

Corn Day At Yoder Farm

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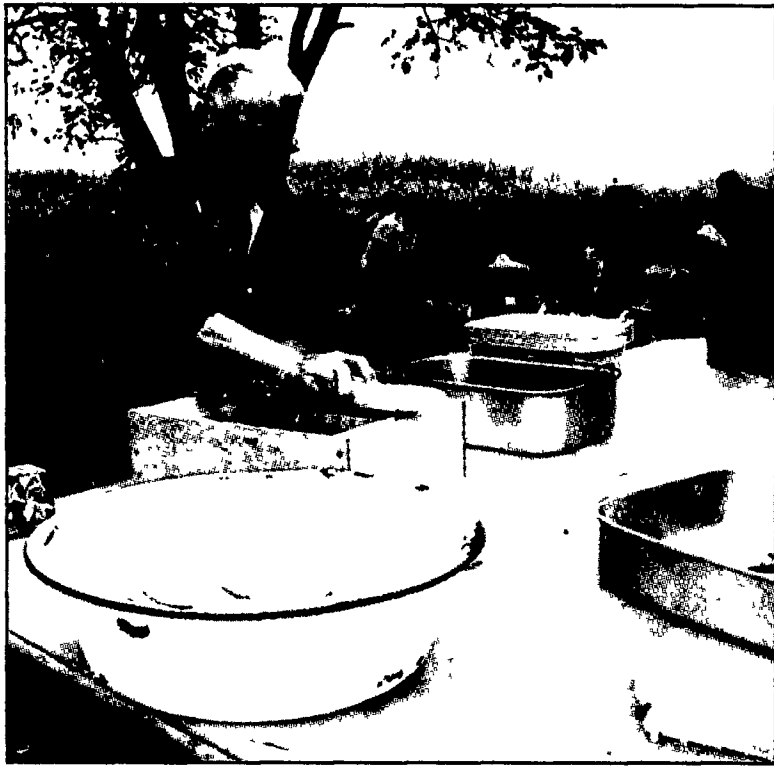
BELLEVILLE (Mifflin Co.) — Night had barely faded when people gathered at Loren and Wanda Yoder's farm in Belleville Tuesday.

It was 6 a.m. Loren had already milked his dairy herd and picked two pickup truck beds full of lush yellow sweet corn.

About 35 people gathered for the fourth annual corn day located in what is known as Big Valley.

Eighty-four-year-old Turie Alwine and Wanda are said to have founded the annual event.

Turie explained, "Loren and Wanda are so generous. They had always planted extra corn to share with members at church (Barrville Mennonite). We wanted to help older people who didn't have their own gardens."



Turie Alwine, 84-years-old, uses her specialty-made corn cutter box devised by another participant at the event, Gib Knepp.



Most of the women use cutters that creamed the corn, but some prefer to cut it off with a knife.



This husking crew talked as fast as they worked.

The plan was to preserve corn and give it to older people to enjoy throughout the year. The idea has mushroomed. It's no longer reserved only for older people, or for church members, but for anyone in the community who wants it.

After four years, the participants seemed to know exactly what to do. Some settle in lawn chairs and begin husking the ears. Some of the men build a fire in an outdoor cooker, which Loren designed especially for the event.

Dozens of freshly husked and silked corn are dumped into the boiling water for 10-minute blanchings. The corn is then transferred to a large trough filled with cold water. Water squirted from a hose continually cools the water.

After the corn has cooled, the ears are taken to the cutup crew.

Most use cream-style cutters, but some of the women prefer to use a knife to cut off the corn kernels.

The cut corn is passed on to women who fill plastic boxes and bags with the corn.

Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention, and that appeared true at this event. Plastic cups had the bottoms cut off and were used as funnels to guide the corn kernels into the bags without spilling.

When the bags and boxes were



Wanda Yoder plans the annual corn-day event on her and her husband's farm, Belleville.

filled, Wanda hurried them to a freezer.

Age showed no limits. Participants from 9- to 89-years-of-age worked diligently to keep things progressing smoothly.

The Kuhns sisters Taylor, 9, and Kirsten, 11, help with unloading the ears from the back of the pickup truck and serve as runners for many errands. Their brother Chase, 13, and cousin Gabe Speck, 12, help with picking and with transferring the ears

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The wood-fired outdoor cooker can boil 14 dozen ears of corn at one time, but not as fast as participants husked the corn.



Taylor and Kirsten Kuhns help their grandfather, Loren Yoder, cool off the corn before cutting.