

Md. Crop Improvement to meet, praises research program

EASTON, Md. — More than 90 percent of the Maryland soybean acreage in recent years has been planted to seven varieties released to growers since 1968 by the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station in joint breeding programs with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and research workers at other land-grant universities.

These new soybeans have included Essex, Miles, Williams, York, Wye, Bay and Shore, reports James R. Miller, agronomy department chairman at the University of Maryland in College Park.

Partly as a result of these improved varieties, the most recent five-year average for soybean yields in Maryland

(1974-78) is 25.4 percent higher than it was 10 years earlier (1964-68). For the U.S. as a whole, the increase is only 11.2 percent, Miller observed recently.

To show another measure of comparison, the value of Maryland's soybean crop was \$70.7 million in 1978. This compares with a figure of only \$12.5 million in 1968.

In addition to soybean breeding work, the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station participated in 1976 with crop scientists at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in a joint release of Potomac, a soft red winter wheat.

Another wheat variety is now being developed jointly in the two states. It is still in

the experimental stage. The new advanced breeding line is expected to be named and released to growers in another year or two.

It appears to carry more resistance to powdery mildew than Potomac, and it holds promise of being more suitable for double-cropping with soybeans.

Furthermore, the new line appears to be equal or superior in yielding ability to Arthur, the wheat variety now commonly used for double-cropping in Maryland.

The Maryland plant breeder directly connected with the wheat breeding project is David J. Sammons, assistant professor of agronomy at the College Park campus.

Sammons will report on his work with small grains next Tuesday night at the seventy-third annual meeting of the Maryland Crop Improvement Association.

That event is scheduled in the Tidewater Inn at Easton on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Registration for the meeting will begin at 6 p.m.; dinner will be served at 6:30,

and the program will get under way at 7:30.

Included on the agenda are the president's report by B. Frank Adkins of Hebron, a Wicomico county farmer. Awards will be presented to winners of the official 1979 state corn and soybean yield contests. And Maryland's James R. Miller will present a proposed new set of by-laws for the association.

Miller explained that the major change will call for creation of a board of directors, consisting of 10 members, to manage the association's business. This proposal is intended to give wider farmer and agribusiness participation.

The Maryland Crop Improvement Association was founded in 1906. Its purposes and aims are to cooperate with the College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station and extension service at the University of Maryland—particularly the agronomy and horticulture departments—in improving crops in the state.

The association also cooperates with the Maryland Agricultural

Experiment Station in the dissemination of foundation seed stocks and with the state Department of Agriculture in a seed certification program.

Tickets for the association's annual dinner meeting are available at

\$3.50 each. Reservations may be made by calling 301/269-2339 in Annapolis during weekday office hours. Eastern Shore residents may prefer to call 301/749-4933 at Salisbury. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Consumers removed from farm

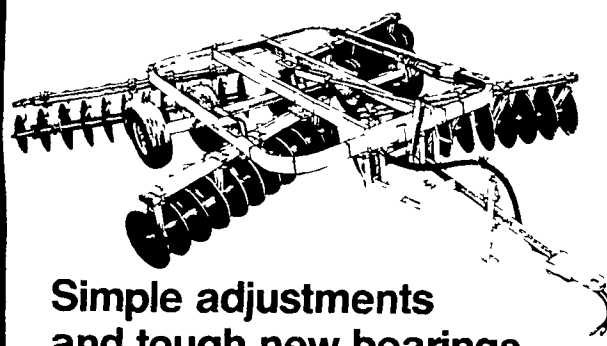
MEDIA — Today's Pennsylvania consumer, who is statistically less and less likely to be a farmer, selects food from a well-lighted supermarket. Urban dwellers no longer look at the darkened, threatening summer sky the same way residents of farming communities have for generations.

Urbanites may appreciate the need for rain to make crops grow, but, according to James J. McKeehen, Delaware County extension agricultural agent, not be aware that too much at the wrong time can also ruin a crop. Today's consumer knows more about prices of agricultural products and food than he does production, though he may not know that he pays less of his

paycheck for food than any other country in the world. Also many consumers seem not to know that only about 40 cents of every dollar spent for food to the farmer or rancher.



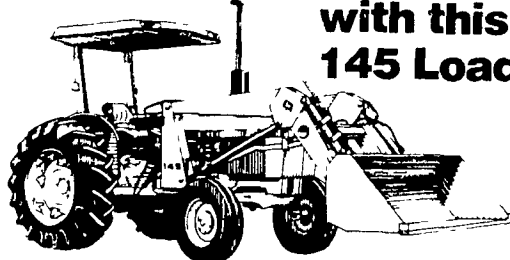
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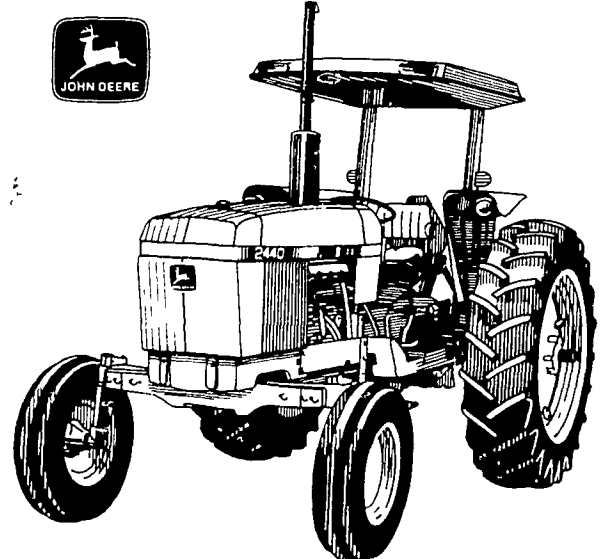
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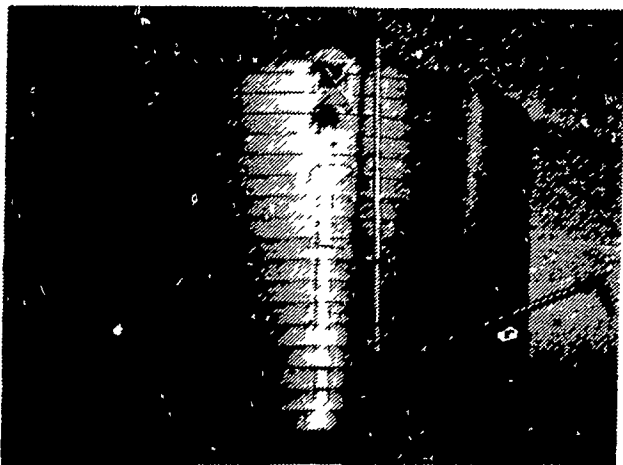
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