SNAP BEANS
Long Range Plans

HISTORY: -- Acreage increased from 13,200 in 1945 to 15,700 in 1960. Value increased from $1,631,000 to $3,424,000. Yields per acre virtually the same at about 25-30 cwt. per acre. Production is concentrated in the Southeastern, Northeastern and Western counties. In 1950 we ranked 2nd in fresh market acreage and 14th in processing acreage.

Total per capita consumption has gradually increased -- fresh consumption is going down -- canned and frozen going up. National production reflects this consumer trend more than N. C. production. Our fresh market production has remained virtually the same -- processing acreage went from 2000 to 3500. National acreage for processing surged ahead of fresh market acreage in 1955 (for the first time) and has remained ahead with the gap continually widening.

Eastern North Carolina has the soils and climate for good early and late production. Fields are sufficiently large to permit mechanical harvesting. Western North Carolina has ideal climate for production of high quality beans over a long period of time but is more limited on land availability.

Yields have been low -- quality not as good as it should be.

PRESENT: -- Produced 13,400 acres in 1961 -- 4,200 spring (east); 5,000 summer (west); 900 fall (east) and 2300 for processing (mostly west) -- valued at $2,607,000. Leading counties in production are Henderson, Ashe, Currituck, Duplin, Avery and Watauga. Technology now available to produce 60 cwt. per acre -- about double our present average -- many better growers are doing this. Most farmers are not using all technology available to them. Mechanical harvesters are beginning to come to this state -- we had 4 operating in 1961. Mechanical harvesters are now being used for processing beans only.

GAINS: -- Increase value by 2 - 2½ million dollars. By 1966 our acreage for processing could increase 300% -- mostly in the west. Our fresh market acreage should remain about the same but our yields could increase 50 - 100%. This is
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based on expected per capita consumption and population increase. Due to geographical location, we are in better position to get a larger share of the fresh market trade. Even though fresh market consumption is going down, there will always be some fresh snap beans sold and we are in position to get a lion's share of this market -- if our production is efficient.

Areas suggested for production are Henderson, Transylvania, Ashe, Duplin, Currituck, Tyrrell, Washington, Hyde and Beaufort. This is based on availability of suitable land as well as climatic conditions and mechanization.

CLIENTELE: Educational effort will be directed at area or county extension personnel who are responsible for this commodity as well as the local purchasing agents of the produce. Purchasing agents (for fresh market or processing) have considerable influence on farmer's production practices. The small one acre growers will have to get in the 5 - 10 - 20 acres class or be forced out of production. This has already happened in New York - the leading snap bean state.

PROBLEMS: (1) Technical and Economic: -- We need a high yielding, high quality snap bean suitable for both fresh market and processing. Bush Blue Lake varieties are now on the verge of release and should fill this need. Plot and field testing of these varieties and strains will determine those most suitable.

Yields will have to be increased through better soil selection, crop rotation, and better management of all other cultural practices (spacing, speed of planting, method of fertilization, etc.). Adequate moisture from blossom to harvest is essential -- this means irrigation.

Labor for harvesting is a bottleneck. Beans for processing must be picked mechanically which means large, level fields. Beans for fresh market will still be hand picked for next several years -- yields must be high enough to pay high labor cost and still make a profit. (2) Education and Motivation -- Best accomplished through method, result and research-type demonstrations. More "snap bean" meetings and fewer "general vegetable meetings". More field days at harvest time to point out effective production and harvesting techniques. This could best be accomplished through county or area commodity specialists.

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