

Agribusiness In St. Lawrence County

Farm Roundup

USDA Urges Farmers Get Storage Loans

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Agriculture Department has stepped up a campaign urging farmers to put more 1971-crop corn under the protection of support loans as a move to help improve market prices.

By doing so, officials also are subtly fencing with congressional proponents of a "strategic reserve" plan under which the government would buy millions of bushels of wheat and feed as a method of strengthening prices at the farm level.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service called attention

Wednesday to recent actions enabling corn-swamped farmers to get price support loans and overcome local storage difficulties.

Officials said they are "strongly urging" farmers to make use of the loan program.

"With 83 per cent of the 1971 corn acreage in the feed grain program—more than in any previous year—most of this year's corn crop is eligible for loan," the agency said.

The added encouragement for farmers to put more corn under loan came as the strategic reserve plan gained

steam on Capitol Hill.

A Senate agriculture subcommittee heard testimony Wednesday on the reserve plan—already approved by the House farm panel—including charges the government's new "set-aside" plan for curbing crop output is not working.

The reserve plan calls for government stockpiling of up to 300 million bushels of wheat and 30 million tons of feed grain.

Agriculture Secretary Clifford M. Hardin has opposed the reserve plan, asserting the present price support apparatus serves the same purpose by removing from market competition grain placed under loan.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elation over the sales of 80 million bushels of corn plus barley and oats to the Soviet Union is being tempered by cold facts showing damage to the U. S. farm export structure by dock strikes.

The announcement by the Nixon administration last Friday that clearance had been worked out with maritime leaders for loading Soviet-bound grain at unstruck ports came as a morale boost for farmers and government officials alike.

Although 80 million bushels of corn for the Soviet market will not solve the immediate feed surplus problem, it is substantial.

The one-shot sale alone represents a 13 per cent bite out of the predicted 600 million bushels surplus from the 1971 crop, assuming 4.8 billion would have been used anyway from this year's output of 5.4 billion bushels.

Conservation Commissioner Urges Program Participation

Commissioner Henry L. Diamond of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation yesterday urged the participation of all local conservation commissions in a new Ford Foundation grants-in-aid program for community action on the environment. He suggested that they should begin immediately to develop projects on which to base an application.

that the grants will aid conservation commissions in cities, towns and villages in their work in areas such as open space preservation and planning, waste management and treatment studies, preparation of local ordinances, and other environmental protection projects.

"Any well-run council can be almost assured of getting \$750 with no strings attached, and up to \$5,000 on a matching basis," Commissioner Diamond said.

"Our Department is cooperating closely with the Ford Foundation to get as much mileage as possible out of this new program," Commissioner Diamond added. "Ford has designed the program expressly and exclusively for conservation commissions. Charles Morrison, our director of community assistance and the man who is responsible for coordinating our work with the local commissions, has been appointed by the Foundation to a Review Board for processing grant applications."

"The Ford funds, totaling \$385,000, are being allocated to northeastern States on the basis of the number of conservation commissions in each State," Commissioner Diamond said. "In the short time we have had comprehensive enabling legislation and firm State support through this Department more than 150 commission is tantamount to recognizing environmental quality as a public purpose," the Commissioner said that he hoped to see the total number of commissions go way up in the next few months, thereby increasing the State's share of the Ford funds.

Praising the Ford Foundation for recognizing the potential of conservation commissions as an environmental action arm of local government, the Commissioner said

The Commissioner also said that, in addition to Morrison's appointment, he was greatly pleased by the Ford Foundation's selection of Ned Smith, executive director of the Open Space Institute, and William H. Whyte, of the American Conservation Association for the Review Board for this grants program.

The Legislature passed enabling legislation in 1970, authorizing local governments to establish conservation commissions.



Land-Judging champions

David Noble, left, and David Tracy, right, Canton Central Future Farmers of America Chapter members both scored in the first ten of more than 180 contestants in the annual St. Lawrence County FFA Land-Judging contest held last week. Tracy placed third and Noble seventh. Supervision and judging of the competition was handled by St. Lawrence County Soil Conservation District officials. FFA Chapters representing twelve St. Lawrence County Schools participated in the land-judging competition held at the Richard Sibbitts farm in Canton. Trophies, ribbons and cash awards made to teams, schools, and individuals were provided by the St. Lawrence County Bankers Association.

On Their Way Out?

By DON KENDALL
WASHINGTON (AP)—Small "mom and pop" apple orchards are expected to fade away despite rising demand and larger production indicated for the future, says an Agriculture Department expert.

Commercial apple production, defined as from orchards of 100 or more trees, is widely dispersed among 34 states, although two-thirds of the yearly output is in California, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington.

Last year the apples were worth \$296 million to growers, second only to oranges—\$395 million—among the nation's fruit crops. Apples also ranked ahead of such other agricultural crops as rye, flaxseed, cottonseed, sugarcane and lettuce in terms of farm value.

Ben W. Huang, an analyst in the Economic Research Service, said in a report issued Monday apple production has increased steadily in the last 20 years. The 1969 crop was the largest since the late 1930s, and since the early 1950s, crops have grown about 30 per cent.

But the 20-year growth has not been uniform in all geographic areas. Washington state, the leading producer, has had a boost smaller than any other major state except Virginia, while Pennsylvania has increased output 80 per cent, Huang said.

There have been "dramatic shifts" in varieties of apple trees. Old plantings are being replaced with dwarf and semidwarf trees which have greater yields per acre, he said.

As more of this occurs, Huang said, apple production appears to be headed for continued gains. Demand, mainly from increased population, also is expected to keep rising.

"However, increased efficiency often requires increases in uses of capital and a large scale of operation which will force many small and less efficient apple growers out of business," Huang said.

"Thus, total apple acreage is likely to fall, and apple production will be concentrated in larger commercial holdings," he said.

Meanwhile, Huang said, more apples are being used for processing while per capita use of fresh apples has fallen.

All use of the fruit reached a peak of 31.5 pounds per capita in 1951 and then dropped to a low of 23.9 pounds in 1966, Huang said. The big crop of 1969 and the relatively large output last year helped boost per capita use to 29.2 pounds.

Per capita fresh apple eating declined from 22.7 pounds in the early 1950s to 16.3 pounds in 1967-70. Twenty years ago fresh use accounted for 80 per cent of per capita apple consumption. By the late 1960s it had fallen to 62 per cent.

In contrast, Huang said, apples used for processing rose from a per capita consumption of six pounds 20 years ago to 10 pounds recently.

Consumer Legislation Passed

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate has approved a hefty package of consumer legislation to spell out more clearly a product warranty and offer deceived customers stronger federal support.

The final vote Monday night was 76 to 2 after a series of key tests on amendments which would have stripped or watered down the sections giving new, broad powers to the Federal Trade Commission.

At one point, Sen. Frank Moss, D-Utah, a sponsor of the bill with Sen. Warren Magnuson, D-Wash., said tactics of the opponents verged on a filibuster.

Key sections would grant the FTC power to pass industry regulations with the force of law, subject to congressional veto; launch class-action suits to recover a deceived customer's money; seek injunctions, and intervene in local consumer disputes.

The package goes far beyond the bits-and-pieces approach of past consumer legislation and would beef up the FTC, branded as just a shade more than powerless by such critics as Ralph Nader.

Sen. Roman Hruska R-Nebr., criticized the FTC powers as drastic and said they would create more problems than they solve. His amendment stripping all the FTC provisions was defeated 57 to 24.

The Senate defeated, 49 to 30, a bid by Sen. Marlow Cook, R-Ky., to eliminate the class-action power. Cook called this measure "piecemeal legislation at its worst." He said the FTC would be its own judge, prosecutor and jury.

In the final vote Hruska and Sen. Sam Ervin, D-N.C., were the only dissenters.

Cornell Develops New Type Air-Cushioned Apple Harvester

ITHACA — Cornell University agricultural engineers have developed a new type of apple harvester that uses bags filled with air to intercept apples as they drop through the tree.

Primarily designed to pick apples for the fresh food market without causing bruises and other types of damage to the fruit, the harvester is now undergoing intensive evaluation under field conditions.

Unlike the commercial harvester for processing-type apples with a single frame for catching fruit, the new device has three frames. One of them is a simple rubber-padded frame for use at the bottom of the tree, and the other two above it go directly into the fruit-laden tree. All three draw back into the machine when not in use.

The insertable frames are unique in their makeup. Each consists of a row of prongs with every prong equipped with a plastic bag. When the prongs are inserted into the tree in proper position, the attached bags are inflated forming "air mattresses" within the tree.

Shaken loose from the tree by a shaker, apples make only a short trip before landing on one of the air-mattress frames and roll out of the tree. None can fall through from one frame to another.

Known to the designers as an "insertable, multi-level fruit-catching device," the harvester project was directed by Profs. William F. Millier and Gerald E. Rehkugler at the N.Y. State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell. They were assisted by Roger A. Pellerin, research associate, James A. Throop and Robert B. Bradley, research technicians, all in the College's Department of Agricultural Engineering.

Now being tested at the Cornell orchard, the harvester is the first of its kind in the country specifically designed to harvest tender apple varieties, according to Millier.

"So far, it looks good and seems to be doing the job very well," he said.

The concept of intercepting apples with air bags was first tried under field conditions a year ago and was found to be effective in reducing damage to the fruit. The test involved such fresh-market varieties as McIntosh, Red Delicious, and Cortland.

New York State is second in the nation in apple production. About half of the state's annual apple crop of 23 million bushels consists of apples marketed as fresh fruit.

Mysterious Rot Delights German Grape Growers

ELTVILLE, Germany (AP) — A mysterious rot has reappeared on the grapes of Rhine River vineyards and the growers are delighted. To them, the fungus signals great wine.

"The 1971 grape crop is a relatively small vintage of very high quality," said Hans Ambrosi, director of Rheingau Vineyards owned by the state of Hesse, Germany's largest wine producer. "For the first time since 1953 we have the 'noble rot' in quantity."

Ambrosi plucked a bunch of grapes from a vat destined for the wine press. Many of the berries were a ripe yellow. Others seemed to have melted into a purplish mass, like dozens of wizened raisins crushed into a ball. "That is noble rot," he said.

It is a dust-like mold—botrytis cinerea—that decays the skins of grapes that reach a stage of overripeness on the vine. The phenomenon, every 5 to 10 years "concentrates the grape sugar from which we produce wines of the highest quality."

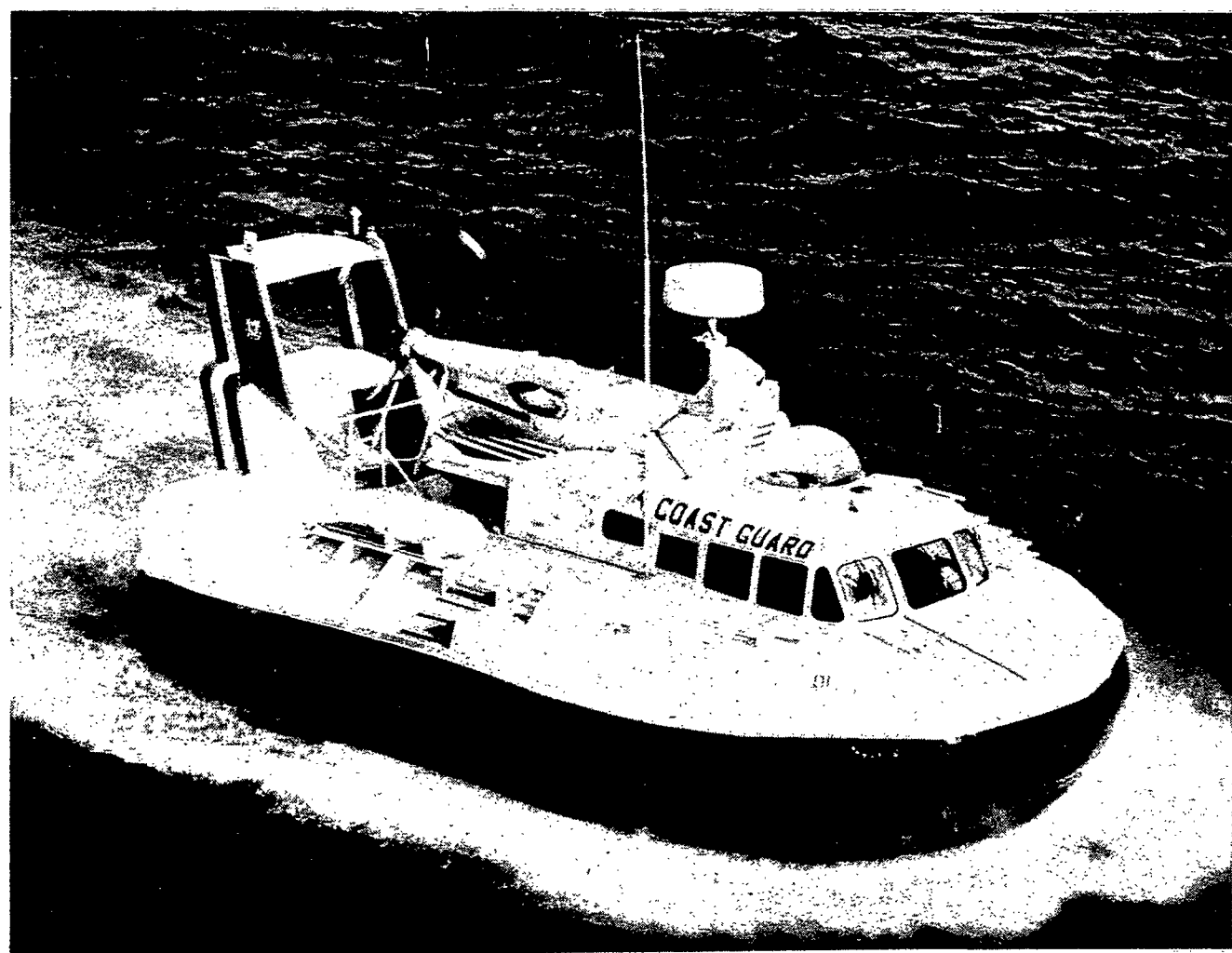
Ambrosi, who holds a degree in viticulture, explained how wine growers can predict a great wine six months before the earliest maturing bottles will be uncorked.

"The climatic factors have been fulfilled for highest quality wine," he said. "We've had much sun, high temperatures and sufficient rain in the May to October vegetation months."

"We had a warm, humid autumn to promote growth of the noble rot. The sugar content of the grapes has reached record high levels without loss of acidity in the berries. Thus the wines will be in balance and harmonious."

The importance of summer sunlight cannot be overemphasized in a wine district as northerly as Winnipeg in Canada. This year the May to October growing season had 1,281 hours of sunlight, the seventh highest count of the century, according to Ambrosi.

Air Cushion Vehicle On Lakes



CLEVELAND—The U.S. Coast Guard now has an Air Cushion Vehicle (ACV) operation on the Great Lakes. Based at St. Ignace, Mich., the ACV will be tested from now until June 30, 1972 in this region.

This vehicle is one of the three being tested by the Coast Guard's ACV Evaluation Unit since Nov. of 1970. Two of the craft have been operating in San Francisco Bay, while this one was recently delivered from Point Barrow, Alaska, where it had been assisting the Advanced Research Projects Agency in their Arctic trials.

The ACV will be tested to determine its cold weather limits and ice operation capability. Its missions will include ice reconnaissance, aids to navigation,

search and rescue, and water pollution control.

During the month of April, 1972 the ACV is scheduled to operate in the Buffalo area primarily for ice reconnaissance. Following that assignment the craft will work in the western portion of Lake Erie as a Search and Rescue (SAR) vehicle.

The Three ACVs were originally delivered by Bell Aerospace Company of Buffalo, the U.S. Navy in 1966 for combat evaluation in the Republic of Vietnam. After logging 4,500 hours of operation with that service, they were turned over to the Coast Guard in mid 1970.

Designated Model SK-5, the ACV is 38', 10" long, with a beam of 23', 9". Capable of speeds of up to 70 knots (80

mph) and, riding on a cushion of air, they can maneuver over water, ice, marshes, and dry land.

Although they can be operated by one man, the Coast Guard crews include an operator, a radar operator-navigator, and a rescue crewman. Operators and crews currently being trained in the evaluation unit include officers and enlisted personnel with both aviation and general service background.

According to Commander Thomas C. Lutton, commanding officer of the ACV Evaluation Unit: "At this time it appears that qualified enlisted personnel can perform all the required functions of operating the craft in the search and rescue environment."