

Lebanon-Dauphin Corn Growers Conduct Clinic

by Newton Bair, Associate Lebanon County Agent

Thursday's bright sun and mild breezes provided just the right atmosphere for corn growers from the Dauphin-Lebanon area to discuss their production strategy for the coming season. The two-county meeting, held in Halifax, was sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service. John Harris, Associate Dauphin County Agent, served as host and chairman.

Information on the latest research and field trials was reported by Dr. Joseph McGahen, corn specialist with the Cooperative Extension Service of Penn State University. Dr. Willis McClellan, Penn State agronomist, brought the corn growers up to date on chemical weed control and Dr. Robert Tetrault, extension entomologist, talked

about the most serious corn insects and how to subdue them. Six master corn growers were honored by County Agents John Harris, Dauphin County and Newton Bair, Lebanon County, who supervised the yield checks in their respective counties.

Noting that the average cost of producing corn was in excess of \$200 per acre last year, McGahen expressed his concern that corn producers use every trick possible this year to reduce their costs and maximize yields of grain. He urged the use of planter box seed treatment, even though the purchased seed was previously treated. Soil insecticides applied at planting time have been shown to increase yields as much as 15 percent. "Many corn growers overlook the minor details that often add up to major yield reductions," McGahen said.

McGahen listed some of

the more important of these oft-neglected items: match planter plates to seed size - sizes vary between commercial varieties and from year to year. Planting depth and seed coverage should be checked frequently, as field conditions vary and planters change adjustment. Corn fields should not be worked too finely, which often increases the chance of crusting following a rain. He also recommends applying no more than a total of 45 pounds of nitrogen plus potassium as a starter fertilizer to avoid seed injury. Two hundred eighty pounds of 5-10-10 would provide 14 pounds of nitrogen and 28 pounds of potassium, nearly the maximum allowable for planter application.

Dr. McClellan stressed the importance of identifying the major weed problem in each field and then selecting the best herbicide to properly

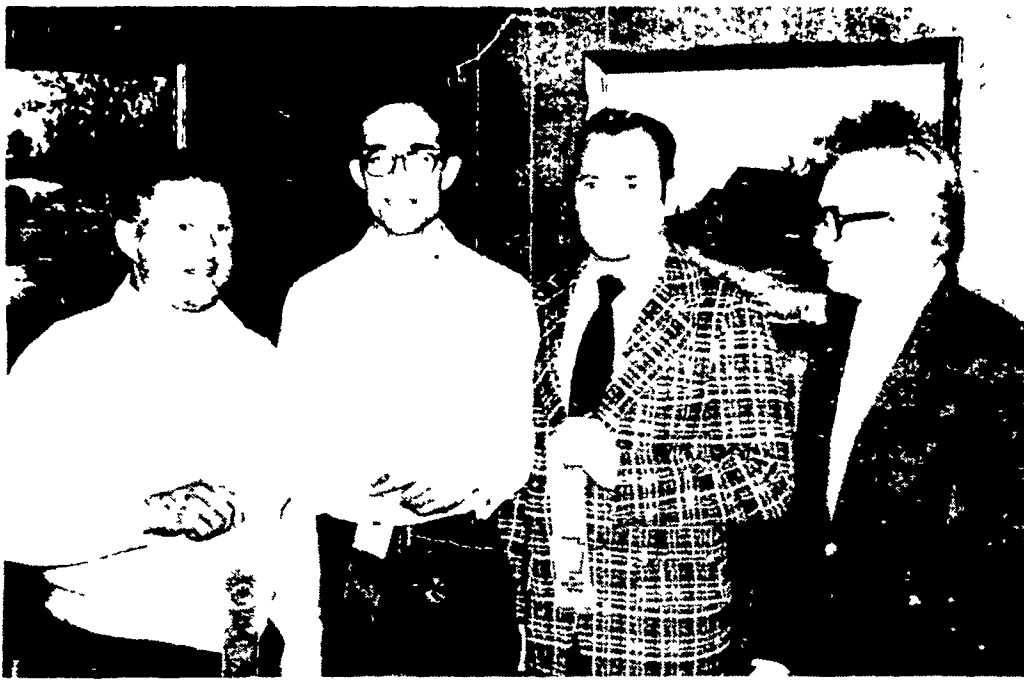


John Harris (third from left), Associate Dauphin County Agent, presents Master Corn Growers

Awards to Thomas Williams, Middletown; Donald Miller, Millersburg and David Coble, Hershey.

control it. Farmers were urged to read the label on all herbicide containers before applying them on crop fields. Many formulations have been changed this year and will require different dilution rates from those used in previous years.

Corn insects will again be a problem, according to Dr. Tetrault. The three consecutive mild winters have increased the chances that large numbers of insects will survive and be ready to attack the corn crop this year. Tetrault listed the six major corn insect pests in order of importance as the seed corn maggot, slugs, flea beetle, Armyworm, European corn borer and the garden symphylan.



From left, John H. Herr, Lebanon R4, Richard Elliott, Lebanon R4, and Galen Boyd, Lebanon R1, receive Master Corn Growers Awards from Associate Lebanon County Agent

Newton Bair. Each grower produced official yields in excess of 150 bushels shelled corn per acre. Average yield in the state contest was 126 bushels per acre.

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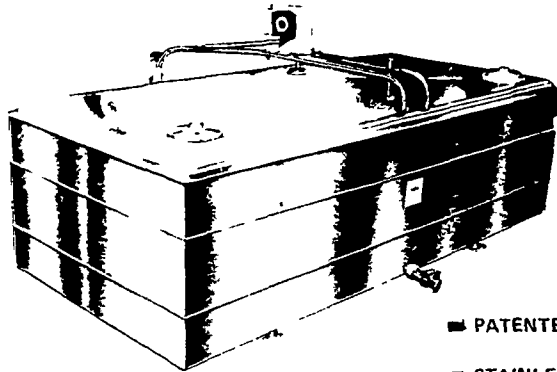
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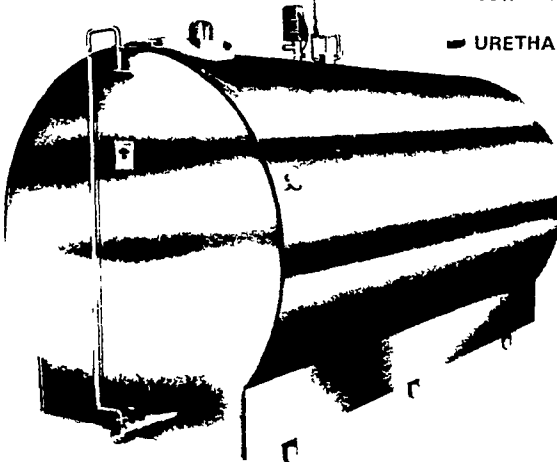
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