

Agricultural Engineers Study Cheaper Weed Production Plans

Agricultural engineers at North Carolina State have been scientifically analyzing tobacco production since 1950. Their goal is to help farmers produce tobacco faster, easier and cheaper.

Few characteristics of the tobacco plant or the practices used in growing it have escaped the engineers' attention. In their mechanical harvesting experiments alone, the engineers have studied 32 different characteristics of tobacco stalks and leaves.

How much force is required to tear or bruise a tobacco leaf? How strong is a tobacco stalk; how strong is a leaf? What is the shape of a leaf, its thickness, midrib strength and bruising tolerance? How much force is needed to remove a leaf from the stalk? Will suckers or sucker stubs effect a mechanical harvester? How much friction results when tobacco leaves are placed

against steel? wood? belt material?

These are some of the basic questions that the engineers have had to answer before they could get far building a mechanical harvester.

Efforts to develop new curing methods have likewise required answers to many basic questions about tobacco. What, for example, are the best times and temperatures needed to cure quality tobacco?

What effect does curing have on the many chemicals found in a tobacco leaf? What gases does a tobacco leaf consume or release during curing? How does air flow, heat and spacing affect curing? How does leaf shedding effect quality?

Questions such as these could go on and on. Their answers are all necessary in any scientific attempt to mechanize the harvest-

ing and curing of tobacco.

With this type of information, coupled with their engineering know-how, the State College scientists have made considerable progress in mechanical harvesting.

Both self-propelled and tractor-mounted harvesters have been field tested. By 1962, field losses with both types of harvesters had been reduced to about 5 per cent.

This 5 per cent figure compares favorably with harvesting losses in almost every other mechanized crop. Yet, the loss is considered excessive, or prohibitive, in tobacco under the present acreage control system.

State engineers have tested 28 different "defoliators" or picker heads in an effort to reduce the field losses from mechanical harvesting. Two new defoliators were tested during the past summer.

The engineers are also explor-

ing the possibilities of removing more leaves from the stalk at each pruning than is currently done. If successful, this could greatly reduce the number of prunings needed to harvest the crop.

Fruits of bulk curing research are not only in the hands of growers, but are getting considerable praise from users. Ninety-nine owners of bulk curers who responded to a recent questionnaire were overwhelmingly in favor of the new labor-saving method.

Research workers believe that bulk curers will show an even greater advantage in 1963, due to new varieties being grown and the increased experience of bulk curer owners.

Broyhill Will Not Run For Governor

Ninth District Congressman James T. Broyhill, whose district includes Watauga County, said this week that he is not a candidate for governor of North Carolina.

Broyhill, now a freshman congressman, said: "I have no aspirations for governor, and have made that clear before." He expressed surprise at published rumors to the contrary, triggered in recent days by the announcement by Eighth District Congressman Charles Raper Jonas that he would not be the GOP candidate for governor in 1964.

Broyhill has his plans well laid.

He is interested in coming back to Congress for a second term from the Ninth Congressional District. His supporters there are expecting him to be the candidate, and the Republican National Committee is counting on him to hold onto the seat.

Reflecting the welcome he was given by the Republican party when he became the second GOP member of the North Carolina delegation in the House, Broyhill was named, as a freshman, to the Republican Policy Committee in the House. That group is the inner circle of leadership advisers and strategists backstopping minority leader Charles Halleck.

Eighty-seven nations aid U. N. funds.

ON RUSSIA MOON SHOT

President Kennedy has questioned whether the Soviet Union is abandoning the moon race.

Kennedy said that he "would not make any bets at all upon Soviet intentions" despite Premier Khrushchev's statement that his country would not race to the moon but, rather, would

profit from American experience in that field.

Expressing his skeptical attitude on Soviet intentions, he said the United States would stay on target.

Brief News Notes

Bishop Sheen is preparing new TV series. Tobacco mixture containing alumina is patented.

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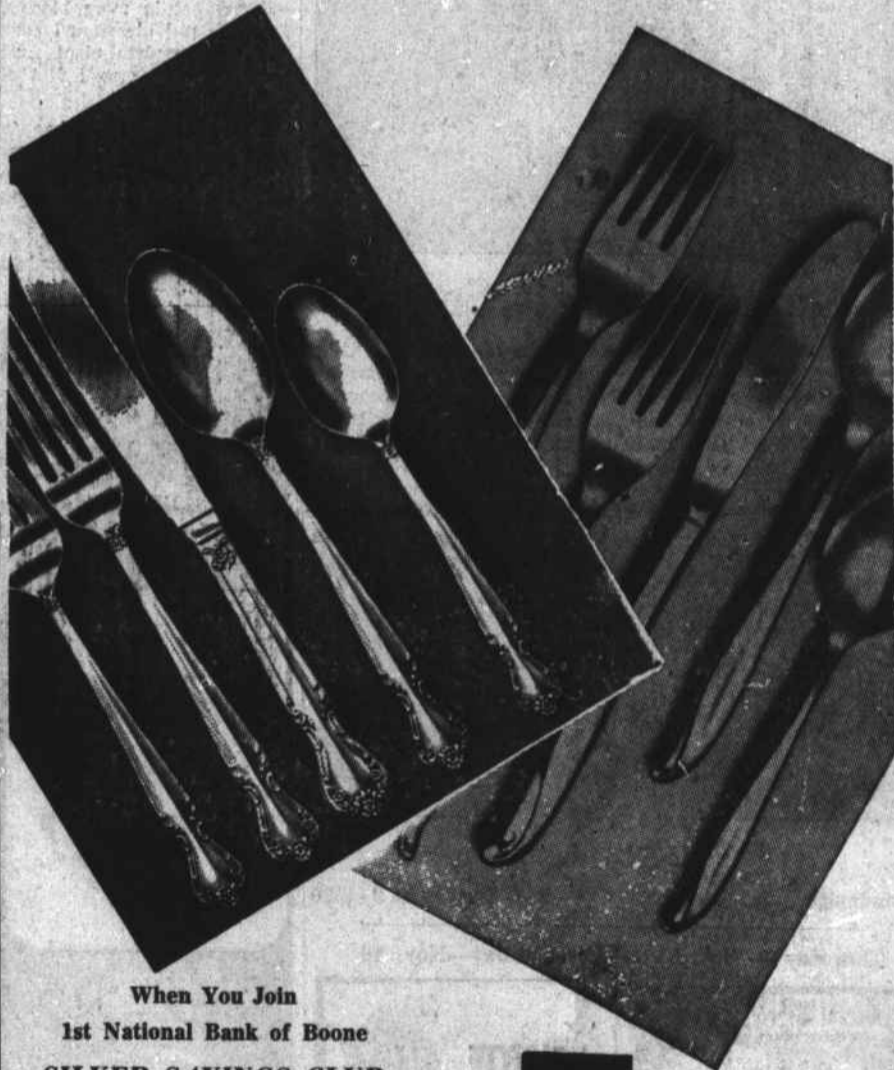
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