

Soybean project predicts billion-bushel increase by 2002

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — By the year 2002, U.S. soybean yields are "most likely" to average 46 bushels per acre, according to a recently completed soybean yield survey. Using a 70 million acre base, this would equate to a soybean crop of around 3.2 billion

bushels, up more than one billion bushels from the 1982 crop production. This soybean yield survey was conducted as part of the latest phase of Project 2002.

"2002: A Blueprint for Soybeans", a joint project of the

American Soybean Association and Elanco Products Company, manufacturer of Treflan and Surflan herbicides, is a comprehensive study of possible changes in the U.S. soybean industry over the next 20 years.

"We surveyed leading plant pathologists, researchers, soybean farmers and product managers, among others," said Project Manager Dennis Sharpe. "These knowledgeable people are on the leading edge of the development of new varieties. They also have a good idea of the potential that exists for increasing soybean yields."

One part of the survey asked the participants to identify the most important factors which would cause soybean yields to increase

over the next 5, 10, 15 and 20 years. Sharpe indicated the most mentioned factors were those involving farmer adoption of already existing technology, such as narrow-row spacing and use of high-yield soybean varieties. The least mentioned factor was increased government support of soybean prices. Other factors the survey participants noted as deterrents to increase yields were weed problems and insect infestations.

The second major part of the yield survey asked the participants to give their estimates of what U.S. soybean yields would be by the year 2002. Three estimates were requested: a "pessimistic" view, an "optimistic" view and a "most likely" view. Using the "most

likely" scenario, the survey participants predicted a 46 bushel per acre average by the year 2002. In other words, one-billion more bushels of soybeans than were harvested in 1982, using 1982 acreage as a base.

"This yield increase prediction is slightly above the last 20 year trend," notes Sharpe. "In the last 10 years, we have had a period where yield average increases have been relatively flat. However, over the long term, soybean yields have been increasing approximately 1.3 percent per year."

The Project 2002 Soybean Yield Survey also indicated soybean yields are expected to increase at equal or faster rates than corn yields.

PFA urges PIK revisions

CAMP HILL — The Pennsylvania Farmers' Association is urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to change its eligibility rules to give more farmers the opportunity to participate in the Payment-In-Kind program, now underway.

In a letter to USDA Secretary John Block, PFA's Governmental Relations Division manager, Alvin Myers, said PFA "believes that the PIK program now being implemented is a viable program to reduce the government cost and utilize the commodities in storage. However, we feel that there is a discrepancy in the program which may discriminate against some of our members."

To be eligible for PIK, farmers must either have certified their

crops' base acreages during the 1980-81 year or have had aerial photographs of their farm taken to verify the crops being grown and establish a base. Farmers who have not had base acreages certified or aerial photographs recorded are not eligible to sign up in PIK.

Myers said, "We feel that if this program is to be presented fairly, all farmers should be eligible."

PFA recommends that farmers also be allowed to sign up for PIK if they can present; sales receipts for crops sold; sales receipts for seed; and sworn testimony from neighbors or area residents that crops were grown.

"This would allow the latitude for state agencies to obtain full participation from farmers," Myers said.

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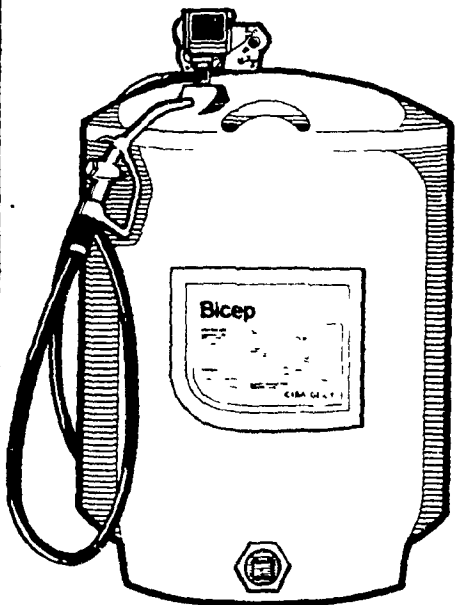
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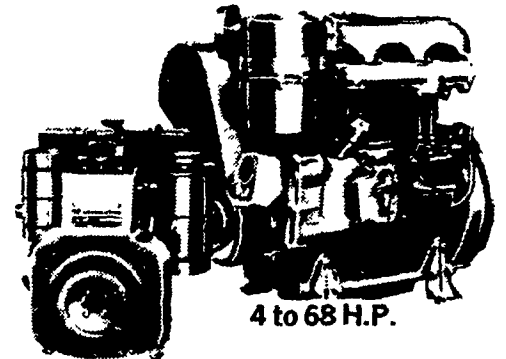
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