

1971 Crop Size Still Undecided

We understand many local farmers are making important farm management decisions based on the expectation of high grain prices continuing for the next year.

While high grain prices may continue, we think a word of caution is in order. Latest USDA figures, as of July 1, project U.S. acreage for harvest is 303 million acres, up 13 million acres or 4.5 per cent from last year. That's the most acres since 1960, primarily because of higher feed grain and food grain acreage.

Specifically, corn acreage at 64.5 million acres is up 12.5 per cent or one-eighth over last year. Sorghum for grain at 16.6 million acres is up 21 per cent, more than off-setting a 15 per cent drop in oats to 15.8 million acres. Total wheat acreage is 48.5 million, up 9.5 per cent, or nearly one-tenth.

While there have been droughts in some sections and corn blight has taken its toll in others, this increased acreage builds considerable added production capacity into the farm outlook.

Forecasts we have seen so far continue to view the outcome as highly uncertain, with the prospects still existing for both a bumper crop or shortage.

Key questions are:

What will be the average yield per

acre? Will a series of local factors, including pests such as the corn borer, reported the worst in many years in some midwestern areas, drought and other problems keep yields down?

And will the corn blight be a serious factor? The final projection last year was that the blight cost the nation 13 per cent of its corn crop. Note that with an increased acreage this year of 12.5 per cent, the blight would have to be twice as bad this year to result in a crop the same size as last year. If the blight is only as severe as last year, there would be a considerably larger crop than last year, and if the blight turns out not to be as bad as last year, we could be on our way to a record corn crop.

So far, our reports continue to indicate that while the corn blight is widely spread, actual damage so far is not great. But the reports also emphasize that the most crucial growing stage for corn is just emerging and that the fate of the corn crop still hangs in the balance — with a chance of both a good crop and a poor one.

Therefore, we think farmers should continue to try to remain as flexible as possible, not locking themselves into the types of situations which may prove to be both costly and difficult to get out of if the 1971 crop doesn't turn out as expected.

On Disease Management

With the elimination of T seed corn and the substitution of all N or resistant seed, the Southern Corn Blight should be brought under control in 1972.

The less severe yellow leaf blight first appeared extensively in the local area about three years ago and there are other varieties of blight around, including a northern blight. But so far none of these have been serious.

While it is possible that new strains of fungus will develop, the rapidity with which the Southern Blight is being brought under control gives us good reason to believe that any future problems will also be temporary.

Meanwhile, the experience of farmers throughout the country with the Southern Corn Blight during the past two years is causing a close look at the entire crop program.

This reevaluation includes the type of crops grown, as well as how they're managed.

The lasting benefit of the Southern Blight, we believe, will be its educational value in making farmers intensely aware that there is a relationship between plant disease and crop management. Farmers were repeatedly told last year and this year that the crop would be less susceptible to blight if stress was avoided on the plant, including avoiding high plant population, applying proper rates of fertilizing, proper weed control and so forth. Farmers should have already known the importance of these practices, but the blight reemphasized them and showed that there's another reason for them besides the ones which have long been cited.

Farmers were also repeatedly warned that it was important to plant the crop early in order to get it mature and harvested at the earliest possible date. It appears that this advice is being borne out as ex-

ceptionally good. Some of the earliest planted corn, involving varieties which mature early, are already in the dent stage and have escaped with very little blight damage, we are informed.

As the blight continues to snowball — it seems to develop slowly during the summer, then explode in intensity during the latter part of the season — we think that the later the corn matures, the more damage that it will probably suffer. Of course, N corn should suffer little or no damage and the T corn will be hardest hit, with some varieties of T corn apparently more susceptible than others.

While we're certain that management practices which reduce stress on plants can never completely control disease, the wise farmer may discover that the lessons of the corn blight can be carried over into all his crop farming operations.

In the future, we think farmers should study crop diseases with a view toward applying the right chemicals at the right time to get the best control possible at the least cost. At the same time, they should study the disease with the view of using crop practices which will prevent and slow the disease and its spread.

Grassroots Opinions

COMSTOCK, NEBR., NEWS: "As I understand it, we were an underdeveloped country 180 years ago, with a population of three million. While we were underdeveloped, some of the now underdeveloped countries were then developed. Now that they are underdeveloped, we are becoming underdeveloped helping those underdeveloped countries become developed again. When we finally become underdeveloped and the underdeveloped nations are developed, I wonder if they will come to our aid?"

STARBUCK, MINN., TIMES: "Why is it? A man wakes up in the morning after sleeping on an advertised blanket, in advertised pajamas. He will bathe in an advertised tub, wash with advertised soap, shave with an advertised razor, drink advertised coffee after his advertised juice, cereal and toast (toasted in his advertised toaster), put on advertised clothes and an advertised hat. He will ride to work in an advertised car, sit at an advertised desk, smoke advertised cigarettes and write with an advertised pen. Yet this man hesitates to advertise, saying that advertising does not pay. Finally, when his unadvertised business goes under he will then advertise it for sale."

NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent

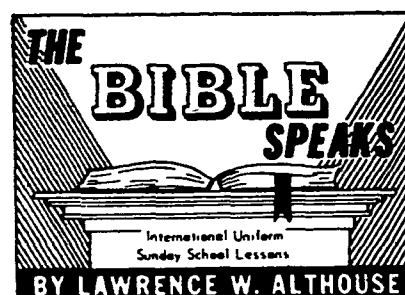


To Consider Silage Capacity
The current corn crop is facing some problems relating to proper maturity. It is quite possible that many fields will not reach the dent stage because of the southern leaf blight. Growers are reminded that making the crop into silage is probably the best way to harvest the most feed nutrients. As we have mentioned before, some of the "Normal" varieties that were intended for silage could be left for grain and then use the "T" or "Blend" strains for silage. Some farms may need more silage capacity in view of the larger amount of corn that should be made into silage. With a large number (over 6) of blight lesions on the ear at this time of the season when the corn is only in the milk stage, it is questionable if that ear will make crib corn of good keeping qualities. Silage is an excellent feed for livestock and might be the way to go with a large percentage of the infected corn crop.

To Introduce New Silage Gradually
Under normal conditions corn silage is ready for feeding from 10 days to two weeks after ensiled. When blight damaged corn is put into the silo, this period should be extended to three weeks time. This will allow more time for proper fermentation and reduce the dan-

ger of silo gas and high nitrates. If the freshly chopped corn must be fed to the milking herd, it should be introduced gradually, 20 to 30 pounds per head daily, and fed along with other dry matter. Less digestive problems and fewer production slumps may occur when this is done. All members of the farm family should be warned about the danger of silo gas for the first 10 days after filling the silo.

To Order Winter Grain Supplies
Small grain producers should be thinking about the variety of grain wanted this fall; some supplies of certified seed may not reach and, therefore, early ordering is good planning. Winter oats should be seeded about the middle of September with winter barley going into the ground in late September to early October, and wheat to be seeded the middle to late part of October. Hessian Fly free dates should be recognized on the winter wheat for best results; the Redcoat variety of wheat should no longer be considered fly resistant because of the number of infected fields this past summer. Winter barley could get more attention in this part of the country this fall because this winter grain will yield well in Southeastern Pennsylvania, and is an excellent substitute for corn in many rations.



AT EASE IN ZION

Lesson for August 22, 1971

Background Scripture: Isaiah 5:20-23; Amos 6:1-8; Romans 13:10-14
Devotional Reading: Proverbs 23:29-35

Almeda C. Adams, founder of the Cleveland Music School Settlement and author of *Seeing Europe Through Sightless Eyes*, owes her blindness to alcohol. When she was but a few days old a physician under the numbing



Rev. Althouse

effect of alcohol used too strong a solution of silver nitrate to treat her eyes. She has been sightless ever since. The same thing can happen to a whole society. The effects of alcoholism on a whole nation can be equally crippling. Some nations today are just beginning to wake up to this problem. The reason: they are beginning to understand the terrible price they have to pay for this tragic social disease. They have become concerned because they can see what it does to the economy, how it affects the moral fiber of their people, and the decay it brings to the national morale.

The degenerate society

The prophets of Israel frequently brought this same warning to the nation. Drunkenness was often one of the most obvious symp-

toms of the degenerate society.

Thus when the prophet Amos came warning the people of Judah of God's impending judgement, he cited the drinking-bouts as part of the whole picture of corruption that would bring the downfall of these people. "Woe to those . . . who drink wine in bowls," he proclaimed. The people were not satisfied with normal utensils; they made gluttons of themselves, using bowls to increase the quantity consumed.

The problem, as Amos, made quite clear, was that the people were being corrupted by their affluence. Self-indulgence had become the national past-time for those who could afford it. The description of this "fat life" is vivid: "Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat lambs from the flock . . . who sing idle songs to the harp . . ." (4, 5).

Having a good time?

Yet, despite the attractions of the "fat life," we cannot help wondering whether it is all it appears to be. For example, in a recent cartoon, we see an elderly woman, half drunk, sitting at a night club table. All around her are scenes and sounds of the "fat life": a band blaring away deliriously, frenzied dancers, people wearing little paper hats and blowing tiny horns. Yet as the waiter bends over her table, she asks him: "Waiter, am I having a good time?"

So it may be that people will go through the motions of "having a good time," yet still not know whether their affluence and self-indulgence are really bringing them the sought-for satisfaction. "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion," warned Amos. It is still good advice today.

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