

Plan Change to Narrow Rows

Any Pennsylvania corn grower who is not consistently producing 125 to 150 bushels of shelled corn per acre with his conventional 36 to 40 inch row spacing, should not be primarily concerned with switching to narrow rows as the panacea for his production problem.

The most opportune time to change to narrow rows is when maximum yields have been reached with present spacing and one or more of the major machines for corn production has worn out and needs replacing according to Burton S. Horne, Penn State agricultural engineer.

How many acres of corn are needed to economically justify a change over to narrow rows? The number of acres would depend on many factors including replacement or conversion of old equipment. This is an individual enterprise problem and the decision to change must be an individual decision made by the farm operator.

The reason for changing to more narrow rows is to obtain more and better spaced corn plants on an acre of ground, so that yields can be increased with higher plant populations.

Farmers who are not already planting to obtain 20,000 stalks

per acre can increase yields much easier by heavier fertilization and planting higher population at their present standard spaced corn rows.

Corn producers who have a large proportion of their acreage on level or gently sloping land are in best position to go to narrow rows.

Less than half of Pennsylvania farm land is sufficiently level for operation of narrow row equipment. Field size and total acreage in corn will determine the amount of narrow row culture on some of this land.

Burton listed the following machinery management factors:

1) The cost to change to narrow rows is influenced primarily by a producer's machinery situation. Replacement with new equipment could go as high as \$15,000 to \$20,000. A survey of over 200 farmers who changed to narrow rows indicated an average "change over" cost of \$2,500, with a range from \$1,500 to \$4,000.

2) Unit or flex type planters are recommended. The units are easily adjusted on tool bar arrangements for various row spacings, and can be readily adapted to narrow rows. Older model planters are usually adjustable in two inch increments from 34 to 42 inches.

3) Because of the heavy weight when loaded for planting, planters over four units are most easily handled as a trailer type.

'69 Timber Sales Set New Record

The Forest Service reports 18.9 billion board feet of timber was sold in 23,418 sales during fiscal year 1969.

More than 20,000 of these sales were designed for the small timber operator.

Timber receipts in 1969 were at a record level of \$306.8 million — an increase of \$101.2 million over the previous year.

planter. Planters of four units can be rear mounted on the larger tractors.

4) One planter model when adjusted to a 32 inch spacing or less must use the flat type seed corn boxes to achieve this spacing.

5) A four row 40 inch planter plants 160 inches (13 1/3 feet) per pass through the field. A 4 row 30 inch planter plants 120 inches (10 feet) per pass. This difference effects planting capacity, requiring three more "turn arounds" per acre when fields are 3 times as long as they are wide. Lost time piles up here and this is one of the reasons for the trend to six and eight row narrow row planters.

6) A six row 30 inch planter will increase planting capacity 12 1/2 per cent one eighth over a four row 40 inch planter and an eight row 30 inch system will increase planting capacity 50 per cent. This increased planting capacity is desirable.

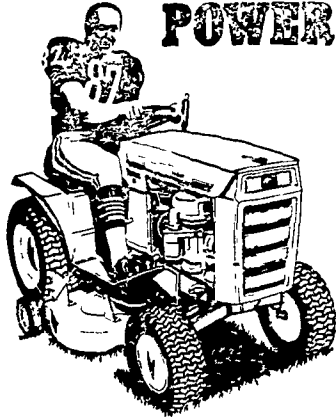
7) Tractor rear tread must fit system of narrow rows selected. Treads should be adjustable to cover 60, 90 or 120 inches for a 30 inch system. Check individual tractor specifications. (Note: To exceed a 100 inch tread, axle extensions are normally required). For a 20 inch system, treads of 60, 80 or 100 inches should be available.

8) Tractor tire width may be a restriction. An 18 inch wide tire in a 20 inch row has practically no "maneuvering room."

9) Cultivators most popular for narrow row operations will be the rear mounted, tool bar type frameworks on which individual cultivator shanks (or teeth) can be adjusted for various narrow row spacings.

10) Herbicide costs (when applied in a band) increase 33 1/2 per cent or one third when changing from a 40 inch to 30 inch herbicide costs when the over-inch system there is no increase all broadcast spray is used in both systems.

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