

weather, and left until all the crop is ready. Teams are then used to draw the crates of onions to the topping machine, which is set up near the storage house. The latest improved topper is mounted on trucks and in many cases is taken to the field and used there, moving from one pile of onions to another, as no time is lost in setting up the machine. These topping machines pinch the top of the onion off by means of a square cutter bar, in such a manner that the length of the stem remaining on the onion is in proportion to the size of it, and never is an onion topped too short. After passing down the rolls of the machine, the onion drops on a travelling slatted screen to remove all small ones, dirt, etc., then the onion drops on an endless travelling belt, where sorting takes place. All damaged, unsound, or "thick-neck" onions being removed by a man or boy stationed there for the purpose, the good onions dropping into crates at the end of the carriers.

These machines are built in three sizes, one, two and four rolls, each roll being supposed to be capable of topping forty to fifty bushels of onions per hour.



Crates of Onions Curing in Field.

The onions that have been topped by hand, after they are thoroughly cured and are ready to be moved to market or storage, are run over screens to remove all small ones and loose skin on the onion. The ideal screen (the one in use in Hardin County, Ohio) is 36 inches wide, 10 feet long with an apron of 14 inches and narrowing in to a mouth of 15 inches in width, 44 inches high at the top or high end of the screen, 37 inches high at the low end or mouth of the screen, and the sides are six inches in height. The screen proper is made of hardwood slats spaced one and a quarter inches apart. These have rounded tops so as not to damage the onions when passing over them. They are one and one-half inches deep, 7-8 inch wide at the top and 5-8 inch wide at the bottom, so that once an onion starts to go through it has a clear passage. The screen proper is removable and can have other sizes used in the same frame, as some growers use one and one-eighth inch and others one and one-quarter inch screens. For white onions a one-inch screen is nearly always used. It takes six men to properly operate the above, one man