

Farmers feel impact of housing boom

Farming in the 90s is competing with encroaching housing development and for some farmers directly in the path they have to adjust or go elsewhere.

Participants on the 1998 Halton Farm Tour got a chance recently to hear firsthand about the problems some local farmers face in Halton Hills. The tour, which had about 55 participants, stopped at three farms in Halton Hills: Towervue Farm owned by Jim and John Reid, Di Girolamo Greenhouse, and Allison Market all located on the Eighth Line.

Brothers Bob and Bill Allison talked to participants about their farming operations and the impact housing development across the road in Georgetown South has had on them.

Bob and Gabrielle Allison have 100 acres of sweet corn, 15 acres of pumpkins and vegetables and three acres of fruit trees and they operate a seasonal retail farm market—Allison Market. Allison told those on the tour they specialize in sweet corn and they put their sales building up two years ago.

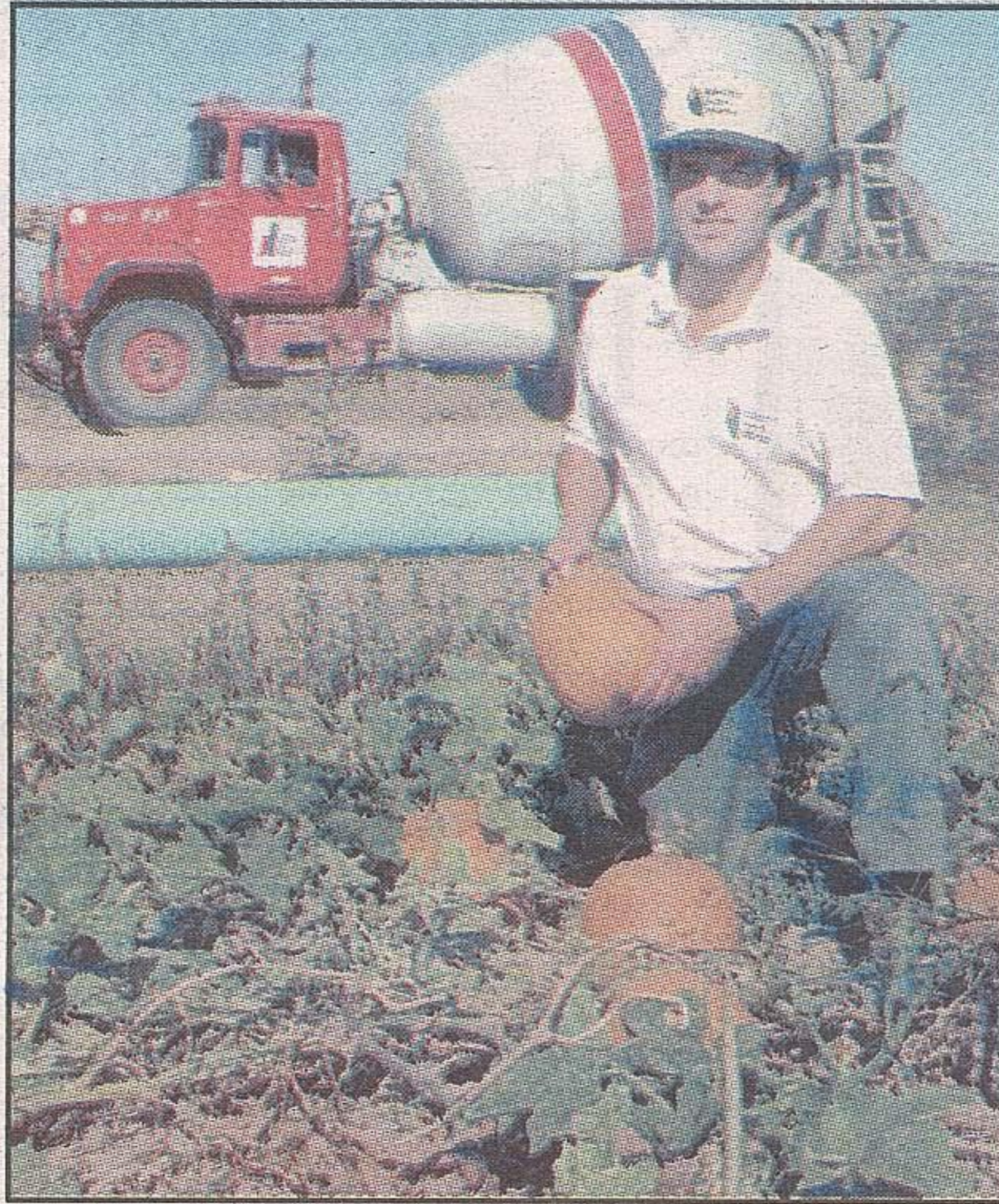
He explained a positive aspect of the growth of Georgetown South on the east side of Eighth Line is that he is hoping to some of the new residents will come to buy sweet corn.

"I have doubts whether my kids will farm here or not," he added about the impact development will have on farming in the future.

He raised the concern of the Eighth Line not being adequate. "In my opinion the infrastructure should have been built before the houses," said Allison.

His brother Bill and his wife Janet Allison have 1,500 acres in field crops and have 100 feeder beef cattle and 100 hogs.

He said a negative aspect of being in an area that is in



Farmer Bob Allison grows his pumpkins amid increased development along the Eighth Line. Allison said lack of rain this summer has kept the pumpkins small.

Photo by Ted Brown

the midst of development has meant buying additional land is "unrealistic" because of the price.

He also said that he noticed a definite change in the quantity of groundwater when the development was undertaken across the road.

At the Reid farm, participants got some insight into the family owned and operated farm that has about 400 acres of soybeans, corn, wheat, barley and hay in cultivation. They also saw the Di Girolamo Greenhouse operation, a 65-acre family farm, that grows 40,000 flats of annuals and vegetables and 70 varieties of perennials and 30 varieties of herbs.

The tour was organized by Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC) and is designed to provide a forum for learning about Halton's agricultural industry.

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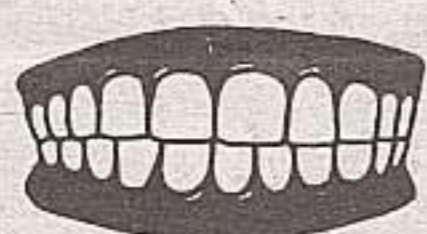
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