Tour Presentation

I. Welcome

II. Introduction (History- Mass Fruit Growers, University, prior use of farm. (Other orchards to tailor accordingly, i.e., family owners, special attractions, property history). Explain ownership by taxpayers, stake in the success of the enterprise.

III. While still outside building good opportunity to point out different machines, sizes of trees, bins, boxes, even the nests of barn swallows living under the dock. Also stress this is a working farm and there are lots of things that might be problems, such as traffic, dock edge, water on floor of large cooler and reinforce at the appropriate time.

IV. Ladders as tools- usefulness of ladders in getting apples, point out difference between new and older ladders, wood and aluminum. Elicit responses: problems with wood, why moving to aluminum, problems with aluminum. Suggest that more will follow about the shape of the ladders (triangles) when we get inside. Inside building point out where fruit is sold, boxed, packed, other features inside while moving to area reserved for group. Be flexible, explain any noises which catch attention or activity (refrigeration motor, forklift usage) while the opportunity arises.

V. Once seated use size of apple, contrasting largest with smallest, to begin. Color, size, shape, texture of skin, healthy apples vs. pest laden apple, apple shapes and sizes compared with other fruit such as pears, grapes, cherries, and the tiny crab apples. The point here is variety if fruits. Guess at how many apples may be harvested in one season. This leads to harvesting.

VI. Bucket, box, bin. Smaller to larger. Compare bag used by students to bucket to visually demonstrate why the bucket is better. Two hands free, more apples can be held, hands free for climbing, ease in emptying. Have bucket, box and bin available. Demonstrate use of bucket and release of fruit. Reinforce bins again while in storage, counting how high bins are piled. If desirable stress seasonal nature of farm tasks. Harvest is in the fall. Next season’s tasks: pruning, fence mending, tree removal, packing, storage, box and bin mending. Pruning tools – clippers, pruning poles, saws. Necessity of pruning. Air circulation, light, good shape. Liken to haircut. Demonstrate pruning pole with a branch using water shoots. Also show small model wooden ladder and demonstrate how the pointed top of the ladder stays in the crotch of a tree better than a rectangular ladder and how the leg allows it to stand at the edge of the tree’s branches.

VII. Tasks of spring may include planting of trees, gourds and pumpkins, bringing bees to pollinate. All fruit begin as flowers. Life cycle of apple from bud to fruit. Key role of bees. Tell how bees are brought to the orchard. Show photo of beehives. Contrast with hives made by paper wasps.

VIII. Explain how some bugs help, such as the bees and ladybugs. Photos of plum curculio and coddling moth and the damage they do to apples. Have moth traps and sticky balls available in the trees where picking will occur to reinforce this concept or available inside. This is also an opportunity to mention deer, turkeys, snakes, mice, predatory birds and the inter-relatedness of creatures in controlling any species.

IX. Take children inside storage area after emphasizing the importance of keeping apples after harvest. Relate to how they should keep their apples when they return home. Apples like to be kept cool and moist. Temperature and water of cooler. Distinguish between research storage (marked bags and boxes) and bins piled high. Ask how the bins got to be placed so high up. Talk about the forklift as a tool after the time in the cooler if this has not already been covered.
X. May take students to area where experiment to determine ripeness of fruit using iodine happens. Ripeness may not be determined by eye. Red apples may not be ripe; green apple may be ripe.

XI. Prepare students for picking. Twist and pull. New fruit grows from the site. Don’t want to damage it. Leave fruit on the ground. Pathogens on the ground and animal contamination. Pick only in designated areas. Check to see if students will be allowed to eat an apple as soon as it is picked.

XII. While passing the area where tractors are parked point out different tractor-related attachments. Have students guess at their use. Also point out signs warning of the dangers of pesticide application.

XIII. On the walk to the picking site, point out rock piles. Snakes as orchard helpers. Point out mouse guards around trees. Have students notice different sizes of trees, support systems, fallen trees, and traps placed in trees. Can expand conversation by asking questions about what other kinds of fruits can be grown in an orchard. Other products from trees, (nuts, oils, medicines) the invaluable role of trees as sources of fruit, wood for building, the role they play in the environment, Discuss the way all the animals (insects, birds, snakes, lizards) living on the farm relate to one another.