

# Corn growers

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available to indicate that farmers are doing a good job of conserving the soil."

The survey results also show that fewer farmers are cultivating and rotary hoeing their corn crops. In 1971, 78 per cent said they cultivated at least once, while only 65 per cent said they cultivated at least once in 1977.

Those farmers who said they rotary-hoed their crops in 1971 totaled 36 per cent of the project entrants. In 1977,

only half as many farmers, 18 per cent, rotary-hoed.

"The energy crisis a few years back forced many farmers to look for ways, such as minimum tillage, to cut their production costs. But since that time, most of those cost savings have been offset by increased usage of herbicides and insecticides," the Funk agronomist says.

"By switching to minimum tillage, a better environment was created for insects and disease organisms. But we have

learned to compensate for these problems through better usage of herbicides and insecticides. And we are also seeing better usage of herbicide combinations," Dr. Craig explains.

He adds that if ideal field conditions can be achieved through these alternative practices, then there is no real need to cultivate. "Cultivation is another trip across the field that can add to operating costs and soil compaction."

The Project:200 study indicates that farmers are carrying their conservation practices all the way through the growing season. The current trend is to harvest early and at lower moisture contents.

In 1971, only one percent of the farmers were harvesting in August. Last year that figure was up to 10 per cent. The percentage of farmers who said they harvested in September totaled seven per cent in 1971, compared to 16 per cent in 1977.

Fifty-four per cent of the farmers said they harvested in October last year, up nine per cent from 1971. Fifty-three per cent fewer farmers harvested their corn in November last year than did in 1971.

The study also shows a significant increase in the number of farmers harvesting their corn as No. 2 corn (15.5 per cent moisture). Last year 10 per cent harvested the crop as No. 2 corn, opposed to just four per cent in 1971. Most of the farmers are now harvesting at moisture contents of 20 per cent or less.

"Again, this shows a significant move toward energy conservation. The current trend is to plant earlier-maturing, faster drying hybrids earlier in the Spring, allowing earlier harvest of drier corn in the Fall," Dr. Craig says, adding that Funk research has put a great deal of effort into the development of fast dry down hybrids.

"Ninety-five to 96 per cent of the crop is now planted in April and May," he says, adding that harvesting early and at lower moisture contents reduced drying fuel needs and helps prevent bottlenecks in grain handling systems.

Dr. Craig says that yield reductions which may have been expected when farmers began switching to minimum tillage problems and shorter-season hybrids have not been expected.

"In many instances, we have seen yield increases," he says. He attributes this to better water holding capacities of minimum-tilled soils, better herbicide and insecticide usage, well-balanced fertility programs and hybrid research.

"There is no doubt that corn breeders are doing a

better job of breeding high-yield characteristics into hybrids. Farmers can now plant earlier-maturing hybrids."

Dr. Craig says that in good crop management programs, farmers may get yields from the earlier-maturing hybrids comparable to those from full-season hybrids.

## Sewing winners to be named

HARRISBURG — Winners in the Pennsylvania State Grange's annual sewing contest will be selected May 23, when final judging is held at the Grange headquarters, 1604 N. Second St., Harrisburg.

An estimated 2,000 entries were judged earlier this month at the local, or Subordinate Grange level,

according to Mrs. Leroy Hoover, of Roaring Spring, state director of women's activities for the Grange. Local winners were judged in county, or Pomona Grange competition with those winners then advancing to the state finals.

State winners in each of five categories will be sent to New York for judging in the National Grange competition.

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