

Corn Experts Discuss Blight

While Southern Corn Leaf Blight levels are still relatively moderate, the disease could still cause serious losses to some corn growers in the Nation's corn producing areas, a group of corn experts reported to Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin at a Federal-State corn blight conference held Wednesday at the University of Illinois in Urbana.

These experts indicated that an increase in blight intensity from present levels could ad-

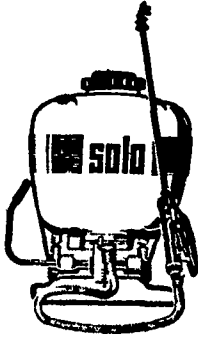
versely affect this year's corn yields. They reported that while the disease is generally more widespread in the Corn Belt States than it was at this time in 1970, the overall blight situation is not currently as grave as it was last year, and that current crop prospects are generally good.

The conference, which included corn blight experts, corn breeders, agronomists, feeding, harvesting and storage specialists, and representatives of farm and agribusiness organizations, was scheduled at the request of Secretary Hardin for the purpose of studying the present corn blight situation and considering possible actions that might be taken to help farmers in the event the disease should become a major threat to corn supplies.

Prospects for adequate supplies of blight-resistant seed for 1972 appears to be exceedingly good at this time, the Secretary was told. Most seed producers have increased their acreage this year, and while the crop is still subject to possible field damage and harvest loss, indications are that ample seed will be available to plant an acreage at least equal to this year's crop.

Farmers whose corn is seriously damaged by Southern Corn Leaf Blight this year may encounter many of the same harvesting and storage problems that occurred in 1970. Many of these, such as lodging, and ear damage and loss, can be overcome by harvesting as early as possible, and by careful planning to assure that adequate drying and storage facilities are available. Most

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States where these problems are likely to occur will provide producers with general guidelines applicable to local situations, the Secretary was assured.

Feeding and nutrition experts emphasized that in research studies that have been conducted thus far, no evidence has been found that would indicate the feeding blight-infected corn is dangerous to livestock. They also reported that in some feeding trials, animals fed blight-infected corn is than those fed so-called "clean" corn.

The group generally agreed that at least another month would be required before overall production levels could be forecast with any certainty.

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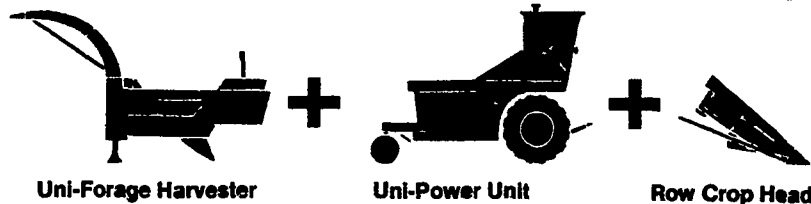
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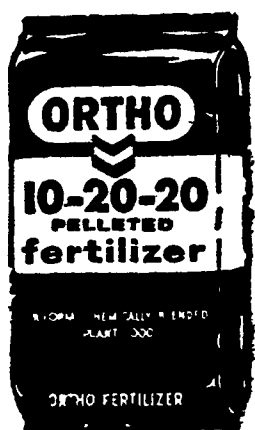
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