

## Pioneer celebrates 25th year at Middletown Station

BY TRISH WILLIAMS

MIDDLETOWN, Del. — Pioneer seed company hosted over 500 visitors to its Middletown test station Wednesday in an informative celebration of its 25th anniversary of corn breeding research at Middletown. Visitors came from a three state area and included agronomists from the University of Delaware, Penn State University, and the University of Maryland.

Farmers hard hit by severe weather conditions this growing season came to learn how they could possibly improve their cropping systems to obtain higher crop yields in the coming years.

Pioneer plant breeders, agronomists, technicians and field representatives guided visitors through research and demonstration plots of corn, soybeans, sorghum, and alfalfa. Pioneer personnel, assisted by University

of Delaware agronomists, William Mitchell and Merle Teal, explained the research work that is being conducted at the station.

Station Manager Tom Ishler and his support staff conduct research to develop new seed corn varieties suitable for production primarily in the mid-Atlantic states. Professor Mitchell works with Ishler to conduct test plot and field research on how Pioneer products perform under all types of management practices ... tillage methods, insecticide and herbicide application, and planting and harvesting techniques.

As part of the the tour Mitchell, Teal, and graduate student Cheryl Stevens discussed how Pioneer corn varieties performance was effected by such management practices as no-till planting, ridge planting, planting in the row of soybean stubble versus between the row, and planter fertilization



Station Manager, Tom Ishler, right and technician Evans stand before a display of inbred corn varieties they use to develop new seed corn varieties.



Bob Wichmann, Pioneer Eastern Division president, assured farmers despite the drought, Pioneer could meet their seed corn needs for next year.

versus broadcast fertilization.

Pioneer Eastern Division President Robert Wichmann addressed the visitors as part of a noon time program. Wichmann said that Pioneer decided 25 years ago to locate the corn breeding research station in Middletown rather than in Lancaster, Pa., because corn in the Middletown area is more subject to insect and weed problems, which is helpful in analyzing a new variety's resistance to disease.

Wichmann said that Pioneer like many farmers has been hard hit by the effects of the drought, reducing this year's seed crop yield.

"I know you are all anxious to

know how the drought will effect seed prices for next year," said Wichmann. "Fortunately, last year's crop was very large."

Because of this large supply Pioneer reduced its seed crop acreage this year, like many other seed companies, only to be hit with dry conditions.

"To compensate for the short seed supply this growing season, we have increased the acreage of our winter planting in Florida," Wichmann reassured. "We are presently planting our Florida seed crop now, it will be harvested in late February and March, and will be available to farmers in late March."

Addressing the farmers Wichmann said, "We are confident if you work with your Pioneer representative in selection of seed corn varieties, Pioneer will have no problem in meeting your needs at a reasonable price."

Professor Mitchell speaking before the group, praised Pioneer for the leadership that it has provided in Delaware and throughout the country in corn breeding research.

"Going way back," said Mitchell, "I have enjoyed a long love affair with Pioneer 312A."

I have worked with Pioneer for years to develop corn varieties

(Turn to Page A19)

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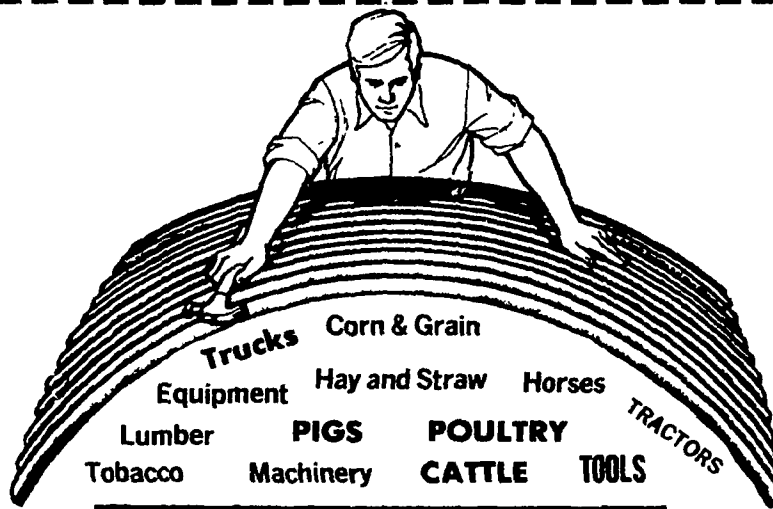
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