

Delmarva corn, soybean conference set

NEWARK, Del. — To get through the next crop year with a profit, grain farmers must make some top-notch management decisions in the months ahead. This means fine-tuning every aspect of their operations.

"We're trying to show growers how they can get the most out of their production dollars, no matter what cropping system they use," says University of Delaware Extension agricultural agent Dave Woodward. He's on the planning committee for the upcoming Delmarva Corn and Soybean Conference, which takes place Thursday, Feb. 3, at the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center in Salisbury, Md. Theme of this year's conference is "Back to Basics."

Close attention to detail will improve growers' chances for success in 1983, Woodward says. For example, in the area of soil fertility, he advises taking careful samples, getting these tested and then following recommendations based on test results.

"University of Delaware fertilizer recommendations are based on years of research and it pays to follow them," the Kent County agent says. "If tests show you have abundant potassium or phosphorus, this is the year to draw on these reserves, just as you would money in a bank account. If you do need fertilizer, we suggest you follow the university's placement recommendations—especially with starter fertilizer." In other words, fine-tune your fertility program.

"For people with poultry and livestock, we think this is the year to have the manure tested and calibrate your spreader," Woodward says. Few farmers are doing this now, but it can pay off in

considerable savings. "When the manure is analyzed, you may find that only four tons of wet cow manure an acre, for example, will supply the recommended nutrients, instead of the 20 tons you were planning to apply." It may also mean you don't have to buy any extra fertilizer.

The first part of the program at next month's Corn and Soybean Conference will deal with just such economies, as a panel of experts from Delaware, Maryland and Virginia talk about "How to Get the Most Out of Your Fertility Dollar."

Integrated pest management is another way of cutting costs. This approach to insect, disease and weed control is based on the concept that you don't apply pesticides unless the problem is already present at a level likely to affect yield. "This permits you to save money by not using materials that aren't needed to produce a good crop," Woodward says. "Again, it boils down to doing a better job of managing inputs—getting back to the basics."

During the conference, two Vienna, Md. farmers will tell how they use pest management in their farming operations.

When it comes to selling their grain, many growers could do a much better job. "I think a lot of people will spend time comparing bids on their fertilizer and pesticides to save a few bucks," Woodward says. They may be able to save \$5 or so an acre doing this, but when it comes to selling their crops, they do a lot less shopping around. "By knowing what it costs to grow a bushel of corn or soybeans and then forward pricing based on this, a farmer may be able to make a much bigger profit," he says. "For example, if

you can make 25 cents more on a bushel of corn by forward pricing, at 100 bushels an acre you've made \$25 additional income."

Two of the major speakers at the conference will talk about grain market decision-making. One of them, Carl J. Heinisch, is vice president of agri-finance at a bank in DeKalb, Ill. The other, W. Glenn Tussey, assistant director of national affairs for the American Farm Bureau Federation, is an authority on foreign trade.

Planning will be critical this year in all areas of production and marketing, Woodward says. He urges area farmers to attend the conference so they can pick up more ideas on how to make farming pay for them in 1983.

The meeting is sponsored by Delmarva agribusinesses and the Cooperative Extension Services of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. It is open to everyone regardless of race, color, sex, handicap, age or national origin. Lunch tickets are

available free from county extension offices in all three states, as well as local agricultural firms. Doors will open at 8:30 a.m. for coffee and donuts and a visit to trade exhibits and equipment displays.

As an indication that this may be the year to fix up old equipment and do some preventive maintenance, a farm welder and shop bolts worth a total of \$500 will be given away as door prizes at the end of the program.

No comparing no-till in Md.

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — No-tillage cultivation methods are gaining popularity on Maryland farms, but research agronomists are still writing the book there on agriculture's state-of-the-art planting technique.

V. Allan Bandel, agronomist for the University of Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station has received a \$3,000 grant to compare fertilizer application methods in his three-year study of no-till versus conventional-till cultivation in Maryland.

Although researchers generally agree no-till can outstrip conventional-till corn yields under the right conditions, they are still experimenting with methods to determine exactly what those "right conditions" are, said Bandel.

No-till is less labor-intensive than conventional-till and involves planting a crop directly into the unplowed stubble of a previously harvested crop. However, a no-till crop generally requires some additional nitrogen fertilizer and herbicides to push yields above those for conventional-till.

In this year's test plots at MAES' Wye Research Center, Bandel said

he will compare nitrogen fertilizer application methods across both methods of cultivation.

"We know that, under most circumstances, dribbling nitrogen fertilizer solution is better than broadcast spraying," said Bandel.

"And we know that injecting nitrogen fertilizer solution is better than broadcasting."

"But we don't know how injection compares with dribbling," he said.

The comparison for Maryland farmers could be important, according to Bandel.

Supplies of fertilizer, especially nitrogen, are becoming increasingly expensive.

Injecting nitrogen fertilizer is a highly efficient method of application, according to Bandel.

However, injection disturbs the soil around crop roots and may produce some adverse effects such as topsoil erosion.

Dribbling fertilizer, on the other hand, does not disturb precious topsoil. And it places the nitrogen solution closer to the plant roots than broadcasting.

But, as its name implies, dribbling takes time to "dribble" down to the crop's root system.

"What we have here is a series of trade offs," said Bandel.

"Our research this year may help us determine which method works better and costs the farmer less," he said.

Funding for Bandel's \$3,000 grant comes from the Delmarva Poultry Industry Inc.

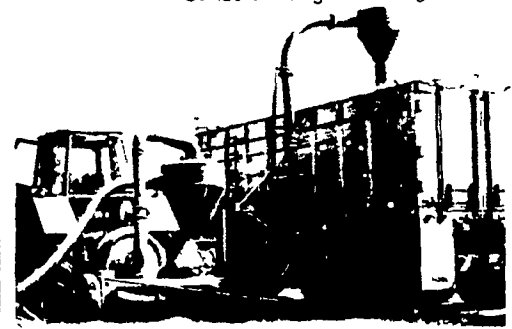
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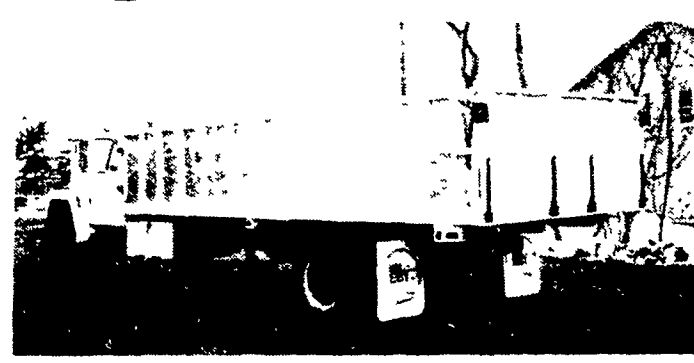
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