

Lancaster-York Heritage Region Agritourism Initiative Begins

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The recently created Lancaster-York Heritage Region is in the process developing a map and guide to farm markets within the region. The purpose of the map and guide is to connect residents and visitors to the area with seasonal farm-fresh produce and value-added products. The project will also help promote farmers who directly market the produce they grow.

The map and guide will include places that consumers can access farm-fresh produce such as historic downtown farmers' markets, farmers' markets, country markets, on-farm markets, producers' markets, on-farm retail outlets, historic mills, community supported agriculture farms (CSAs), and wineries. It will help consumers find locally grown fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products, eggs, wines, honey, milled grains, grapes, etc.

Another important element of the project is the interpretive information that the guide will provide on the history of growing and producing food in the Lancaster-York region. Among the

topics that will be discussed will be the importance of farming to the region, the people that farm the land, the cultural influences of food, and mention of how some area businesses have evolved from small on-farm producers to large international snack food corporations.

The map and guide will be an attractive, full-color piece with photos and a foldout map. A complimentary Web-page is also being developed.

The project is being funded through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, along with funding from the two county convention and visitors bureaus. The Lancaster County Planning Commission is coordinating the development of the map and guide.

The Lancaster-York Heritage Region is an official Pennsylvania Heritage Park. It was designated by then Lt. Governor Mark Schweiker in August 2001. The mission of the Heritage Parks program is to highlight Pennsylvania's unique industrial heritage to promote tourism and economic development. Agriculture has been one of the State's leading industries for more than 300 years.

A management/action plan prepared for the Lancaster-York Heritage Region proposed five interpretive themes to implement the goals of the State Heritage Parks program in this area. The map and guide to farm-fresh produce is part of the

"foodways" theme of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region plan.

If you own, operate, manage, or otherwise know of a farm market that sells seasonal farm-fresh produce

in Lancaster or York County that may be a good candidate for the farm-fresh map and guide, please send your name, phone number, name of the market, address, and any other pertinent informa-

tion to Scott Standish, Deputy Director for Long-Range Planning, Lancaster County Planning Commission, 50 North Duke Street, P.O. Box 83480, Lancaster, PA 17608.

Insect Pest Not So Pesky

WOOSTER, Ohio — The strawberry bud weevil, an insect that feeds on strawberry plants, may not be as much of a concern as once originally thought.

Though labeled a pest because of the considerable damage the insect can do to strawberry plants, entomologists have found that the strawberry bud weevil, commonly known as the clipper, restricts its range along a field's edge, making it easier to control the insect through smaller, more economical pesticide applications.

"Monitoring weevils in unsprayed fields over a three-four year period showed that the insects move only about 8-10 meters (24-32 feet) per year," said Joe Kovach, of Ohio State's Integrated Pest Management Program. "The pest occurs more often on the edge of the field rather than the center, so why spray a whole field if you can effectively control it by just spraying along the border?"

In addition, researchers found that the damage the insect does to a bud may contribute to an increase in the size of the fruit that is produced. The strawberry bud

weevil feeds on unopened flower buds, preventing them from developing, and hence producing little or no fruit. Research has shown that this clipping results in bigger fruit size from the remaining buds on the plant.

Kovach, a researcher with the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center in Wooster, Ohio, discussed these latest research findings at the Ohio Fruit and Vegetable Growers Congress and Ohio Roadside Marketing Conference in February in Toledo, Ohio.

"Some fruit, like apples, are compensators. That is, they produce bigger fruit when their buds are removed," said Kovach. "Recent research has shown that strawberry plants do the same thing."

Studies have indicated that if the primary bud is clipped, the secondary bud produces bigger fruit. Additionally, if the secondary bud is clipped, the primary and tertiary buds produce bigger fruit.

"We think it takes a lot of energy to open that flower bud. If a bud is clipped before it opens, then that energy is allocated to other unopened

buds, hence producing larger fruit," noted Kovach.

Kovach stated that some strawberry cultivars are better compensators than others. Seneca topped the list of 11 compensating cultivars, with a 44 percent increase in fruit size after clipping the primary bud. Mohawk, Mira and Jewel followed with 20-25 percent increase in fruit size. Other cultivars, such as Lateglow, Earliglow and Cavendish rounded out the list with 10 percent or less increase in fruit size.

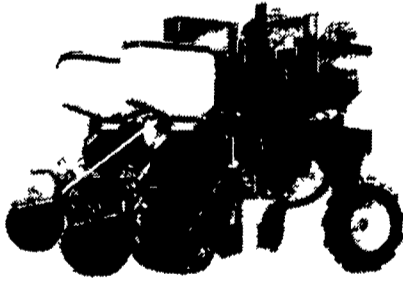
"These results tell us that maybe growers should plant strawberries that compensate for clipper injury in border rows of the field, so bigger fruit is produced with minimal yield loss. And then plant non-compensation cultivars in the middle of the field," said Kovach.

Kovach stated that farmers might not have to spray as much on compensating cultivars to control the insect and recommends that farmers wait until at least one clip is present on a primary bud or up to 20 on secondary and tertiary buds in order to continue producing a successful crop.



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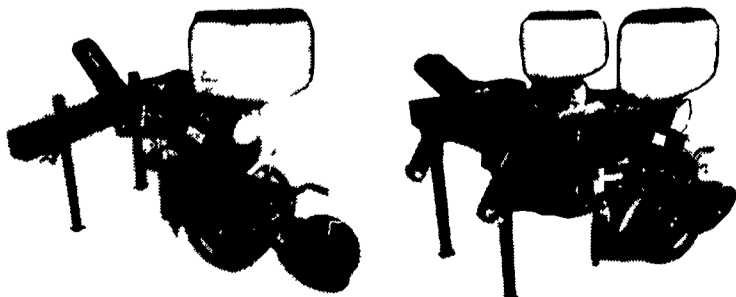


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