Welcome to the latest issue of the Illinois Vegetable Farmer's Letter. Winter has been a series of surprises. January was mild; then, February 1, winter arrived. March weather is always a mystery, but I hope that you have survived in good shape and are now in the midst of spring activity.

This issue of the newsletter has seasonal concerns, announcements of coming events, reports on things that have already happened, and items of interest. I hope everyone finds something useful or interesting here.

Something to Do in Washington, D.C. --the Potato Museum!

The Smithsonian may have the Hope Diamond, but the Potato Museum has the vintage 1952 Mr. Potato Head, and he's about as big a draw, among those who dig potatoes.

Potato Museum curator Tom Hughes says that while the museum is run on a shoestring, it is absolutely serious. "There are hundreds of museums devoted to weapons, battles, and wars, but few, if any, about food," reads a brochure. "The Potato Museum aims to educate the public about this valuable plant and its promising future, while preserving items associated with its history and social influence."

Hughes started the collection in 1975 as a project for a class he was teaching in Belgium, and it just kept on growing. In 1987, Hughes opened a nonprofit museum, financed in part by the International Potato Center in Lima, Peru. Hughes and his wife, Meredith, run the museum part-time.

Visitors are quickly overwhelmed by the realization of just how many aspects of life are linked with the potato, from pop art through politics to the Industrial Revolution. Pre-Columbian potato pots with dozens of unwinking eyes stare out of exhibit cases. A poster of Marilyn Monroe proves that on the right person, even a potato sack looks good. Irish potato weeders called "spuds"--yes, that's where the name comes from--hang from the walls.

Hughes says he never dreamed a class project could grow so large. People are always bringing him things or pointing out new topics ripe for cultivation. What he could use, he said, is a little money. He wishes a sponsor such as Hasbro (which manufactures Mr. Potato Head) would consider sponsoring his operation so that he can, perhaps, hire someone to keep the museum open full-time. "After all, we give them an awful lot of free publicity for Mr. Potato Head," he noted.

The Potato Museum is at 704 North Carolina Avenue SE, not far from the Capitol. For more information on hours—mostly weekends—call (202)544-1558. Tours are by appointment only.

This is taken from an article by Jody McPhillips in the Chicago Tribune, February 19, 1989.

New Cucumber Plant in Havana

Green Bay Foods of Wisconsin has purchased a shuttered John Deere dealership in central Illinois and will use the building to process cucumbers, officials said. The company plans to receive, wash and cool about 270,000 bushels of cucumbers this year in the former Weakly and Sloan Implement Company in Havana.

The cucumbers will be shipped to other sites for pickling, but Art Oshefsky, company vice president, said pickling might be done at the Havana plant in the future.

Arlyn Smith, senior agricultural manager with Green Bay Foods, said about 1,000 acres in the spring and 1,000 acres in the fall will be under contract to his company, representing about $790,000 worth of business.

Farmers sign contracts to plant and grow the crop, but Green Bay Foods will harvest the cucumbers mechanically using its own equipment. "We’re limited due to the availability of harvesters," Oshefsky said. "In the fall, we may have additional harvesters available, and we’d increase volume. There are 65,000 to 100,000 acres of irrigated land near Havana. It is the
farthest north where we could have a spring and a fall crop."

From an Associated Press story.

Row Tunnels in Production of Bell Peppers at St. Charles

John Gerber continued his research work on the management of row tunnels in bell pepper production in 1988. Lady Bell plug transplants were set in black plastic mulch on May 13 and immediately covered with spun-bonded polypropylene row tunnels. The tunnels were removed from rows at 1-week intervals, starting at 3 weeks and ending at 7 weeks. Temperatures were monitored both inside and outside the tunnels.

At harvest time the peppers were examined for number of lobes on marketable fruit. As in the past, the row tunnels increased the percentage of 4-lobed (blocky) fruit and almost eliminated the 2-lobed fruit. The objective in 1988 was to generate enough data correlating the difference in temperature with fruit quality, to develop a formula of heat unit calculation. The formula can then be used as a tool for predicting the optimum time for removing row tunnels from bell peppers. With the cost of the material being high and the pepper plant being sensitive to overexposure to the row tunnel, this formula may be the precise tool that is needed to give growers the opportunity to really take advantage of row tunnels in bell pepper production. Further work will be done to test the formula and fine-tune it.

Bell Peppers, Onions, and Tomatoes with Drip Irrigation

Bill Shoemaker, associate horticulturist and superintendent of the St. Charles Horticulture Research Center, conducted an initial study and demonstration plot in 1988 to generate basic data on the impact of drip irrigation practices on the production of bell peppers, onions, and tomatoes. The onions (Sweet Sandwich variety) were direct-seeded on May 9, and the tomatoes (Celebrity) and peppers (Lady Bell) were transplanted on June 3. Overhead irrigation was applied uniformly over the whole plot until the drip system could be operated on June 21. The late start reduced the impact of the drought study.

The bell peppers showed the most dramatic differences between irrigated and nonirrigated treatments. It was apparent from the beginning of harvest that irrigated plants were outperforming nonirrigated plants, both in numbers of fruit and in harvest quality. The differences became even greater as the season went on. After two harvests, the nonirrigated plants became virtually nonproductive, probably not justifying the cost of harvest. In the irrigated treatments, the plants continued to produce large numbers of quality fruit, indicating that peppers are very sensitive to drought stress, and very responsive to drip irrigation.

The preceding two articles were submitted by William H. Shoemaker, associate horticulturist, Department of Horticulture, and superintendent, St. Charles Horticulture Research Center.

IPM Workshop and Twilight Meetings at St. Charles

The Kane County Extension office will be sponsoring two Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Workshops on June 20 and August 8 from 1 to 4:30 p.m. for vegetable growers interested in sharpening their integrated pest management skills. Speakers will be Ann Carrick, Region 1 IPM specialist; Darin Eastburn, pathology specialist; Roscoe Randell, entomology specialist; Richard Hentschel, horticulture adviser; and William Shoemaker, Research Farm superintendent.

The two workshops will cover IPM practices in both classroom and field settings. We will discuss the crops in season at each workshop. At 6:30 p.m. these same two days, Bill Shoemaker will be conducting twilight meetings at the St. Charles Research Center. These will feature walking tours of the plots, including work with sweet corn, bell peppers, drip irrigation, and variety trials. You might want to plan on coming for the afternoon workshop and staying through the twilight meeting, too.

For more information, or to register, call (312)584-6166.

Submitted by Richard Hentschel, Kane County horticulture adviser.

Availability of Asparagus Seed and Crowns for 1989

One-year-old crowns (root systems) of the New Jersey hybrid asparagus varieties Syn 4-56, Syn 4-51, and Jersey Knight are available for the 1989 planting year. The “Syn” designation means that the variety contains 10 percent female plants and 90 percent male plants. The female plants produce marketable spears but do not produce as large a percentage of jumbo spears as do the male plants; however, the Syn 4-56 and Syn 4-51 varieties are extremely high yielding. Growers using these varieties in northwestern Illinois have averaged 500 pounds per acre (lb/A) the year after planting, 1,000 lb/A the second year after planting, and 1,500 to 2,000 lb/A the third year after planting. These are actual growers'
yields, not just test plot results.

The Jersey Knight variety has been reported to attain a long spear height without the tip of the spear loosening up (ferning out), which equates with fiber development (getting woody). This variety retains a tight spear tip longer than other New Jersey hybrids.

Seed is available for the Syn 4-56 and Jersey Giant varieties. The price is $500/lb for the Syn 4-56 and $650/lb for the Jersey Giant. Asparagus seed is very erratic in its germination, but one pound of seed is usually enough to plant one acre.

It takes about 8,000 asparagus crowns to plant one acre, costing $120 per 1,000 crowns or about $1,000 per acre, compared with a seed cost of $500 to $650 per acre. In terms of cost of seed versus cost of crowns, starting from seed is cheaper but this difference is quickly offset by earlier yields from the crowns.

1989 Illinois Asparagus School

The 1989 Illinois Asparagus School was held February 13 in Moline, with 125 people from 10 states attending, eager to learn about growing and marketing techniques. Brian Benson, plant breeder from California, reported on a purple asparagus variety called “Viola,” which should be available in a few years.

The 1989 Proceedings will be available in May for $5 each, or they can be ordered now and, when they are printed, they will be shipped to you. Copies of the 1987 and 1988 Asparagus School Proceedings are also available from Carl Cantaluppi for $5 each. An eight-page insect, disease, and weed identification fact sheet with color plates is available from the Rock Island office for $1. These publications can be ordered by making a check payable to the University of Illinois, to Carl Cantaluppi, Rock Island County Extension Service, 1188 John Deere Road, East Moline, Illinois 61244.

Submitted by Roscoe Randell, Extension entomologist.

Wash Your Clothing with Care after Using Ag Chemicals

You've been in the field all day, and now the sun is setting. You have mixed and applied chemicals conscientiously. You have followed all the safety rules you know. It's time to go home. You're anxious to get a shower, have dinner, and relax with the family.

But wait, there's one more important step. You and your wife should observe some important safety suggestions when washing your work clothes. Laundry tips may seem trivial, but there's more at stake than you realize. The health and safety of you and your family could be affected. Follow these guidelines carefully:

1. Before going into the house, remove chemical granules from the pockets, cuffs and creases of your clothing.
2. When you slip out of your work clothes, keep them separate from the family's soiled clothing.
3. Rubber gloves should be used when handling garments worn while handling chemicals.
4. Wash work clothes separately—not with the family laundry.

The EPA has proposed banning the use of the granular formulations of the pesticide carbofuran (Furadan) on all sites. The EPA's decision is based on evidence that carbofuran granules are acutely toxic to birds and that a single granule may be fatal to small birds. The agency has determined that the risks associated with continued use of granular carbofuran outweigh the benefits derived from its use. FMC Corporation is disputing this determination.

It should be pointed out that in making this determination, the EPA did not consider any benefits (or risks) associated with the use of carbofuran on vegetable crops because these uses represent less than 1 percent of the total granular carbofuran used. The EPA allows a 60-day comment period during which the public is invited to respond to this proposed ban. Comments should refer to Action OPP-30,000/48A and should be submitted in triplicate to the Public Docket and Freedom of Information Section (TS-767C), Office of Pesticide Programs, U.S. EPA, 401 M Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20460.

The EPA has also placed several restrictions on the continued use of the fungicide and miticide dinocap (Karathane and Dikar) to reduce risks to the health of workers who mix, load, and apply this product. See the new label for more details.

Pesticide Update

Kelthane 35 Wettable Powder will be available for use as a miticide on many vegetables and fruit crops. Rohm and Haas has satisfied all of the Environmental Protection Agency's concerns about contamination of the product with DDT, so growers should be able to count on the availability of Kelthane for the foreseeable future. FMC Corporation has received a supplemental label for the use of Pounce 3.2 EC (permethrin) to control a number of insects on turnips in Indiana. Pounce can be used at a rate of 2 to 4 ounces per acre, but no more than 32 ounces per acre per season.
5. Wash your clothes daily when working with chemicals. The longer chemically soiled garments are stored or worn between washings, the more difficult it is to remove the chemicals.

6. Prerinse or presoak clothing in a bucket or tub, or prerinse in a washer. If prerinsing in a washer, spin out before the washing cycle begins.

7. Wash garments using warm (120°F) or hot (140°F) water.

8. Wash a small number of items at once. Use the highest water level and the longest time available.

9. Use heavy-duty detergent at the recommended rate. Liquids are more effective than powders for removing oil-based chemicals. Bleach and ammonia do not improve pesticide removal. Use two rinses.

10. When washing is finished, remove the clothes and run the empty washer through a complete cycle with detergent. This removes any chemical residue that might contaminate family clothing.

11. Line-dry work clothes to avoid possible contamination of the dryer.

Remember, product formulation affects chemical removal during washing. If undiluted liquid concentrate of a medium to highly toxic pesticide is spilled on garments such as a shirt or pair of trousers, consider throwing them out. Washing may not remove enough of the concentrate to be safe.

Don't send out work clothes for commercial dry cleaning. Dry cleaning may seem like the easy way out, but it has no advantage over washing. Also, it could contaminate other people's clothing.

Pesticides can be removed most successfully from 100 percent cotton garments and cotton/polyester blends. It's difficult to wash pesticides from work clothes of 100 percent synthetic fabrics. Avoid wearing them when handling or mixing chemicals.

From CPM/Crop Protection Management, March 1989, p. 17.

An Important Notice to Growers of Snapbeans, Lima Beans, and Peas

A Section 18 emergency exemption has been filed for the use of Pursuit on snapbeans, lima beans, and English peas in Bureau, DeKalb, La Salle, Lee, Mason, and Tazewell counties. Pursuit cannot be used until this exemption is approved and a supplemental label is available.

If the emergency exemption is approved, it will be for a single application (either preemergence or preplant incorporated) of Pursuit to English peas, lima beans, or snapbeans. This application can only be made between April and June. The application rates for Pursuit are 3 ounces per acre for sand, loamy sand, sandy loam, or sand clay loam soils; or 4 ounces per acre for all other soils. The 2-ounce-per-acre rate of Pursuit will not be labeled, nor will more than one application per year be allowed.

You must consider the rotation restrictions when deciding whether to use Pursuit. In the event of a crop loss, snapbeans, lima beans, English peas, or soybeans can be replanted. Four months after the application of Pursuit, barley and wheat can be planted. Field corn can be planted the spring (9 1/2 months) after an application of Pursuit. No other crop can be planted up to 18 months after a Pursuit application. Thus your options are: 1) plant a second crop of snapbeans, English peas, lima beans, or soybeans; 2) plant barley or wheat in the fall; or 3) plant field corn the following spring. You cannot plant sweet corn, cucumbers, tomatoes, pumpkins, or muskmelons until the 1991 growing season if you use Pursuit in 1989.

A Survey of Pesticide Usage in Fruits and Vegetables to Be Conducted

A survey on pesticide use in fruits and vegetables is to be conducted in Illinois as part of the Pesticide Impact Assessment Program. This survey was last conducted in 1978 by Herbert Hopen, David Williams, Marvin Carbonneau, Daniel Meador, and John Street. The new survey will be coordinated by John Masiunas.

Information obtained from this survey is important to assist in: 1) registration of new pesticides; 2) re-registration of older pesticides; 3) coordination of research efforts to obtain new pesticide labels for minor crops through the IR-4 program; and 4) to provide realistic information on current pesticide usage. The survey will be conducted this spring and summer through telephone interviews and on-farm visits. Your assistance in the survey is deeply appreciated. If you have any questions about the survey, contact Dr. Masiunas at (217)244-4231.

Herbicide Rotation Restrictions

In the last issue, I discussed what to do if you expected a carryover problem. In the next few issues, I want to discuss how to avoid carryover problems. Planning crop rotations can be difficult in vegetables due to herbicide label restrictions. The general rule of thumb is that if the herbicide is labeled for use in a crop, then you can also
plant the crop the year following application of the herbicide.

If you are planting soybeans and want to rotate to vegetables, generally you should use Command or Treflan. Use Bladex on corn if you are planning on rotating to vegetables. If you use atrazine or fomesafen (Reflex) containing products, then no vegetables except sweet corn can be planted the following year. With products containing Scepter, no vegetables except peas and snapbeans can be planted the following year.

Chlorimuron-containing products (Classic, Preview, Lorox Plus, Canopy) have the most difficult rotation restrictions, requiring a successful field bioassay before planting any vegetables. Because a bioassay is required, you cannot rotate to vegetables until 3 or 4 years after application of products containing chlorimuron. The table below contains specific rotation restrictions. Be certain to read the label restrictions carefully before using any pesticide.

Table 1. Label restrictions on rotating to vegetables (in months)

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<th>Herbicide</th>
<th>Pumpkin</th>
<th>Musk-melon</th>
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*FB = field bioassay; NY = next year; NNY = not next year; AT = any time.

These last three articles were contributed by John Masiunas, assistant professor, horticulture.
1989 Convention Breaks All Records

Eighteen states were represented at the 1989 Illinois Fruit, Vegetable, and Irrigation Convention and Trade Show in Springfield last January. The total attendance of 2,100 was the largest ever in the 12-year history of the convention. Illinois vegetable growers were joined by fruit and vegetable growers, industry representatives, and educators from as far away as Alabama, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota.

William L. George, associate dean of the College of Agriculture and one of the founders of the Illinois convention, reminded the banquet audience of the first joint meeting of the Illinois Vegetable Growers’ Association and the Illinois State Horticultural Society in Champaign. Dr. George congratulated the leadership of the combined organization, the Illinois Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Foundation, for the vision and energy they demonstrated in making it all happen.

Planning for 1990 began on the last day of the 1989 convention with a meeting of the Convention Planning Committee, which has overall responsibility for managing the convention and trade show. The Program Committee, chaired by John Courter, met in late March to begin designing the educational sessions for next January's meeting. Mark your calendar today for the 1990 convention and trade show—January 15 to 18, 1990, in Springfield, Illinois.

New “Illinois Products” Logo Introduced

The Illinois Department of Agriculture’s Division of Marketing last summer introduced the “Illinois Products” logo for use by food and agricultural companies, producers, farm organizations, and other groups at the Illinois State Fair Great All-Illinois Food Company exhibit. The logo is designed to help promote food and agricultural products that are produced, processed, or packaged in Illinois.

The Division has mailed information on the program to Illinois companies and producers who may be interested in using the logo in product packaging, promotional activities, or marketing campaigns. Before using the logo, a company or producer must complete an agreement form, available from the Marketing Division. The logo can be used free of charge by any agricultural company, individual, or organization after the agreement and certification procedures are completed and approved.

The goal of the “Illinois Products” logo is to increase consumer awareness of Illinois products, as well as to help increase the number of Illinois products in stores. Increased sales of Illinois products would result in employment opportunities, and a stronger state economy and agricultural community. For additional information, call (217)782-6675.

The preceding two articles were submitted by John Gerber, associate professor, Department of Horticulture.

Farmers Must Verify Employee Immigration Status

Does the new immigration law affect agriculture? You bet! As of December 1, 1988, all employers in the United States, including farmers, must verify the employment eligibility of people on their payrolls or pay a stiff penalty.

Employers of seasonal agricultural workers were deferred from sanctions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 until December 1, 1988. Now, agricultural employers must comply with the law just as employers in other sectors of the economy are required to do.

This means that if you hire anyone after November 6, 1986, you must have on file an employment eligibility verification form, called Form I-9, for each employee, even if that person is hired only temporarily. You must keep these forms for at least three years, and, if the employee is on your payroll longer than three years, you must keep the form one year longer than the last day for that worker.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Department of Labor have a legal right to inspect these forms if they give three days’ notice. A fine can result if the forms are missing or improperly filled out. The majority of employers in other sectors of the economy have been complying with the law since June 1987. Some who have not complied have been notified to pay fines as high as $300,000.

If you’re having problems finding sources of legally authorized workers in your area, call your nearest INS or Border Patrol office. They may be able to recommend state and local employment services, refugee resettlement offices, community organizations, and other groups that can help.

Most INS offices also have an Employer and Labor Relations Officer who can answer questions about your responsibility under the law. Call them also if you need to know more about the law, about documents you can use to verify employment, or about forms you must fill out.

In Indiana or Illinois, call the Chicago office at (312)886-8078. Remember also that you should be aware that the law prohibits discrimination on the basis of national origin or citizenship. For more information, call toll-free 1-(800)255-7688.

This article is taken from Prairie Farmer, February 21, 1989.
Sign Bill Introduced February 7

Representative Lynn Martin (IL-16) has introduced H.R. 899, the “Agricultural Product Outdoor Advertising Act,” which would allow farmers to erect signs, displays, and devices advertising locations at which consumers may harvest or purchase agricultural commodities from persons producing such commodities.

Under current law, many roadside stands and farmers’ markets cannot erect any type of sign to advertise the availability of fresh produce, since their market or stand is located along a highway that has received federal highway funds. This ban on signs is part of the highway beautification law passed in 1965.

In introducing this legislation, Congresswoman Martin stated, “Although I like seeing clean and uncluttered highways, it’s unfortunate that our farmers cannot advertise their produce because of the current law.” She also said that her legislation “would limit the size of these signs to 60 square feet or less, so that they don’t destroy an otherwise scenic view.

“Because of the state of the farm economy and many requests from farmers who have been frustrated by their inability to advertise their produce, I felt that it was appropriate for Congress to take the necessary action to address this situation.”

This information is from a news release distributed by Representative Lynn Martin on February 8, 1989.

Herb Meeting held in Mount Vernon

The first annual Midwestern Herb Show was held February 10 to 12 at the Times Square Mall in Mount Vernon, Illinois. Exhibitors from several states displayed various facets of commercial herb production in booths and demonstrations. More than 400 people passed through the exhibit during the three-day event. Interest in the culture and uses of herbs and herb products was very evident. This bodes well for the future of herb production in the Midwest.

National IPM Symposium/Workshop

A symposium/workshop sponsored by the National Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Coordinating Committee will be held April 25 to 28 at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. The theme will be “Targeting Research for IPM Implementation.”

The symposium/workshop will provide an opportunity for scientists involved in research and implementation of IPM to hear about new and developing technologies related to IPM, to discuss issues and concerns in work-
Attention: Horseradish Lovers, Unite!

The Second Annual International Horseradish Festival will be held May 6 at Woodland Park, Collinsville, Illinois, beginning at 10 a.m. Events will include demonstrations of cultivation, harvesting, processing, and use of horseradish. Displays will feature the history and importance of horseradish in the Tri-County area. For fun, enter the horseradish root-throwing contest, or test yourself in the horseradish eating contest. For more information on scheduling, contact: George Astling, (618)344-2910 (work), (618)345-8042 (home); or Pat O’Neill, (618)344-3302 (work).

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