

Super-yield scientists

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dominant factor affecting yield," Johnson says.

"With the new genetic material available, we can get up to 150 to 170 bushels per acre with seed populations of 24,000 to 26,000," he says. "To go much higher than that, we'll have to drop more seed." However, he cautions, "You'd better have everything put together on a good soil."

Beware of upright-leaf hybrids in rows wider than 30 inches. "I planted a URL hybrid in 40-inch rows one year, just to test its response, and lost 50 bushels of yield, compared with 30-inch rows," Johnson says. "Now I don't plant any row wider than 30 inches, for any hybrid."

Shifting to higher rates of nitrogen requires split applications. Johnson suggests no more than 300 pounds per acre in one shot. "Above that, yields go down," he observes. "And that's for pretty dark soils. On much lighter soils I'd go a little easier than that."

Johnson says his main challenge is utilizing nitrogen more efficiently. For his top corn yield, he applied preplant 200 pounds of anhydrous knifed in deep and 100 pounds as urea, then 100 pounds as 28 percent liquid through his irrigation system.

Farmers shooting for super yields must be ready to respond quickly with aerial control when stalk diseases or pests strike. Commercial seed companies view this as standard practice, and farmers should too, Johnson says. "The cost of treatment is negligible, compared with the

value of the grain you'll leave on the ground if there's much downed corn," he observes.

High-yield checklist

Even though their research methods vary considerably, the super-yield scientists agree on several points:

By managing your inputs carefully at a high level, farmers can increase yields dramatically. But no single input will propel a producer into the super-yield category. It takes at least two or three factors, such as row width, population and fertility, working at optimum levels to reach that goal.

If a producer doesn't have a feel for working with high-level inputs, he must walk before he runs. He should experiment with small acreages to collect information on what works and what doesn't work. Super yields can be very profitable, but not in every case. Producers should move cautiously, keep careful, complete records and remember that going for the super yields is a high-risk, high-reward venture.

Super yields usually are better for land and the surrounding ecosystem, than yields from poorly managed low-producing land. Major reason: The higher the yield, the more crop residue, and the more organic matter is retained in the soil. "Top yields are the best friend good soil ever had," Ohio State's Johnson says.

Ultra-high yields, such as 300-bushel corn and 100-bushel soybeans, are only possible on very good soils. No matter how good management may be, producers can't coax super yields out of clay hillsides.

Dauphin County outlines 1985 gypsy moth spraying program

HARRISBURG — A recent interview with Duayne Forsberg, Resource Specialist with the Dauphin County Conservation District, outlined the procedure landowners should follow in Dauphin County to request "possible" gypsy moth spraying of their properties for 1985.

A complex cooperative spraying program involving three levels of government was explained by Forsberg. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Bureau of Forestry, administers and sets forth the spraying program. The majority of spraying funds are provided by the Commonwealth.

Locally, the Dauphin County Commissioners through the Dauphin County Conservation District, will coordinate the field work with municipal assistance. Municipal and county government also provide funds for spraying.

When Forsberg was asked how a landowner should request spraying for 1985, he stated, "it would depend on where the property was located in the county." According to the Dauphin County policy, landowners south of Peters Mountain should direct their request for spraying to their township or borough office. Forsberg said, "The Dauphin County Conservation District will not record requests received from landowners in the southern half of the county."

However, he did state that the Conservation District will record spraying requests from lan-

downers north of Peters Mountain, including Rush Township. "Municipalities in upper Dauphin County are simply without full time office staff that landowners can call. Our office will provide this service for upper Dauphin citizens." The Dauphin County Conservation District can be called at (717) 652-7048 weekdays between 8:15 and 4:30 P.M.

Requests for spraying should be placed while the gypsy moth caterpillars are actively feeding from May to July. The county has set a deadline of July 9, 1984 for spraying requests to be recorded for the 1985 spraying program.

Forsberg said that July 9 to Oct. 1 he will conduct field investigations of requested areas to determine if they are eligible for spraying. He stressed that, "submitting a request is not a guarantee for spraying." DER and Dauphin County have developed a set of guidelines that must be met before any area is sprayed."

The major "requirements" were highlighted by Forsberg. "Only

forested residential or special use areas can be sprayed. Undeveloped and uninhabited forest lands will not be sprayed by DER. An area must be 25 acres or larger in size, contain 250 healthy egg masses per acre, have a crown cover of at least 50 percent and contain tree species that are susceptible to gypsy moth damage."

He also emphasized that, "spraying in 1985 will only occur in municipalities where either the township supervisors or borough council members have agreed to provide municipal funds for spraying." Municipal officials must notify the Conservation District by the beginning of August with their funding decision.

"Once field investigations are completed and if the requested areas qualify, I'll submit the county's proposed treatment areas to DER before October 1st, Forsberg said. We should know by mid-January 1985 which treatment areas DER has accepted or rejected."

Wheat & peaches decline

HARRISBURG — Based on June 1 conditions, Pennsylvania's 1984 production of winter wheat is expected to be three percent below last year's production, according to the Pennsylvania Crop and Livestock Reporting Service. Acreage to be harvested is forecast at 220,000 with a yield of 38 bushels per acre and a total production of 8,360,000 bushels.

Total peach production for

Pennsylvania is forecast at 90 million pounds, four percent below the 94 million pounds produced last year.

U.S. winter wheat production is forecast at 1.97 billion bushels, one percent less than 1983's production of 1.99 billion bushels. Total 1984 U.S. peach production is forecast at 2.53 billion pounds, 41 percent more than last season, and 10 percent more than 1982.

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