

Penna. Farmers Should Plant Corn Thicker

Many Pennsylvania farmers could increase their corn yields by using heavier planting rates, according to Walter I. Thomas and G. W. Gorsline, corn breeders for the Agricultural Experiment Station, University Park. His opinion, supported by results of continued tests, is emphasized by results of trials conducted last year.

In general, two rates of planting were compared, a rate somewhat greater than that usually employed by farmers in localities where the plots were being planted, and a rate designed to be somewhat heavier than anyone considers desirable. In most areas, the plots planted at the heavier rates yielded most in spite of near critical moisture shortages when the crop was maturing.

In a good location for corn growing, these scientists have found that 16,000 plants per acre are not too many. This is an average of 58 plants in 50 feet of 38-inch row, or a kernel of seed every 9 inches. On light, droughty soils, this rate of planting may prove a little too heavy, they say, but on deep, fertile soils, bigger yields may be obtained from 18,000 plants per acre.

Yields of corn silage were

investigated in a preliminary way last year. Practices now in use proved to produce the most total digestible nutrients per acre. They are: (1) Plant as late a hybrid as will reach hard-dough stage before killing frost (2) Use a planting population of 3 to 5 thousand plants per acre more than for grain corn. Silage cut when the corn was silking was uniformly of lower feeding value than silage cut at the hard-dough stage.

A complete report of last year's hybrid corn tests will be available soon at County Agents' offices. It is Station Progress Report 220 entitled "Pennsylvania Corn Performance Studies — 1959."

Farmers spend almost two-thirds as much for capital improvements as all manufacturers of durable goods combined. Farmers invested an average of \$41 billion annually from 1955 to 1958 in new equipment and construction. Manufacturers of durable goods, including steel, autos, appliances and machinery spent \$66 billion annually during the same period for these items.

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Benson Asks Observance

Soil Stewardship Week

Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson today called attention to National Soil Stewardship Week, May 22 to 29, and urged participation of all citizens because of the importance of soil and water resources to the Nation's welfare.

Soil Stewardship Week, sponsored by the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts and various national church organizations, begins on Rural Life Sunday, May 22, and continues through the next Sunday. Soil Stewardship Week is observed in thousands of communities by local soil conversation districts, churches civic, farm, youth organizations, and schools.

Secretary Benson said: "It is proper that townspeople, farmers and ranchers join in this annual observance. The soil holds spiritual riches for all of us besides being

the source of what we eat and wear. We see God's handiwork in each greening leaf and in brooks and springs."

"A kind providence gave us the use and enjoyment of this choice land. We are its stewards with the right to use but not to waste or destroy. Without good soil and adequate water, life as we know it today and the living standards we enjoy would cease to exist. Since soil is a resource on which mankind depends, regardless of race, color, creed, or type of government, it may yet become

the common ground on which the brotherhood of man may meet to develop a life of peace and security"

Farmers' expenditures for labor, farm machinery, fuel, feed, fertilizer, insecticides, and other production items have increased from \$8.4 billion a year during 1937-41 to \$25.1 billion in 1958. This fourfold expansion in such purchases has contributed greatly to the maintenance of high level industrial employment.

Farmers, their suppliers, and those directly dependent on processing and distributing farm products account together for more than one-third of total U S employment.

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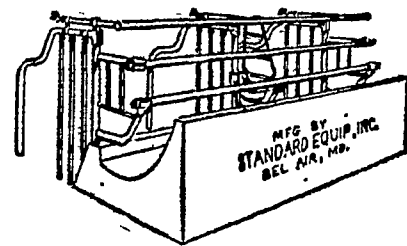
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