fax: (717) 558-4624.

- Mike Blume, Director of Forward Distribution — Phone: (717) 558-4623; e-mail: mikeb@vf-express.com; fax: (717) 558-4624.

From Proceedings Of The 2002 Mid-Atlantic Fruit And Vegetable Convention

UD Hires Extension Irrigation Specialist

NEWARK, Del. — Agricultural engineer Ian McCann has been hired by the University of Delaware as cooperative extension specialist for irrigation and water management.

His appointment is 60 percent extension and 40 percent research through the department of bioresources engineering in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Based at the Research and Education Center in George-

town, McCann will oversee irrigation for Delaware production agriculture, which because of hot summers and inconsistent rainfall relies heavily on piped-in water.

"In general, I will conduct applied research and develop extension programs to benefit farmers and the related industries involved in irrigated agriculture," said McCann. "I also will take on environmental challenges of water and soil resources in the state.

"I plan to gauge on-farm irrigation efficiency, measuring irrigation uniformity, actual irrigation amount applied during the season, crop production, and crop water requirements from meteorological data. In addition, I will investigate soil water content and its movement within and below the root zone."

Born in England, McCann grew up in Kenya and Jamaica. He has a bachelor's degree in environmental sci-

ences from the University of East Anglia in Norfolk, England, and a master's degree in agricultural engineering from the National College of Agricultural Engineering in Bedfordshire, England. He earned a doctorate in agricultural engineering from Texas A&M University.

McCann has worked at the University of Idaho, been a consultant in Oman, and was the department head of bioresources engineering at Sultan

Qaboos University. He also worked for the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas, where he was irrigation and water management specialist for the Arabian Peninsula Regional Program.

