

Madison County Farming

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he went ahead and it's worked out."

Garrett Hensley told about how Johnny wanted to order 7,000 plants right away, and how Garrett talked him down to 6,000 because he wouldn't get enough customers. "I plowed it up and turned him loose on it," recalled Garrett, "and he had so many people up here picking strawberries you could hardly fight your way through 'em."

Members of our tour group then broke into questions, and both Garrett and Melba Hensley did their best to answer. The Hensleys fight their mold problems with chemicals, spraying with Captan two to three times a week. They also use chemicals for weeds, mostly Enide and Dacthal, but also "lots of elbow work" pulling them out from between the plants themselves. They spray the borders of the field with 2,4-D.

Most years, the climate is well suited to strawberries and the Hensleys get as much as 2,500 gallons off their half-acre. This year there was a late frost and picking was delayed, but normally the berries are ripe for a month of heavy picking.

And there's no problem with marketing, reports Melba Hensley. "We've had 65 people in here at one time," she said.

"We have so many we have to control how they walk so they don't step on all the plants. We ask them not to cross back and forth over rows, and we don't let in children under 10. Next year we'll have another two acres of berries, and we'll probably have plenty of pickers."

According to Wiley Duvall, there are about two dozen commercial strawberry operations in the county, and the Hensley's is the largest. The county helps all the growers order 40,000 to 60,000 plants each year, getting a better price by ordering in bulk. About 75 percent of these plants go to small, backyard patches.

Our caravan wound back down the hard road, then on over to Highway 212 and up to Billy and Virginia Barron's house, which they built themselves, under the guidance of Jerry Shannon. All three are from South Carolina, where they were friends, and Billy and Jerry are now farming together. Virginia took the group through the house, pointing out the local fieldstone, pine, cedar and poplar used for the chimney, floors, walls, stairs and bannisters. Because Billy and Virginia are both tall people, the counter-tops in the kitchen are an extra-high 40 inches.

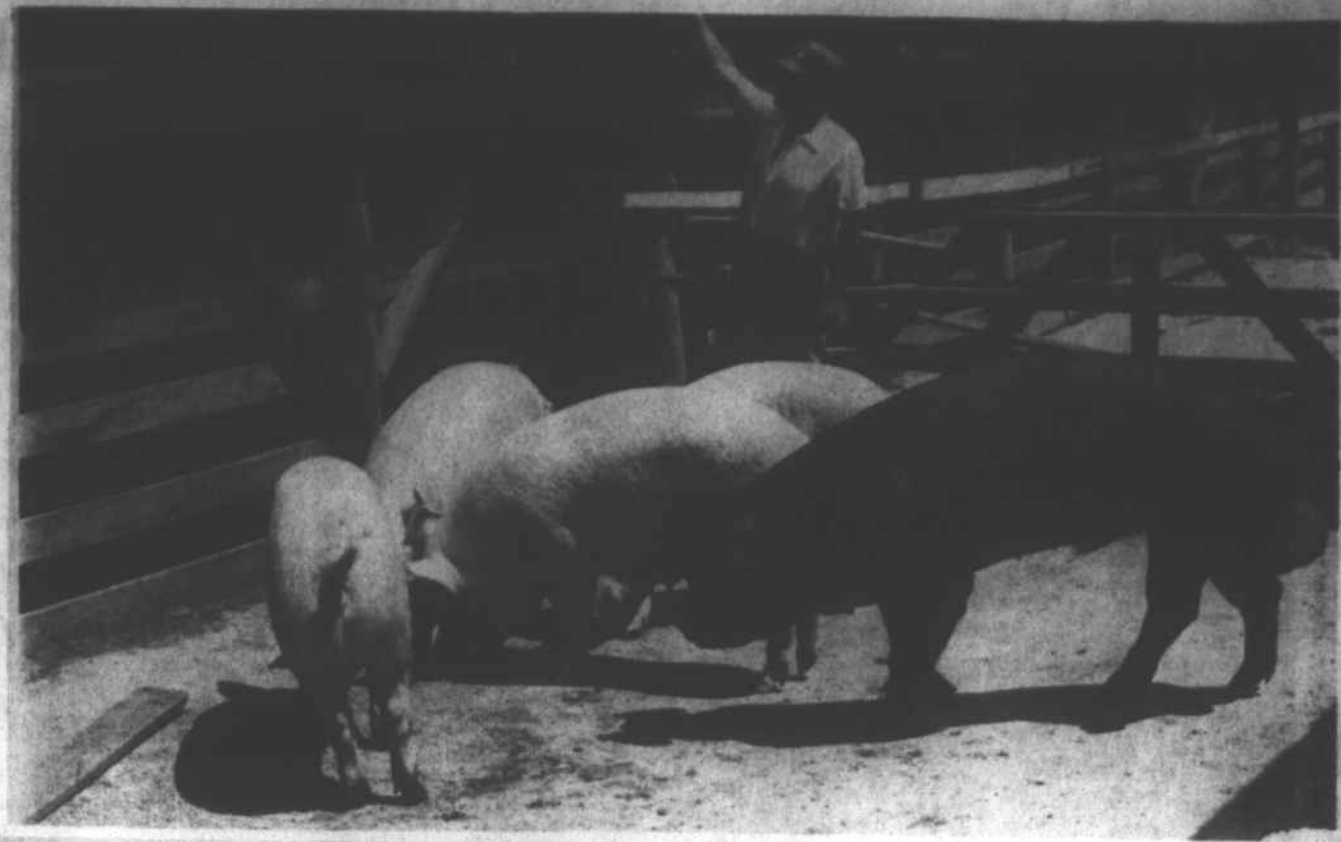
Our last stop was at the

farm nearby, where Billy and Jerry Shannon were both bleary-eyed from long days picking tomatoes; this year's crop is a heavy one because of all the rainfall. Earl Wise, standing among rows of lush plants, said: "These folks have got more to do than they can get done, so I'll tell you a little about them. Jerry was living up by Hot Springs until January a year ago, when he bought this farm, and since then he's built two houses here, plus the Barron's house, and put in all these crops, so evidently that man can get things done more than the rest of us."

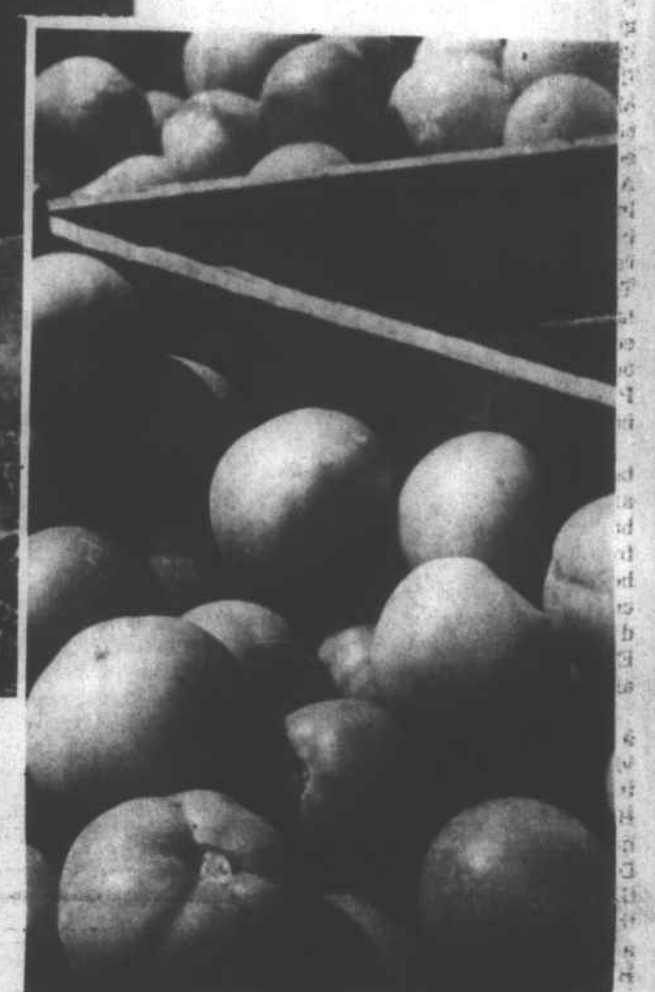
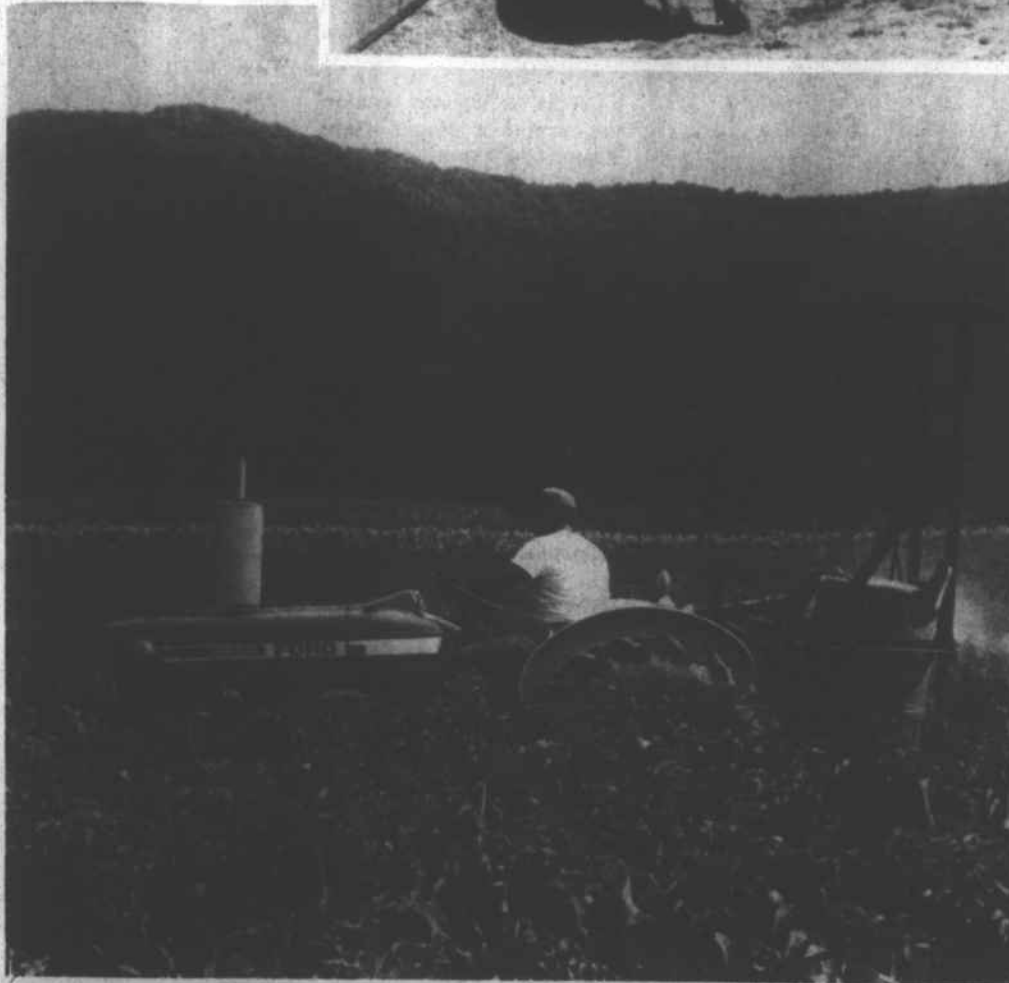
"This is his second drop of tomatoes, five acres of them, and it is one of the better crops in the county. He and Billy will get about 30 tons of saleable tomatoes per acre, in spite of a little trouble with gray mold. This crop will probably bring about \$6,000 an acre in profit this year because the price is up. Last year it was down; very bad. These boys have had the energy to work hard while the price is up and they'll do well this year."

In addition to tomatoes, Shannon and Barron are trying a number of experimental crops including rhododendron, hemlock, mountain laurel, doghobble, and balsam. "A couple of other counties have been leading the pack in grow-

ing Christmas trees and other ornamentals," said Gary Ealey, the Extension agent handling these new crops. "But we think Madison is just as good a place to grow them. Here they are being grown from seed in these buckets. The seed goes into shredded bark with some urea compound and phosphate and that's it - they don't need anything else. We'll just give them water and pinch 'em back and let 'em grow and take the money in about three years and go on vacation. That's really all they need, and the total expenses per plant are only about 50 cents, compared with a price of \$5 to \$10. So we'd like to see more of our farmers trying these plants."



Howard Higgins spoils his prize boar (right) and four of his 70 sows above. At left, Jerry Shannon sprays his five acres of tomatoes. Below, left, Garrett and Melba Hensley stand proudly by their one-half acre strawberry patch, the county's largest



Gudger Holds Meeting

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already been passed by Congress into law. Carter asked for a program to produce synthetic fuel from coal, said Gudger, and two weeks later the synthetic fuel bill was passed.

Also, Carter said he wanted the power to ration gasoline, and Congress responded by passing a bill giving him that power.

Gudger said that one of his own special interests was in reducing the number of commissions and agencies in government by streamlining operations. He recalled the bad flood of 1977, when the French Broad River hit Hot Springs, washed out Cane River, and destroyed many homes.

"It was a mess," said Gudger. "But the mess was not only caused by water. Forty-two separate federal agencies came down here after the flood to help out. There were so many of them they had to have a big meeting in Asheville to decide who would do what. After that Carter vowed to reorganize some of these agencies, and he has done that."

"He has also asked for a separate Department of Energy, and he got that; he's asked for a Department of Education, and he's got that through the House and a slightly different bill through the Senate, and it looks like in September he'll have a department similar to what he wants."

Gudger defended the concept of a Department of Education, saying it would not usurp local power but would reinforce and coordinate local educational policy.

He said that streamlining bureaucracy was easier pledged than done. There are, for example, 5,000 people in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare who do nothing but write regulations. But he cited the Paperwork Commission as an example of a commission that can do what it's supposed to do and "then just disappear, like it said it would. Most of these groups just keep growing once they start. The Paperwork Commission was founded in 1973, and was

supposed to exist for just three years, and it did. It made its report and went home."

Gudger strongly defended the North Carolina university system against the segregation suit brought by former HEW Secretary Joseph Califano. "When the state in turn sued for a stay of that suit, it produced one of the best-written documents I have ever seen. It points out that North Carolina has made greater steps in university integration than any other state in the nation. The fact is that fantastic progress has been made in meeting the needs of the minority race over the last 10 years. Our only problem is that we have five universities out of 16 that are heavily black. I think only 6 percent of the students at A & T are white. But five years ago it was only something like 2 percent. So we are making progress."

Gudger then spent over half an hour answering questions from the audience. Leonard Gosnell asked if the pardoning of draft evaders was setting a precedent; William Tisdale worried about cut-backs in veterans' services.

Superintendent of Education Robert Edwards said that HEW pressure on Madison County to provide complete access facilities for handicapped students was unreasonable, due to the small budget here and the great expense of these facilities (one elevator, he estimated, would cost some \$80,000 to install). He also pleaded that if the draft were reinstated, it be done in such a way as not to interrupt the education of 18- and 19-year-olds.

Charles Tolley, manager of French Broad EMC, wanted to know about federal assistance for people unable to pay their energy bills. Gudger said that there would "definitely be \$400 million in emergency fuel available, and I think that's going to have to be increased by 50 percent. He also said there would be stamps for the

elderly to purchase electricity.

Robert Carter, of the Department of Social Services, said that a four-day work-week would help save energy and wondered what was being done about it. "I wrote the president a nice letter," he said, "and he wrote me a very nice reply, but he didn't use my proposal."



Hang Gliding Championship This Month

More than 20 of the best hang glider pilots in the United States and the leading flyers from several foreign countries will assemble here Sept. 11 through 16 for what will likely be the finest hang gliding competition field ever assembled in the United States.

The Masters of Hang Gliding Championship at Grandfather Mountain will have for the first time the top flyers from England, France, Australia, Japan, and Brazil,

with the possibility also of West Germany. Representing the United States will be four previous winners of the U.S. Nationals and three previous winners of the Masters of

Hang Gliding. American winners of many other championships in hang gliding will fill out the field of 27 invited pilots.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Legal Services Corporation is a private, non-profit organization established by Congress to provide financial support for legal assistance to poor people in civil matters. In the near future the Corporation will be allocating limited funds to establish new programs, or expand existing programs, to serve eligible clients in various unserved counties throughout the United States.

Counties in North Carolina under consideration for this purpose include:

Anson	Hyde	Richmond
Beaufort	Jones	Rutherford
Buncombe	Madison	Transylvania
Carteret	Martin	Tyrrell
Craven	Pamlico	Washington
Cumberland	Pitt	Wayne
Henderson	Polk	

Proposals to provide such services are invited from all interested groups. Such proposals and completed grant application materials must be received by the Corporation on or before Friday, October 12, 1979.

Grant application forms and additional information may be obtained by written request to:

Regional Director
Legal Services Corporation
Atlanta Regional Office
615 Peachtree Street, N.E. 9th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30308

The public will have an opportunity to discuss the proposals, and the subject of legal services generally, at an open meeting in or near each service area under consideration unless it would be impractical to do so. The time and place of such meetings will be announced at a later date. In all circumstances, the views of all interested persons and groups are earnestly requested and will be carefully considered.

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ATTENTION ALL ELVIS FANS!!!

A trip to Memphis is now being planned for Sept. 28-30. Elvis' cousin, Billy Smith will be our guide. If interested call 667-4875 for details.



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