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**Remove Trees,
Stop Disease**

Winter is the best season for removing those dead, dying, severely decayed or crowded shade trees around the home or in the community.

William H. Love, extension specialist in municipal forestry at Michigan State College, explains the reason this way: When the ground is frozen or protected by snow, there is less danger of damaging lawns and flower beds with falling trees or the skidding or moving of logs. And many tree service concerns are not so busy this season of the year. Winter also is a safe time to dispose of brush and wood by burning.

Dead and dying trees, Love points out, are ideal breeding places for many harmful insects and tree diseases. It is essential, he maintains, to remove and burn all dead elm wood throughout southeastern Michigan in areas where Dutch elm disease is found. Bark beetles carry this disease from diseased to healthy trees. The insects over-winter and multiply in dead and dying elm trees and in piles of elm wood.

Pruning out and burning all dead branches from healthy elm trees will improve the trees as well as reduce the bark beetle population. And, Love stresses, "a program of tree removal and pruning is long overdue in most communities throughout Michigan."

**SHARP PLUNGE
NOT EXPECTED
IN FEBRUARY**

February price slumps have become normal - but don't look for a drastic plunge in February prices, advises Arthur Mauch, Michigan State College agricultural economist.

Prices in central markets were heightened on several crop and livestock products in recent weeks, notes Mauch, after the fall marketing peaks passed. The 1953 harvest was only a little below that in 1952, which was the second biggest on record.

Farmers sold 5 per cent more products the first 11 months of 1953 than in the same months of 1952, but prices averaged about 10 per cent lower. Overall receipts of \$28 billion were four per cent under 1952, the MSC farm economist explains.

February price breaks have been common in recent years. After people do their Christmas shopping, pay bills in January and pay federal income taxes and state and local taxes, they have less to spend. Winter also cuts a crimp in industrial production and in road building and construction work.

What about this February? "Businessmen are cutting down on inventories and there is some general slowing of the economy," advises Mauch. Sometimes the winter let-down does not wait until February, and weaknesses in some commodities show it may be on the way. But prices of most farm commodities have been readjusting downward for two years and Mauch considers it unlikely there will be a drastic drop in February.

FARM NEWS

NICE RICE—This smiling youngster in Athens, Greece, sitting beside a bag of rice, mirrors the delight of his countrymen in Greece's 1953 rice harvest. "The successful harvest has given every indication that there will be enough rice to feed the country for a year, with some left over for export."

**Potato Disease
Warning Issued**

Steps to prevent spread of potato nematode to Michigan fields, where 10,736,000 bushels of potatoes were grown in 1952, were recommended this week by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. The estimated value of the potato crop last year was \$11,802,000.

The potato root nematode has the technical name, "Ditylenchus destructor." It is microscopic and attacks only the tubers of the potato plant. The potatoes show small chalk-colored spots on the surface flesh when the skin is peeled away, according to C. A. Boyer, chief of the department's bureau of plant industry.

In advanced stages, potatoes are discolored and have depressed areas with firm edges. Eventually the lesions enlarge and the skin shrinks and cracks. Fields remain infested for many years.

Boyer says the pest was first found in Germany in 1888. It was discovered in Idaho in 1943, Prince Edward Island in 1945 and in Oakland County, Wisconsin, in October of the closeness of Wisconsin potato regions to Michigan, every means must be taken to prevent its spread here, Boyer warns.

He suggests potato growers take the following steps:

1. Plant only the best grades of certified seed potatoes.
2. Get certified seed from reliable sources outside known infested areas.
3. Don't use used burlap bags unless they have been properly treated or did not come from infested areas.

Examine your potatoes for indications of the pest. If suspicious potatoes are found, place a sample in a plastic bag, seal tightly and mail to the Michigan Department of Agriculture, bureau of plant industry at Lansing.

**Ketosis Hits
Cattle Frequently**

Ketosis, a disease that causes severe losses in milk production, is more likely to occur in winter than any other time, warns Dr. James Williams, of the animal pathology department of Michigan State College.

"We don't know why exactly," Dr. Williams says, "but fluctuations in temperature and humidity may be part of the cause. We do use dairymen to provide plenty of ventilation in their barns as a precautionary measure."

When a cow contracts ketosis, she goes off feed suddenly, and there is a sharp drop in milk production. She sometimes becomes violently nervous and she may stagger as if intoxicated, or she may walk stiffly at the beginning of the disease. Ketosis most often occurs in high-producing cows shortly after calving.

The best preventive, Dr. Williams suggests, is to see that cows, especially those in high milk production, get plenty of good quality grain and hay or silage. Sometimes a ketosis-hit cow will respond to an increased amount of carbohydrates - sugar or molasses - in the ration.

The best idea, Dr. Williams points out, is to call the veterinarian immediately when ketosis is suspected. A prompt diagnosis is desirable before prescribing a cure, as the malady can be confused with many other diseases.

**Potatoes Better
Buy Than Usual**

While the potato is always an excellent budget item, it is even a better buy than usual right now. Probably no other vegetable can top the potato's versatility. A homemaker can build a whole meal around potatoes by combining them with other foods.

Potato casserole dishes are a good way to use up left over meats. Hot potato salad might make a hit with the family another time. And on a blustery cold night, generous servings of potato soup or potato and fresh chowder are other menu possibilities.

The Joppe, Ill., steam-electric plant to supply power to the new Atomic Energy Commission project will require 6,300 tons of coal daily, and its four turbines will produce 156,250 kw each.

**Improved Grading
Increases Profit**

Better buys for consumers and better prices for Michigan growers are resulting from the improved grading, packing and marketing of the state's crops, according to Miles A. Nelson, chief of the bureau of marketing and enforcement of the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Nelson cites better prices paid growers of the 144 million pound crop of red, tart canning cherries last year.

Because of strict adherence to requirements of U. S. standards for red, tart cherries, prices to the grower were 2 1/2 cents higher than the year before," Nelson said. "Officials of the cherry industry are giving all the credit to stricter grading. If grading had advanced price only one cent, this meant \$1,440,000 to the cherry grower," Nelson pointed out.

And the grading program was responsible for the entire increase, a full \$3,250,000 was added to the producers' income."

He said markets for Michigan tart cherries, some of them 1,000

**Less Persons Send Letters
Regarding Deer Season**

To date, the conservation department's game division has received about 150 letters from the public regarding the recent deer season.

Although no accurate comparative count was kept, biologist Dave Jenkins, who answers each of the letters, says he believes more hunters had written by this date last year than have this far this year. A total of about 1,000 letters was received concerning the 1952 deer season, the last one being stamped in the game division on May 2, 1953.

While away, were voicing approval. The gist of their statements seems to be, "You now have quality. Hang onto that grading program," Nelson reported. Improved grading spells less waste and a better buy for housewives, too.

Nelson cites better producer prices and improved marketing conditions for poultry products, strawberries and other fruits where recommendations of the Michigan Department of Agriculture are carried out.

**FARM CALENDAR
OF EVENTS**

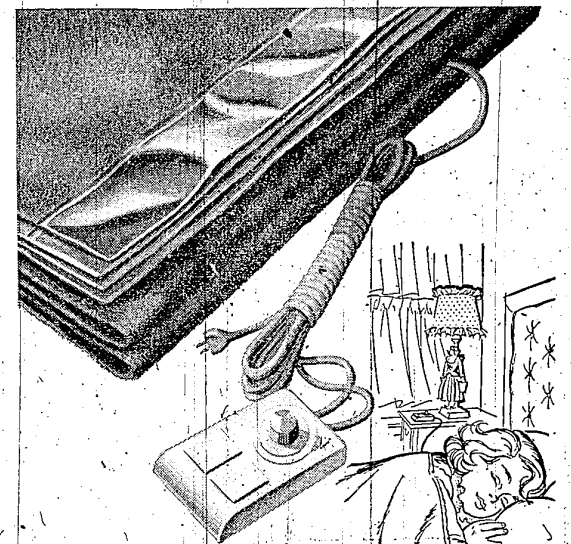
January 14 - 15, Rural Health Conference, Hamcroft Hotel, Saginaw.
January 15 - 20, Fruit and Vegetable Processors and Fieldmen at Michigan State College.

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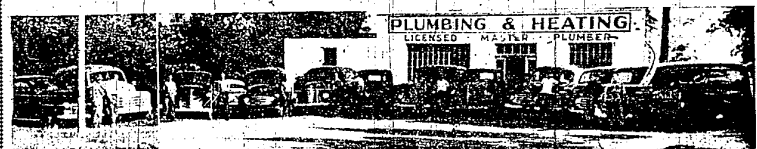
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