

Weiler named finalist for National FFA award

EPHRATA - John Weiler, Stevens R1, has been named the Eastern Region winner of the FFA Agricultural Sales and/or Service Proficiency Award. He is one of four FFA members in the nation to receive this award. One of the four will be named the national winner in Agricultural Sales and/or Service at the Thursday morning session, November 9, of the FFA's Golden Anniversary Celebration at the 1978 National FFA Convention in Kansas City, Mo.

John, 19, is an artificial insemination technician with the Atlantic Breeders Cooperative. He transferred to Ephrata High School so he could be involved with vocational agriculture and FFA in the ninth grade. "The school I had been attending did not offer vo-ag; my projects, interests and activities centered around dairy cattle and in the FFA I had the opportunity to feed my interests."

"Through a program operated by the vocational agriculture department, John attended school in the morning and in the afternoon he worked for Atlantic Breeders, gained much experience, and following graduation became a full-time technician," according to his vocational agriculture instructor Lewis Ayers. John enjoys his work and plans to make it his career.

As a member of the Cloister FFA Chapter, John has served as treasurer and president. He participated on the Dairy Cattle Judging Team, placing sixth high individual in the National FFA Dairy Judging Contest.

His other activities include soft ball, the State Young Farmer's Association, State and National Holstein Association, and Director of Lancaster County Junior Holstein Club.

The Agricultural Sales and/or Service Proficiency Award is one of 22 Agricultural Proficiency Awards presented annually by the Future Farmers of America Foundation. Applicants for the award must show activities and experience providing a background for occupations requiring technical knowledge in marketing farm produce or in providing the consumable supplies and services used in production agriculture.

Chapters may recognize a member for the Agricultural Sales and/or Service Proficiency Award by presenting a medal and a certificate. Chapter winners may compete at the state level where the winner is presented a check for \$100 from the National FFA

Foundation, Inc. State winners then compete for recognition in each of the four FFA administrative regions. Each regional winner earns a check for \$250 and a plaque plus a travel award to the National FFA Convention in Kansas City, Mo. Here the student's application is judged against winners from three other regions. The top FFA member in the nation in Agricultural Sales and/or Service is recognized at the National FFA Convention with a plaque and a check for \$500.

As sponsors of the Agricultural Sales and/or Service Awards, Allis-Chalmers Corporation provides funds for awards at the local, state, and national levels as well as travel awards to the National FFA Convention for regional winners.



Breaking corn yield barriers or, how high is up

WASHINGTON, D.C. — How they must have whistled when the national average corn yield shot up to 35.4 bushels per acre! That was in 1942, and it set a record. Eyebrows went up again in 1948 when farmers weighed in with a record-shattering 43 bushels per acre.

Not in their wildest dreams would U.S. farmers believe that just 30 years later they'd harvest an average of 100.7 bushels of corn per acre. But that's exactly what they expect to do, according to the crop reporting board of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The board released figures this month which gave that production estimate. While the figures are only estimates that could change, there's not likely to be much difference this late in the season between the estimate and the final harvest.

Most of the increase is due to hybrid corn, which became available in quantity to U.S. farmers in the 1930's following successful experiments in corn crossbreeding. Corn yields didn't change much from 1886 through the 1930's, running around 24 bushels per acre. When the hybrids hit the furrows, yields began setting records.

The 1948 record held until 1956 when U.S. farmers grew

an average of 47.4 bushels per acre. Since that year, records have been rather commonplace for U.S. corn farmers as they've climbed through yield levels of 80.1 in 1967, and 97.1 in 1972.

What is the yield limit per acre for corn? No one, of course, can be sure. "Genetically, we don't see a ceiling," said Paul H. Harvey, coordinator for corn and sorghum research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. "Corn is a variable crop. There's plenty to work with. Other factors such as water and temperature will limit corn yields before genetics do."

"The national breeding programs for hybrid corn have given us a one per cent increase each year over the past about 50 years. We expect that increase to continue for some time," he said.

"Fertilizer and equipment have been factors in increasing the yield, too. With today's equipment, a farmer can plant his entire crop in a week's time. So a rainy period doesn't create the same problems today as it did when horses pulled the plows and it took two or three weeks to put the crop in."

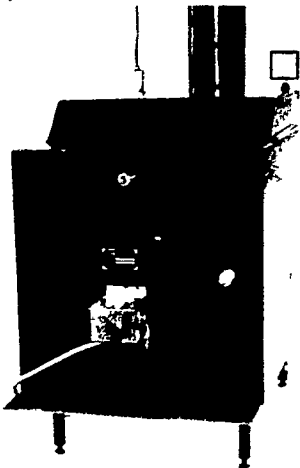
The high yield per acre means that planting and growing conditions were good over a large portion of our 67.7 million acre corn plot. Farmers cut back

more than two million acres from last year, incidentally. We'll still have bad years. That 100.7 is an average figure. One state (California) reported a high of 120 bushels per acre and another (Mississippi) reported only 43 per acre.

Doubling and tripling our corn yield is important, of course. It not only creates jobs — in fertilizer, farm equipment, transportation, farming and in the hybrid seed industry itself — but the sale of corn overseas puts money in America's pocket another way. Corn will grab a big chunk of the \$26.5 billion dollar export record sale this country expects to make this year. The total corn crop is expected to be about 6.82 billion bushels — 7 per cent above last year's record.

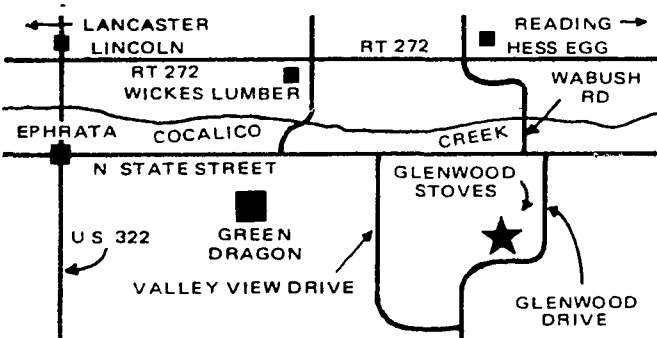
Harvey noted that earlier in his career when farmers were still averaging 30 or so bushels per acre he started a 100-bushel corn club. It had five members — farmers whose yields reached the magic figure.

Would he be optimistic enough in these days of already high yields to start a club for, say, 300 bushel members? "Sure. After all," he said, "several farmers already get 300 bushels and just last year we learned of a Michigan farmer who produced 352 bushels of corn an acre."



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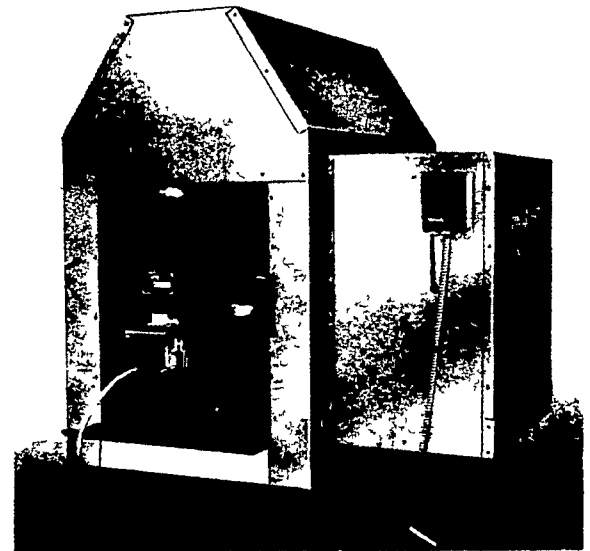
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