



Tobacco farmers had the opportunity to compare regular varieties of Pennlan and Pennbel, above, with a new variety which produces bigger leaves and an earlier harvest date. According to John Yocum, Penn State specialist, this larger leaf tobacco, left, matures earlier requiring an earlier harvest.

Farmers prove eagerness to learn at local field day

BY DEBBIE KOONTZ

LANDISVILLE — In the field of farming, there are no fears of being overqualified or of obtaining too much education — rather, the learning never stops as evidenced by the almost 300 people who turned out for the Southeastern Research Field Day, Wednesday.

The day was designed to enable farmers, seed suppliers and others to see crop research currently being conducted, and to enable them to talk to specialists about certain problems or interests.

The day, coordinated and sponsored by Penn State University, was held at the southeastern field research laboratory in Landisville. According to Penn State, the laboratory was originally established in the early 1900s to centralize tobacco investigations and has gradually expanded to include tests on the adaptability of many field crops. Thus the day included the research and production practices of ten different crops.

Participants had the opportunity

to ask questions from sixteen specialists and four research assistants. Areas included bedding plants for flowers; alfalfa variety, fertility and management for forage; tomato varieties; kenaf seedling rate; grape varieties and others.

Tobacco research was discussed by John Yocum, senior research associate and manager of the laboratory. Farmers had an opportunity to discuss new types of tobacco that produce larger leaves and have an earlier harvest date, and a chance to see them next to varieties of Pennlan and Pennbel — two types Yocum described as the "primary varieties in Pennsylvania."

"We also have some examples of aphid controls that you preplant and that are controlling the aphids up to now," he elaborated.

According to the Agricultural Experiment Station at Penn State, "Breeding and plant selection for superior strains of Pennsylvania tobacco that incorporate disease resistance, yield, and quality are an important part of the tobacco

research program conducted at the laboratory." Their latest brochure on the lab goes on to say, "Important contributions of the tobacco investigations have been the development of recommendations for correct usage of herbicides, fertilizers, insecticides, and fungicides, and recommendations of plant population, curing, and general plant bed management procedures.

Corn research is an integral part of the laboratory's program too. The investigations carried on at the lab seek continual improvement of hybrids adapted to the long growing season of southcentral and southeast Pennsylvania.

Joe McGahan, corn specialist, said, "We look at over 300 hybrids every year in our testing program (referring to all of Penn State's research on corn).

We're just scraping the iceberg, actually, in our knowledge of how plants grow. We know more

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