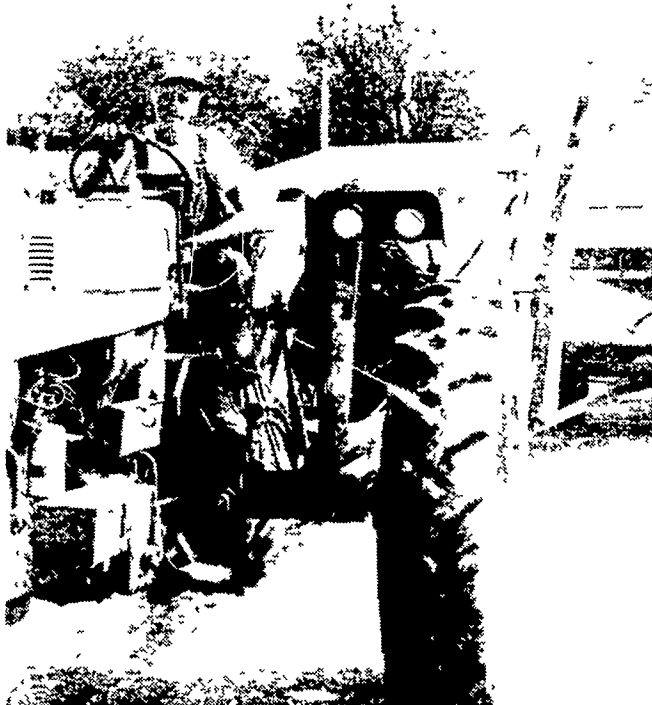


# Corn crop surveyed before field harvest

By KENDACE BORRY  
LITITZ - In late September, the crop enumerator for the USDA Reporting Service made the final trip to the Elam Snyder cornfield

located near Brunnerville, which had been used as a sample in the random field survey. The trip was made for the final count and estimates to be done before



Elam Snyder, Lititz, prepares to harvest his corn fields. He expected an overall good harvest from his fields, relating that he had a good year for his corn crop.

the crop was actually harvested.

The enumerator travelled to the area in the cornfield where the sample areas were marked. There, the first thing done was to check the corn for maturity and record the findings. Then the corn which lay in the first row of each fifteen foot unit was picked with the third and fourth ear marked to be sent to Harrisburg for further study. Finally the corn that had been picked was weighed and its weight recorded. The corn was later

returned to the farmer, except for the ears sent to Harrisburg.

After the study in Harrisburg of all the random fields used in this survey, a forecast of predicted harvest estimates is released by the Crop Reporting Service.

Concerning the field farmed by Elam Snyder, the Crop Reporting Service released this information. The estimated yield of that 3.5 acre field located in northcentral Lancaster County is 129 bushels per acre. Still able to affect this predicted number were the problems of wet weather and frost possibilities which could change the estimate.

According to the farmer, Elam Snyder, of all his corn fields harvested this year,

the one used on the random survey gave the poorest harvest. He estimated that his harvest on that field was closer to 140 bushels per acre and added that it just didn't produce like some of his other fields.

Speaking of the other cornfields on his farm, Snyder mentioned that this was a good year of growing corn for him, with enough rain and good weather. He figured that he expected the harvest figures of his other cornfields to come close to the 200 bushels per acre mark, although he again remarked that the field

chosen for the sample survey was not nearly as nice as his other fields.

According to the state estimate for the corn crop, based on the data for October 1, the state average yield for field corn should be 88 bushels per acre. This was the same as the estimate at the beginning of the month of September, with little change in the way the crop developed. One more estimate will be made before the survey is finished, and the final estimate of field corn yields in Pennsylvania will be released at the beginning of November.

The crop reporting service's final estimate last year (1976) for the corn crop was 90 bushels per acre for the state of Pa.

## Preventive

(Continued from Page 118)

Maryland farmers with special problems concerning suspected aflatoxin contamination should contact their local county Extensive agricultural agents. Grain dealers may call Bradley H. Powers, marketing specialist at the state Department of Agriculture in Annapolis; phone: (301) 269-2181.

Ultra-violet rays produced by black-light lamps are being used extensively to detect the possibility of aflatoxin contamination in newly harvested corn. Broken corn kernels that produce a greenish-gold fluorescence under the black light are assumed to be contaminated with the poisonous mold byproduct. Scattered loads of corn are reportedly being rejected by buyers on this basis.

The black light method is not fool-proof, note Extension specialists at the University of Maryland. The greenish fluorescence tells little or nothing about the

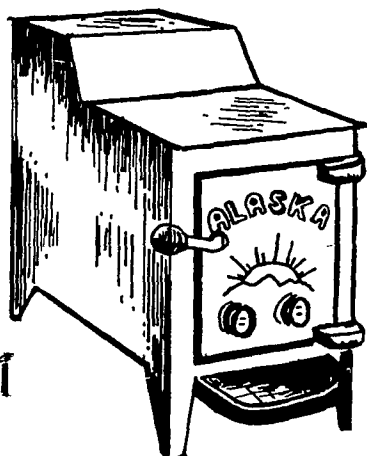
degree of contamination or the accuracy with which the sample being tested was taken.

In fact, the black light method is a true indicator of aflatoxins only about 80 per cent of the time, says John L. Crothers, Jr., Extension grain marketing specialist at the College Park campus. His view is supported by Bradley H. Powers, grain marketing specialist with the Maryland Department of Agriculture in Annapolis.

The only sure way to determine if aflatoxins are present and to determine their concentration is to have the grain sample analyzed by a chemical assay. This requires expensive equipment. Some grain buyers in Baltimore and on Maryland's Eastern Shore are reportedly getting such equipment installed as rapidly as possible. Farmers should ask for this service, if they have doubts about corn which has been rejected on the basis of black light fluorescence.

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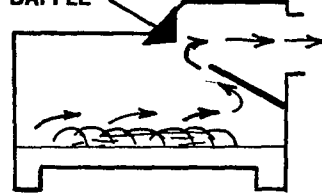
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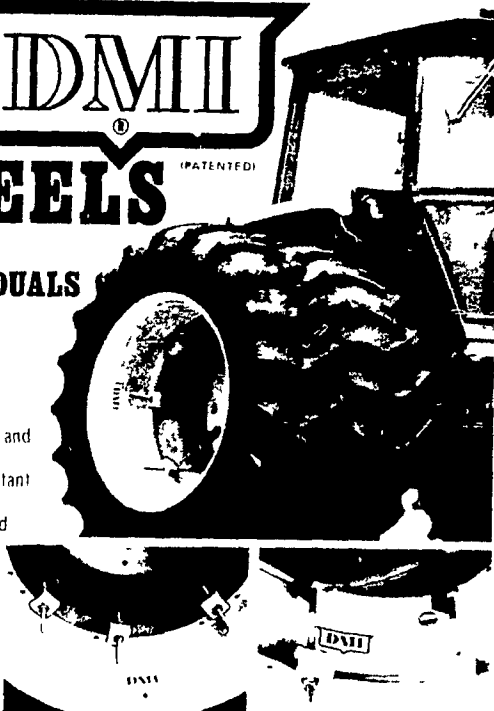
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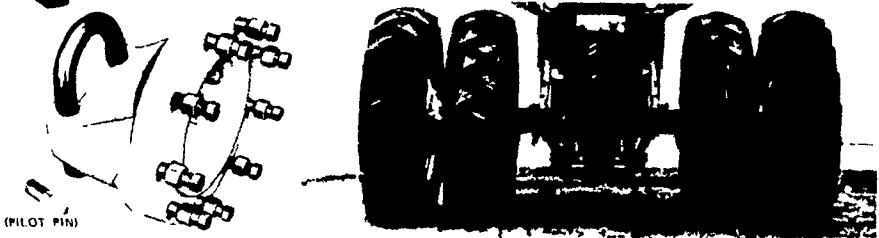
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