

## How no-till farming keeps plantings timely

HUNT VALLEY, Md. — No-tillage farming can be successful on any northeastern dairy farm where the chief crops are corn, oats, and alfalfa, declared Penn State Agronomist Bill

McClellan. He addressed nearly 1000 farmers attending the Sixth Annual Mid-Atlantic No-Till Conference.

He urged farmers to "take advantage of what is already

known about a complete no-tillage system." No-till farming replaces plowing with planters having soil-cutting disks or coulters which prepare a narrow strip for placing the seed.

McClellan reported the chief advantages of no-till farming are control of erosion, the ability to plant instead of using time for tillage, and minimum labor and fuel.

Eastern farmers have proved, he said, that they can grow no-tillage corn, soybeans, forage crops, and small grains.

Timeliness of no-tillage planting can be of utmost benefit to farmers, he pointed out.

No-till planting prevents delays in seeding fields. In conventional planting, however, delays due to weather and soil conditions can disrupt the entire planting operation.

Moreover, soil conditions in no-till fields often allow harvesting when conventionally tilled fields will not support heavy harvesting equipment, McClellan noted.

Farmers attended from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Mid-Atlantic No-Till Conference is sponsored annually by the Extension Services of the land-grant universities in the six Mid-Atlantic states.

Co-sponsorship and financial support come from related agribusiness firms serving the Mid-Atlantic area.

In no-till farming, only herbicides are needed for weed control, McClellan stated. A corn crop can be followed with no-tillage oats the succeeding year. Herbicides with short-term residues must be used on the corn field to prevent injury to oats.

After removing oats for

grain and harvesting the straw, the farmer can put in a no-till alfalfa seeding in the oats stubble. Yields from a corn-oats-alfalfa rotation in a no-till system are equal to yields with conventional tillage, it was pointed out.

John H. Koons, R2 Waynesboro, described his experiences with no-tillage on a dairy farm. He said the time and labor saved in growing no-tillage corn has made it possible for him to increase his acreage considerably and has provided much added income without creating any more work.

"All corn on our farm is planted no-till and we have been planting no-till for eight years," he claimed. "The biggest advantage no-tillage has given us is the ability to add 300 acres of rented ground for producing corn and 400 acres of custom planting."

"This provides added income without greatly increasing our time and labor beyond that needed

eight years ago to plant 100 acres in the conventional way," Koons said.

He said 90 per cent of his manure is handled as liquid. He believes that liquid manure and no-tillage corn "go hand in hand." The 100-acre home farm is grown to silage corn and these fields get the manure.

All of Koon's silage corn fields are seeded to rye cover crops after the corn is harvested and removed. The rye is killed in the spring with herbicides and then corn is planted.

"It is important that corn planter soil-cutting disks or coulters cut through the manure crust to allow air and sunlight to penetrate down to the soil where the corn is germinating. If this is done properly, germination and a good stand of seedlings are assured," he stated.

He also adds a ton or more of lime per acre to all corn ground each year, as long as time and weather conditions permit. This prevents the soil from becoming acid and allows herbicides to control weeds effectively.

## Maryland schedules ag week activities

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — "Maryland Agriculture: Food and Energy for People" has been selected as the slogan for the 1980 Maryland Agricultural Week.

The slogan, suggested by Kendra Buckel, was chosen from approximately 100 entries submitted. Miss Buckel is with the Montgomery County Extension Service.

This year's "Ag Week" will begin Monday, February 4 at Salisbury Mall in Wicomico County. Traveling agricultural displays will be set up in the local malls of five additional Maryland counties on the following dates:

Prince Georges County at Laurel Centre — Feb. 11-16.

Baltimore County at Westview Mall — Feb. 18-23.

Washington County at Valley Mall — Feb. 25 - March 1.

Frederick County at Fredericktowne Mall — March 3-8.

Montgomery County at Montgomery Mall — March 10-15.

The public is invited to view the displays free of charge. The purpose of the six-week tour is to pass in-

formation from food producers to consumers about the role agriculture plays in today's world.

Chairwoman for the 1980 Ag Week program is Connie Parvis of Delmarva Poultry Industry Inc. Committee chairmen include Robert E. Blades of Bayshore Foods in Easton, finance; Jack I. Matthews of the Maryland Farm Bureau, dinner; Roy D. Porter of the Maryland Extension Service, exhibits; and Susie J. Richburg of Maryland Cooperative Milk Producers in Baltimore, publicity.

The 11-year-old activity is sponsored by the members of Maryland's agriculture industry. In addition to the small exhibits, the traditional legislative banquet will be conducted the second week of February.

Those wishing to offer ideas for or assistance during Ag Week should direct correspondence to Maryland Ag Week Committee, c/o Maryland Agricultural Commission, Parole Plaza Office Building, Annapolis, Md., 21401 or contact local Extension agents in the participating counties.

## Corny fuel this winter

COLUMBIA, Mo. — One of those cold, wintery evenings, picture yourself snuggled around a stove fueled with corncobs.

Corncobs?!

"Well, they're inexpensive, renewable, require no sawing or splitting, produce fewer ashes and provide a cleaner fire than wood does," claims James Pastoret, wood utilization specialist at the University of Missouri.

"Of course, they produce a fire that requires more frequent attention because they burn more rapidly. And since fuel supply is not as dense, storage can be a problem.

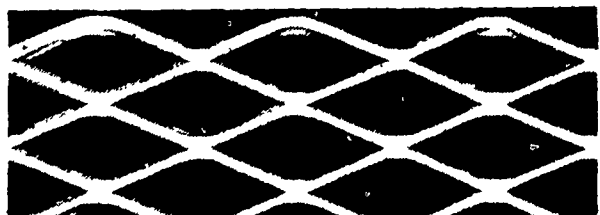
"Corncobs burn unevenly and very hot if you chuck the box full," he said. "That could mean a chimney fire

"But there is no reason you can't use corncobs as fuel. Just be careful"

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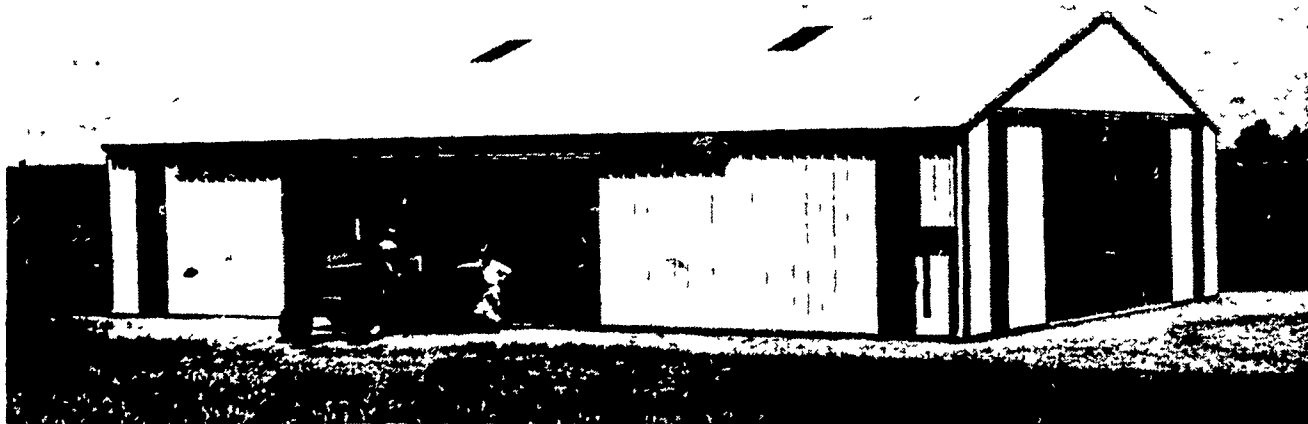
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