

Crops day

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Farmers tend to put lime on corn and the soil may be quite acid by the time the small grain is planted.

Any pH below 6.0 will increase winterkill, Yocum added.

Corn yields in test plots across the state last year were off by 14 percent, he told growers.

At the Landisville Station they were off by 20 percent, dropping from an average 161 bushels per acre to 128 bushels.

Yocum put the blame on wet weather, too much water, shallow roots, Helminthosporium problems which killed plants.

That sorry scene was followed by stalk rots which lodged plants.

Yocum said researchers averaged only 66 percent erect plants in commercial plots.

Plots at Landisville had 75 percent downed plants.

Yocum noted a good bit of herbicide damage due to the cool, wet, cloudy weather. Banvel and post applications of Bladex were among the worst culprits.

He advised against applying such materials during peak cloudy periods.

He also said farmers should be alert for rootworm damage. He advised walking fields in July to look for goosenecked corn. In August farmers should check for rootworm beetles.

Farmers who see three or more adults per ear tip should consider spraying.

Yocum also said farmers should limit manure applications to 30 tons per acre cattle manure and six tons per acre fresh poultry manure.

Beyond those levels there is too much chance of nitrogen and potassium becoming excessive and getting out of balance with magnesium.

The need to keep manure and fertilizers in balance

was re-emphasized in a movie showed farmers.

The film presented several reasons for keeping fertility levels balanced, the best of which may be both crop and animal health.

The movie emphasized the need for timely application of fertilizer, for instance, applying P and K after the first and after the final cutting of alfalfa.

It praised the use of manure injection and said storage was one of the better ways to avoid nutrient loss.

For farmers on daily haul, the film suggested applying manure only on level fields away from streams — especially if the fields are snow-covered.

Lebanon County Agent Newton Bair told farmers how to combat a problem which came in after Hurricane Agnes in 1972: burcucumber.

Burcucumber, or wild cucumber as it is known, is a vine resembling cucumber or wild sweet potato.

It has a lot of curly tentacles and many seed pods along the vine.

It is vicious in corn, Bair told farmers, climbing up and over plants and actually pulling plants over.

As farmers with burcucumber know, it is virtually impossible to combine a field so infested.

Bair said it is a difficult weed to control because it has a tough, hardy seed which can germinate from as deep as four to six inches in the ground.

Several herbicides will do a decent job of controlling burcucumber, he said.

In conventional corn, a maximum dosage of two pounds atrazine and three quarts of Lasso will give excellent control.

The addition of a pint of Banvel appears to have an additive effect, especially early in the season.

In no-till plots, a dose of one pound atrazine, 2.5 pounds Bladex and Paraquat did a good job.

Bair said in both conventional and no-till corn

combinations of the longer-lasting triazine herbicides gave the best control when used at the higher rates.

He cautioned farmers that he was not recommending heavy applications of the materials except where there is a known problem.

David Thomposon, of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, was on hand to help farmers update their pesticide certification as private applicators.

He said the certification process was an exercise in things farmers already know and a program to stimulate interest in things they didn't know.

He said the basic reason for the program was to show now to follow instructions.

He recommended farmers read their chemical labels and follow directions. He also said it might be a good idea to let suburban neighbors what you are doing and why so they don't get bent out of shape when they see lime drifting across fields.

"In 99 percent of the cases,

if you let people know what you are doing you will solve the problem," Thomposon said.

Penn State Ag Engineer Jim Garthe told farmers they were better off to consider gasohol or farm-produced methane as a source of heat rather than as a fuel for mobile equipment.

He said there were too many problems with conversions to make it profitable for the average or smaller farmer to look at the possibility of using gasohol for his farm machinery.

David Mathews, director of crops research for Agway, gave a presentation on reducing nutrient losses in growing and storing forage crops by timely harvesting and proper storage.

Wendell Dittmer, of the Department of Agriculture's seed laboratory division, said farmers should read the seed label to be certain of getting the best quality seed.

He said they should look for seed treatment tags, certification tags, and other label information.

He said farmers should look for seed with a high percentage of pure seed, high germination, low or free in weed and crop seed, and with a recent test date.

He said seed certainly should have a test date within the past nine months.

Dittmer also advised farmers to be gentle with their handling of seed.

He pointed out that dropping a bag of soybean seed five or six feet from a loft to a truck bed could kill five or six percent of the seed in the bag through cracking.

Dittmer also explained how the seed testing program works.

In addition to the speakers, several commercial firms had displays and exhibits at the Crops and Soils day program.

The lunch was partially sponsored by Hamilton Bank.

About 200 people attended the session, many of them taking advantage of the opportunity to update their pesticide applicators license.

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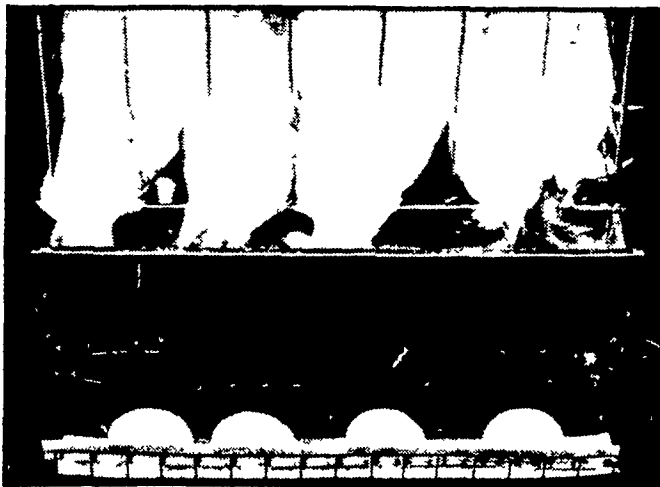


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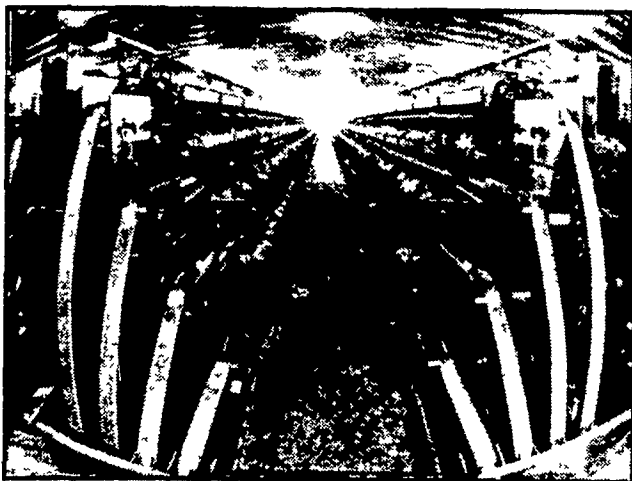
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