

Produce business a family affair



COLUMBUS (AP) — Picking sweet corn, tomatoes and cucumbers and sitting in the hot sun selling produce are what the Daniels family of rural Columbus does for summer fun.

"It brings us closer together. It can be stressful, but we all work together," said Tannie Daniels about the Daniels Produce business she and her husband, Andy, own. "Everyone has a job and everyone does it well."

The family's three children — Holly, 20; Jason, 18; and Kelly, 15 — also help with the business.

The family sells sweet corn, green beans, tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers, cantaloupes, jalapeno peppers, potatoes and watermelons from a truck at a Columbus mall.

Daniels Produce started 12 years ago when Tannie and Andy began selling melons to make extra cash during the crunch of the 1980s, Andy said. It progressed into a strong business specializing in sweet corn.

The produce also is sold at the Haymarket in Lincoln, and 50 percent of the sweet corn is sold to grocery stores.

The Daniels plant 45 acres of sweet corn, 1,200 tomato plants, three acres of melons and 100 bell pepper plants.

"It gets hectic," Tannie said. "They (the family) all work hard and work together."

The sweet corn is usually planted around April 15, and the tomatoes are started early in a greenhouse.

During the summer, the 1,200 tomato plants must be tied up, green beans must be picked and bagged, peppers must be picked and washed, and watermelons and cantaloupe must be picked.