

PLANTING MACHINES FURNISHED IN NEW JERSEY

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The Hunterdon County Agricultural Extension Service and the Hunterdon County National Bank in 1950 launched a major tree planting program. The purpose was to put to good use idle land which was no longer suited to other farm crops. On the advice of the county agricultural agent and state extension forester this small country bank purchased a mechanical tree planter for about \$750 as a part of its public relations program.

A farm custom operator was secured to act as custodian and operator of the machine. He agreed to keep the machine in good mechanical condition, house it, transport it to the job and operate it. The operator's charge to the farmer was \$1.50 to move on to any farm and \$2.50 per hour for his time while on that farm. The landowner furnished the tractor and operator to pull the tree planter. Repair and maintenance costs of the machine were borne by the bank.

In 1950, twenty-two landowners planted 125, 000 trees in 209 hours at an average rate of 600 trees per hour. The best rate was about 900 trees per hour; small areas increased costs. A survey in the summer of 1951 indicated survival of about 90 percent. Furthermore, the results were regarded as satisfactory as where the work had been done by hand.

In reviewing the results of this operation, it is evident that where many farmers are involved the actual operation of the machine must be done by one individual. To let each farmer try to operate the machine invites failure.

In 1952, the planting program resulted in the planting of about 450, 000 trees. The County Board of Agriculture had bought another mechanical planter to be operated for the farmers of the county on a similar basis.

In 1953 about 500, 000 trees will be set out under this program.