

# Soybean yields have reached plateau

URBANA, Ill. - A survey of 436 top soybean growers, taken to identify trends in soybean production reveals an inability to increase yields the past 10 years.

While overall U.S. soybean yields are still creeping upward, history has shown that as top growers go - so goes the nation.

The survey was conducted by the National Soybean Crop Improvement Council, headquartered here, and trends were obtained by matching it up with similar surveys conducted five and 10 years ago. Altogether, 263 top Midwest growers are included in the 1977 survey.

Top soybean growers, however, have not given up and are continuing to do new

things to increase yields, reduce costs and improve their marketing programs. Top soybean growers everywhere are expanding their soybean acreage, switching to improved varieties, using more fungicide seed treatment, moving toward narrower rows, using more combinations of herbicides and planting earlier.

But on the down side, they are using less fertilizer, trying fewer new practices, and cutting back on their expectations for higher yields in the future. In 1970, for example, Midwest soybean growers expected to be averaging 62 bushels of beans by 1980. But in the current survey, they have

reduced their 1980 estimate to 55. They'll have a hard time making even this scaled down goal - they've been stuck on a line through 42 bushels for almost 10 years.

A picture emerges of the world's best soybean growers - trying harder - but enjoying good results less. In fact, an ominous trend of declining yields appears in Western and Mississippi Delta soybean growing areas. Several other answers in the survey tend to lend support to the declining yield trend line.

Asked to report the yield in their "highest" and "lowest" yielding fields, top growers reported a decrease in these field averages in all areas of the country except the Southeast where their yields are still going up. Nationally, top farmers are adopting new practices to increase yields at about half the rate of 1966. Their problem is that few new practices are available. And underscoring it all was pessimism - or perhaps realism - about future yields with consistently lower projections for future yield increases in each of the three years surveyed.

It is not lack of interest, however, that is behind this yield decline. Limitations on research by the USDA and state universities have reduced the flow of new

production ideas available to them. Now, scientists must concentrate on more research on ever more persistent insects, nematodes, plant diseases and weeds. The yield declines reflect the lack of production research - the kind that produces new soybean growing practices which they can put to use to increase yields.

The council's survey was conducted by major soybean regions, including the Midwest, Delta, Southeast and West. The Midwest section of the survey includes the states of Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri and Ohio. In each regional report, leading growers recorded their production practices and changes for 1976, their plans on how to reduce production costs and increase profits, and their plans for the future.

Top Midwest soybean growers have been producing yields in the 40 to 43 bushel range since 1966. In cases where their yields were down, soil and weather conditions were most often mentioned as the reason. Seed varieties, weeds and poor drainage were also cited.

About 20 per cent of the top Midwest growers have some acreages of double-crop

beans. 44 bu.-A. was the top yield from any single double-crop farmer.

Earlier planting and narrower rows are some changes top growers will make to increase their soybean yield in 1977. Most

are already using better weed control and improved bean varieties.

Marketing beans in the Midwest will continue to center around storing on farm, hedging on the futures market, and selling part of their production on contract.

## USDA posts farm plantings

WASHINGTON, D.C.-The Statistical Reporting Service, United States Department of Agriculture, has reported the following plantings of 1977 crops:

Corn planted for all purposes totals 82.7 million acres, down two per cent from 1976 but six per cent above 1975. Acreage for grain, at 70.8 million acres, is down 0.4 per cent from last year but is five per cent above 1975.

Sorghum plantings of 17.4 million acres are down six per cent from 1976 and five per cent from 1975. Producers expect to harvest 14.1 million acres for grain, a decrease of five per cent from 1976.

Feed grain planted acreage (corn, sorghum, oats and barley combined) totals 129.1 million acres, down 0.4 per cent from the

acreage planted last year. Acreage intended for grain harvest is 108.9 million, two per cent larger than the 1976 acreage.

All wheat seedings total 74.4 million acres, down seven per cent from a year earlier and down one per cent from two years ago. Growers seeded 55.7 million acres of winter wheat last fall, three per cent less than a year earlier. Durum wheat acreage seeded is 3.2 million, down 33 per cent from 1976. Spring wheat other than durum seedings total 15.6 million acres, down 12 per cent from last year but 11 per cent above 1975. Acreage for harvest is indicated at 48.5 million acres for winter wheat, 3.0 million for durum and 15.0 million for other spring wheat.

Food grain seeded acreage (wheat, rice and rye combined) at 79.6 million acres is down seven per cent from 1976. Acreage harvested and to be harvested for grain is indicated at 69.5 million acres, down six per cent from 1976.

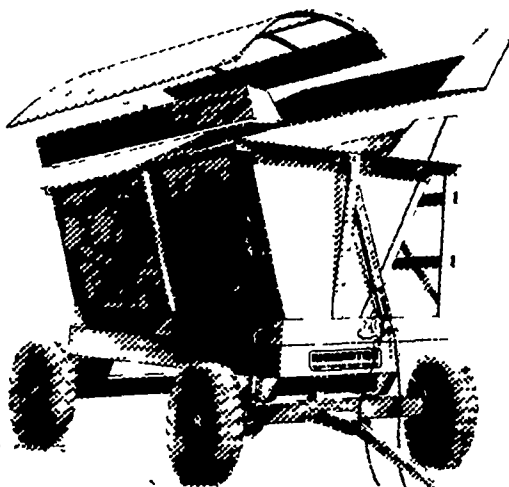
Soybean planted acreage is a record 59.0 million acres, up four per cent from the previous record in 1973 and up 17 per cent from 1976. Growers intend to harvest 58.0 million acres for beans.

Cotton planted acreage is placed at 13.4 million, 15 per cent above 1976 and 41 per cent above 1975.

Oilseed planted acreage (cotton, flaxseed, peanuts and soybeans combined) is 75.4 million, up 17 per cent from 1976.

**TRY A CLASSIFIED**

### RICHARDTON MORE USES THAN EVER.



- Saves time, labor, forage boxes and trucks



- new lower auger loading height



- 12 ft. & 14 ft. sizes



Easily Converts For Use As A

- Forage Wagon
- Grain Box
- Ear Corn Box
- Beet Wagon
- Chaff Saver

FOR YOUR CLOSEST DEALER

CONTACT

Suncook Valley Equipment Company, Inc.  
P.O. Box 220  
Suncook, NH 03275  
(603)485-5355  
Dealer Inquiry Invited



Sure cure for 5 o'clock feet

### SUPER-SOLE FARM BOOT

AA	A	B	C	D	E	EEE
9-18	8-15	7 1/2-18	6 1/2-14	5-16	6-14	6-13

RED WING

Feel really fit . . . for farm work

Style No. 1177

For 'Down-to-earth' comfort



WAYNE'S DRY GOODS

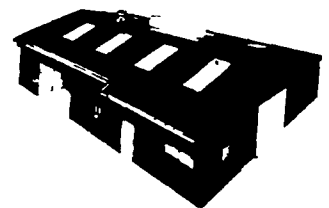
271 W. Main Street, - Kutztown, PA. - Phone (215)683-7686



## VERNON E. MYER

STEEL BUILDINGS AND GRAIN STORAGE

RD4, LEBANON, PA 17042  
PHONE: (717) 867-4139



NEW FINANCE PLAN -  
15% down payment  
5 years on balance  
7% interest  
A.S.C.S. Financing

COMMERCIAL and AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS  
WE OFFER COMPLETE ERECTION ON ANY SIZE OR STYLE BUILDING.

Mail Coupon Today!

- SEND STEEL BUILDINGS LITERATURE
- SEND GRAIN STORAGE LITERATURE

NAME.....  
ADDRESS.....  
CITY.....STATE.....ZIP.....  
TELEPHONE.....

