

**PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

*Between The Rows*

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When energy is relatively cheap, as it is now, systems will use it liberally. If energy was very expensive, we would likely see shifts towards technologies such as no-tillage, low temperature drying, shorter season hybrids, and high moisture corn storage systems.

The next consideration is whether corn production is socially acceptable. This could be a difficult question for some. Possible socially unacceptable aspects of corn production might include the need to spray pesticides in suburban areas, the need to apply manure, and the need for growers to farm large acreages to make a living.

Last year, I talked with one corn grower who told me that he now farms eight farms that each supported a family a generation ago. I know he's not alone in this regard. Is this an acceptable direction for us to be

heading?

Another aspect of sustainability is our dependence on off-farm resources. Most corn producers rely heavily on off-farm products — pesticides, fertilizer, fuel, and seed to name a few. Ideally it would be great to be totally independent from anyone else — but is it worth it when others can produce these items so efficiently and inexpensively?

This aspect of the definition of sustainability is the one where corn producers probably have the most trouble. I maintain that it probably should not be part of the definition and there are many other industries that are far more dependent on external resources than agriculture.

Nevertheless, much Pennsylvania corn is produced with far less off-farm resources than in some other areas. Rotations

and manure supply us with much of our nutrient requirements. We harvest much of our corn as high-moisture and ear corn without using external energy for drying.

We are also not dependent on irrigation like many corn-producing states. Consequently, on a relative basis, we're more sustainable in this regard than some other regions.

In summary, are we sustainable? I think most will agree that we are not there yet, but we have made substantial progress during the past two decades.

Economic considerations still remain at the forefront for many growers. Considerable progress is being made on the environmental front and many are adapting to be more "acceptable" to society.

Energy use is tied to economics — but technologies to reduce our dependence on energy are available should conditions dictate their use. Use of off-farm inputs is low compared to some regions and we are continually working to replace inputs with management. We may not be completely sustainable yet, according to this definition, but I think we are on the right track.



**CORN TALK NEWS**

PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOC., INC.

**3-Year PMCGA Memberships Include Newsletter**

QUARRYVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — For a limited time, corn growers who sign up for three-year memberships with the Pennsylvania Master Corn Growers Association (PMCGA) will receive, as a bonus, three free months of Doane's Agricultural Report, including 24-hour access to Doane's Marketing Advice VIA Teledoane - Doane's market hotline.

"The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) conducts programs in market development, research, and education," said NCGA Field Services Director Dave Drennan. "In cooperation with Doane Agricultural Services (of St. Louis, Mo.), we now will have the opportunity to educate our members more fully. Weekly issues of Doane's Report will help our members to get better prices for their crops, make the right moves on government programs, and upgrade production and management decisions to improve their bottom line. It will keep

corn growers on top of events and primed to make profitable decisions."

The newsletter includes short and long-range market forecasts, ag legislation updates, management tips, and farm business strategies. The newsletter is completely free to corn growers who join or renew for three-year membership terms during this limited-time offer.

Contact Greg Roth, executive secretary, Pennsylvania Master Corn Growers Association, PO Box 304, State College, PA 16804, or H. Grant Troop, PMCGA membership director, 286 Furnace Rd., Quarryville, PA. 17566-9423, (717) 786-8045.

The U.S. Feed Grains Council reports that it would take a fleet of 20,000 Panamax vessels to ship 50-billion bushels of corn. In 1993 the United States will export its 50-billionth bushel of corn.

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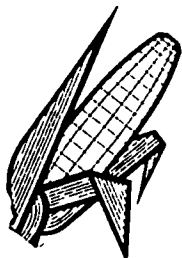
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