

Corn breeding work featured at field day

GEORGETOWN, Del. — To the non-farmer driving through rural Delaware this time of year, corn is corn. But to a plant breeder like James Hawk of the University of Delaware Agricultural Experiment Station, every strain has its unique characteristics that make it more or less suitable for local weather, soil, disease and insect conditions.

No one corn variety will ever be best for all the farmers in Delaware, he says, or even for all the farmers in any one county. That's because different farmers use various agricultural practices Hawk's plant breeding research at the University of Delaware Substation near Georgetown is designed to produce varieties that yield well under each situation.

For instance, farmers who use no-tillage need corn hybrids that can germinate under cooler conditions, since the ground doesn't warm up as fast in the spring if it's shaded by a cover crop.

For farmers who don't irrigate, and who may find themselves with a water stress situation, Hawk is experimenting with male-

sterile corn cytoplasm, which may yield better than fertile cytoplasm under stress. Hawk is looking for the ideal blend of fertile and sterile plants which will produce top yields while offering disease resistance.

Some farmers may get a little worried when they see the stunted-looking corn in some of Hawk's plots at the Substation. But there's really no cause for concern. These are inbreds, which are corn plants he has self-pollinated because they exhibit certain desirable characteristics such as disease resistance.

The inbreds themselves may be small and poor-yielding, but when two inbreds are crossed they

produce a much stronger hybrid, with many of the parent plants' good qualities and fewer of their shortcomings.

Hawk's research will be on view at the University's Farm and Home Field Day, August 13 at the Substation, from 9:30 a.m. till 3:30 p.m.

RED LION — Seventeen members of the Red Lion Chapter of Future Farmers of America participated in the State FFA Activities Week at Penn State when the chapter was awarded a trophy by Harvey A. Smith, editor of Keystone Farmer Magazine.

During the three day event three members of the chapter won a trip to Kansas City, Missouri, to participate in National Competition at the National FFA convention for their winning efforts.

They were Beth Holtzinger, who placed first in the job interview contest, Paul Garner, and Melvin Marks who both placed third in the poultry judging and dairy foods contests respectively.

Other winners included Melissa Peters, seventh in public speaking earning a gold medal; Jimmy Shoff, honorable mention in forestry; Chris Reachard, thirteenth in horse judging earning a silver medal.

Jim Innerst and Abbe Johnson both earned a silver medal in dairy judging and Jeff Grove received honorable mention. The

team of Innerst, Johnson and Grove placed seventh out of 65 teams.

Scott Hildebrand received honorable mention in livestock judging and Melinda Innerst received honorable mention in the dairy foods contest.



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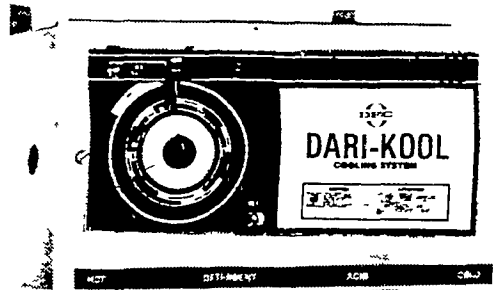
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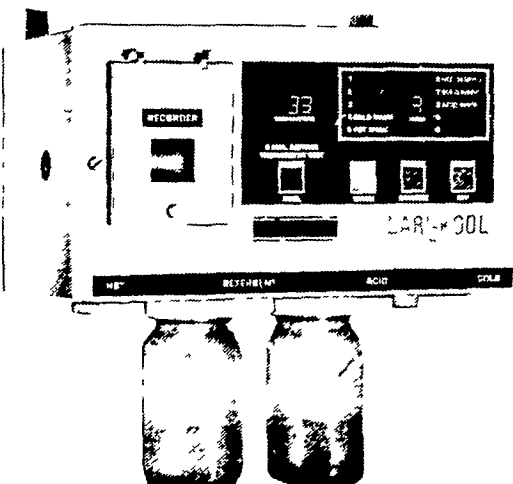
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