CORN TALK NEWS
PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOC., INC.

Five-Acre Corn Club Results: A Few Thoughts

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This year's Five Acre Corn Club results reveal some interesting figures about corn production in Pennsylvania.

In general, the corn club reflected many of the reports of the crop this year. Yields averaged a record 163 bushels per acre over 121 entrants, but moistures were higher than last year.

Barren plant percentage was down slightly from last year to 2.1 percent. The average plant population reported was 23,600, also down slightly from last year. Approximately 15 percent of the growers cultivated their corn and about 40 percent side dressed their crop.

The average N rate including manure, previous crop and fertilizer credits amounted to 191 pounds per acre, which is only slightly above 177 pounds, the recommended rate for the average 161 bushel crop. Granular insecticides were used on 71 percent of the corn following corn, 31 percent of the corn following alfalfa, and 33 percent of the corn following soybeans.

About 13 percent of the entrants no-tilled their crop and the rest were almost evenly split between minimum and conventional tillage. For the last two years, no-till entries have been down somewhat. It is unclear whether this reflects less no-till corn or just less no-till corn that growers wanted to enter in the program.

This year, the no-till entries averaged 5 bushels higher than minimum tillage entries and 15 bushels higher than conventional entries.

Economic data revealed that the average cost of producing an acre of corn, excluding land, was about $212. Land costs are extremely variable across the state, but if one assumes a $50 land charge, the total cost of producing an acre of corn would be $262. At the average price reported of $2.30/bushel, the break even yield of corn is about 94 bushels without land included and 115 bushels with land included.

Some average costs per acre reported included seed, $24, lime, $9, machinery operating, $23, and machinery ownership, $39. Growers in southeastern Pennsylvania generally had lowest costs per bushel, because of lower costs and higher yields per acre.

No-till entries reported the lowest cost per bushel. This was due to higher yields this year, and lower machinery ownership and operating costs. When results were summarized over yield group level, the highest yield group had the highest returns and the lowest break even price. Total costs did not vary greatly between yield groups. Returns to land and management were also calculated for different soil productivity groups. Returns were highest for class I soils and $32 per acre less for class II soils. Class III soils averaged even less in returns, about $78 less than class I.

The Five acre corn club is sponsored by PMCGA, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and the many seed corn companies. Entry in the corn club is open to all corn growers. Corn club programs are coordinated through local cooperative extension offices. For more information, on participating in the club, contact your county extension agent.

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Daryl Alger of Palmyra harvests his Five Acre Corn Club plot in Lebanon County. This field yielded 203.4 bushels per acre.