

## 6 — Burley Season 1992

### Eating affect your smoking risks

By Randy Greene

LEXINGTON - Nutrition and diet may prevent some health risks and chronic diseases associated with cigarette smoking. At least that's one interpretation of research reported by 34 speakers from Finland, Sweden, Germany, England, France, South Africa, Japan, and the United States at a September symposium at the University of Kentucky's Tobacco and Health Research Institute.

The institute's director, Dr. John N. Diana, cautioned though that more research is necessary before conclusions can be drawn. But on a preliminary basis the reports indicate the health risks of cigarette smokers are generally compounded because most smokers also have:

- diets lower in fruits and vegetables than nonsmokers'
- lower blood and tissue concentrations of vitamin C than nonsmokers; and
- higher intakes of fat than nonsmokers.

Given the established relationships between nutrition and disease, "this leads one to conclude that there are factors other than smoking that operate" in tobacco-related diseases, Diana said.

#### SMOKING DECLINES, CANCER DOESN'T

"While the percentage of smokers in America has gone down over the last 30 years," Diana noted, "the absolute number has remained pretty constant." As proof, he cited:

- During 1963-64, there were between 50- and 55-million cigarette smokers in America.

• Since then, the percentage of cigarette smokers in the U.S. has declined from about 50 percent of the population in 1963 to 29.7 percent in 1992.

Yet in 1992 the actual number of U.S. cigarette smokers remains

between 50- and 55-million persons. • Meanwhile, the incidence of annual lung cancer deaths in the U.S. has increased steadily - from 40,000 persons in 1964 to about 110,000 in 1990. Is smoking, therefore, the lone health culprit?

The answer may be "not" - least in two countries Diana cited: • Japan has the world's highest per capita consumption of cigarettes but the world's lowest lung-cancer rates; and

• France, where citizens in some areas demonstrate a "high prevalence of cigarette smoking, high fatty diets, high blood cholesterol levels, and diets very low in leafy green vegetables and fruits" but give "a very low incidence of heart disease and lung cancer that's second only to Japan."

But Diana does not discount U.S. statistics reported by the American Cancer Society, the National Cancer Institute, or the American Heart Association.

"Cigarette smoking directly attributes to the deaths each year of about 115,000 people with coronary (heart) disease, 106,000 people with lung cancer, and 57,000 people with chronic obstructive lung disease," Diana said.

"But a large segment of the smoking population never develops tobacco-associated diseases," Diana argued, "and an equally large, or larger, segment of the nonsmoking population will both develop, and die from, these disorders."

#### NUTRITION AS PREVENTION

"Then if something else is at work, what is it?"

"Almost every disease process that we know of starts with a destruction of cell membranes," Diana said, citing molecules called "oxygen radicals."

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## Burley Season 1992 — 7

### Price supports vs. auction prices

By Randy Greene

LEXINGTON - Price supports - which are set each year by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in consultation with producer-owned associations - create a "floor," or minimum, during American tobacco auctions. If no buyer's bid per pound at auction offers a farmer one cent or more above the price support assigned by grade to that grower's burley, then producer-owned associations, known as the "pools," use federal loans to buy the tobacco.

The burley associations - Burley Tobacco Growers Co-operative Association in Lexington and Burley Stabilization Corporation in Knoxville, Tennessee - process, store, and handle all unsold burley until subsequent buyers can be found, and repay government loans with interest.

This season's USDA-approved price support for burley is \$1.649 a pound - a level that is 6.0 cents higher than in 1991. By comparison, last season's price-support level of \$1.684 a pound was 2.6 cents higher than in 1990.

At least in theory, then, overall price supports have driven up auction prices in recent years.

#### HOW LOAN RATES BOOST PRICES

But individual grade-loan rates - or the actual minimums that buyers must exceed in order to purchase one of 109 different "grades," or types, of burley - have been the real boost for auction prices in recent years.

For example, growers last season received grade-loan support of \$1.83 a pound for top grades of burley, or 24.6 cents above the 1991 price-support average.

In 1992, growers have grade-loan support for those same top grades of \$1.83 a pound for top grades of burley, or 24.6 cents above the 1991 price-support average.

In 1992, growers have grade-loan support for those same top grades of \$1.83 to \$1.86 a pound, or between 18.1 cents and 21.1 cents a pound more

than the 1992 price-support average. By comparison, the 1991 average for prices actually paid at auction for all grades turned out to be \$1.787 a pound, or only 15.8 cents above that year's price support.

Similarly, the 1990 average auction price was \$1.762 a pound, or only 19.5 cents above that year's price-support level of \$1.567 a pound. As beneficial as these increases are to American growers, though, there are problems.

"We may be pricing our product out of a market," said Danny McKinney, CEO of the Burley Tobacco Growers Co-operative Association. "While, clearly, American burley growers are not yet getting as much as they need for their product, our burley prices are almost too high," McKinney explained.

"Our tobacco sells for more than any tobacco anywhere in the world, but compared to our competitors, we may be pushing the limit of what we can realistically get for our burley," he said.

U.S. QUOTAS AND PRICES FOR 1993

"U.S. burley quotas may be reduced again in 1993," according to William M. Snell, professor of ag economics at the University of Kentucky.

He attributed the need for quota cuts to "abruptly changing manufacturer blending practices, stagnant export markets, and increasing foreign competition."

McKinney expects the USDA to cut burley's basic quota "in the 5- to 7-percent range" below the 1992 level.

However, because the 1985 Tobacco Improvement Act prohibits quota cuts from exceeding 10 percent through 1993, dramatic adjustment may not occur until the 1994 crop.

On the other hand, Snell anticipates that burley's support price may go

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