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Another Good Pennsylvania Corn Crop Forecast in 1971

Good, sound cultural practices based around a seed variety which performed well in 1971.

That's the key to the 1971 corn crop in Pennsylvania, Penn State University officials told more than 100 farmers and corn industry men at a special meeting at the Farm and Home Center Wednesday night.

"We think that based on the best information we have, the corn yields should follow about the same pattern as this year," said Joe H. McGahen, extension agronomist.

What did really happen this year? "We had a record yield of corn. On state (research)

plots we had 150 bushels to the acre average," McGahen said.

McGahen also estimated that the overall loss in Pennsylvania in 1970 from the corn blight was not more than two to five per cent.

Arnold Lueck, associate Lancaster County agricultural agent, who spoke briefly in introducing the Penn State officials said Pennsylvania was the leading corn producing state in 1970 outside the Corn Belt, primarily because the state's crop "wasn't hurt badly" by the blight. Pennsylvania moved up from the fifteenth ranking state in 1968, to fourteenth in 1969 and

eleventh in 1970. Lancaster County alone had 150,000 acres of corn this year.

In stating that corn prospects for next year should be about the same as this year, the extension officials were, therefore, making an optimistic forecast. "We just don't share the scare philosophy for next year," McGahen said.

Dr. Don Petersen, Penn State extension plant pathologist, said, "We view the blight situation for next year as about the same as this year."

Yellow Blight Worst

Petersen also stated. "The yellow

leaf blight was by far the most important in Pennsylvania" in 1970. This was true despite all the national attention and damage the new Southern leaf blight caused elsewhere, Petersen emphasized.

The yellow leaf blight first received major attention in Lancaster County in 1969. The Penn State officials predict it will still be an important problem in 1971.

Petersen says yellow leaf blight primarily stems from overwintering in local cornfields. To help fight yellow leaf blight, he urged destruction of debris, either by plowing it under or discing it. If disced, addition of about 40 pounds of nitrogen will help, he said. If debris is left unattended, "you are overwintering the organism on your fields," he said.

But based on Penn State re-

search, Petersen said he disagreed with some authorities that the Southern blight will overwinter. The Penn State research shows it will not overwinter. But it "has a great capacity for traveling long distances" from the south where it will overwinter, he added.

Plant Early for Success

The key to a successful crop in 1971, both Petersen and McGahen stressed, is to plant early. They believe both the yellow and Southern blight will hit corn fields again in 1971. But if the crop is planted early, they think the crop will again mature before major damage can result.

When should corn be planted in 1971? Wait until the last frost, then count back 14 days and that's when the corn should have been planted, McGahen joked. While this method is technically impossible, the point to be emphasized is that the earlier the crop is planted the better, according to McGahen.

Avoid Stress on Corn

The Penn State men also explained why some farmers who had serious blight problems also had serious stalk rot problems.

McGahen said, "Anything, such as blight, which puts stress on a plant increases the incidence of stalk rot. Poor cultivation, poor application of insecticides, root worms, all cause stress, increasing the problems of stalk rot."

Petersen added, "A lot of the stalk rot in the past year stemmed from leaf blight."

For Best Results in '71

McGahen and Petersen summarized the following recommendations to help farmers get through the 1971 season with a minimum of losses from blight:

- Plant early
- Destroy debris
- Rotate crops. This may be particularly helpful where yellow

(Continued on Page 8)

Rootworm May Be Worse Than Blight

"The northern corn rootworm is potentially the greatest problem in corn," Dr. Robert Tetrault, Penn State University Extension entomologist, told local corn producers at the Farm and Home Center corn meeting Wednesday night.

The corn rootworm, along

with some other soil insects, pose a potentially greater problem than the blight in large part because growers are unaware of them, Tetrault said.

In outlining the problem from insects he said losses of 10 to 20 per cent are not uncommon from insects on Pennsylvania farms. This compares to an estimated overall loss from blight in the state this year of only two to five per cent.

Besides corn rootworm, which has built up to serious levels much faster than Penn State officials had originally expected, lesser insect pests include seed corn maggots, centipedes and slugs.

Besides the use of various chemicals, corn rootworm can be controlled with crop rotation since the insect feeds only on corn. However, the rootworm will again be a serious pest within a year if there are nearby infested fields. Two to three years of protection from crop rotation is about the most that can be expected, he said.

A 10 to 20 per cent crop loss from insects can also be expected if corn seed is not treated

with an insecticide before planting, he said.

4-H Council Plays Santa

The Lancaster County 4-H County Council Thursday collected cookies and toys for distribution during the holiday season.

The cookies will go to the Brethren Home at Neffsville. Marlin Bollinger is delivering the cookies.

Tim Breneisen and Miss Joan Lucas, assistant extension home economist, are delivering the toys to the YMCA on North Duke Street, Lancaster.

The Council also announced plans to visit a children's home during the Easter season to entertain with a skit and egg hunt.



But Farmers Still Must Use Safe Practices, Dr. Forney Warns

'Crash Program' May Stop Hog Cholera, Pa. Official Says

Largely because of progress this summer in Virginia and North Carolina, the hog cholera outlook now is the best that it has been for many years, Dr. Homer S. Forney, Harrisburg, chief of the miscellaneous diseases division of the Bureau of Animal Industry, said this week.

The progress in Virginia and North Carolina against the dreaded swine disease now makes the U. S. goal of wiping out hog cholera in the U. S. by 1972 seem feasible, Dr. Forney said.

Recent reports show that only one or two counties are still quarantined in Virginia and

North Carolina still has only a few problem spots, Dr. Forney said.

The two states are of particular importance to local swine producers because of their proximity

Farm Calendar

Saturday, December 19
Fulton Grange Youth Committee, Christmas Caroling

Tuesday, December 22
7:30 p.m.—Ephrata Adult Farmers Feeding Course, Class Number 3, Agriculture Department, Ephrata High School

Friday, December 25
Merry Christmas!

and because the two are among the major sources of feeder pigs for this area.

The reduction of the swine disease in Virginia and North Carolina stemmed from a "crash program" by a special task force of 172 persons including 160 veterinarians and livestock inspectors from 40 states. During the program, some 12,000 head of hogs with cholera or exposed to it were destroyed.

The importance of the crash program in Virginia and North Carolina is shown by the fact that in the four month period before the program these two states alone accounted for over 60 per cent of all hog cholera

cases reported in the U. S. Dr. Forney explained.

The U. S. still has some personnel in Virginia and North Carolina to finish the clean up work that was started. Indications are that similar crash programs will be instituted anywhere in the U. S. that hog cholera becomes a serious problem.

If the task force procedure is followed, Dr. Forney says he thinks the goal of making the U. S. free of cholera by 1972 seems realistic at the present time.

Besides a few clean-up areas in Virginia and North Carolina Dr. Forney said his reports

show New York had one case recently and there are a handful of other states with recent cases. Pennsylvania has not had a case since July and Maryland was recently put back into the eradication status.

Nationwide, there has been a (Continued on Page 11)

Notice

Because mail will not be delivered Saturday, December 26, subscribers will not receive next week's Lancaster Farming until Monday, December 28.