



# CORN TALK

## PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOC., INC.

Corn Talk, Lancaster Farming, Saturday, October 9, 1993

### Producers Should Analyze Corn Test Plots, Take Notes

**VERN ACHENBACH JR.**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
**BERRYSBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — All corn variety trials are not equal, but all can reveal very useful information about the varieties planted, according to Dauphin County Extension Agent Paul Craig.

Throughout the year, local trial plots can be observed for germination success, rapidity of growth, etc.

But late summer and fall, just prior to harvesting, is especially the season for field day open houses — cooperating businesses sponsor demonstration activities of implements, inspections of seed variety plots, and, usually, guest speakers.

As long as those who visit these events take notes and approach the review with a specific agenda, a great deal of insight into the applicability of a specific variety can be gained.

According to Craig, if a producer is really on top of efficiency in selecting varieties to plant, the comparisons and record keeping never really stop.

He said that, in his opinion, a producer should probably be switching varieties every five years in order to stay with the best the industry has to offer.

But he also said that prior to switching varieties, at least two years of observing that variety should be done before changing the whole farm's production

strategy. As a suggestion for best evaluation, Craig said planting small plots that are designed to provide objective results is a good way to determine whether a variety is suited for a particular farm.

While these techniques are available, not every producer follows a systematic evaluation in selecting new varieties.


"I read somewhere that the majority of decisions made on which seed variety to purchase are based on knowing the salesman," Craig said.

And while that may be good news for seed companies, to Craig it means more producers are at risk of taking in a lower yield or having a crop failure

(Turn to Page 12)




Paul Craig, Dauphin County Extension agent, inspects the condition of an ear of corn in a university trial done by Penn State University. Craig said that producers should visit test plots when they can and compare differences between end-row ears at a corn variety test plot, look for ear height, ear number, barren stalks, husk length and configuration, apparent pest and disease tolerance, apparent differences in soil type and drainage between specific plants, etc., and keep notes on each aspect for each variety example inspected.



**PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

*Between The Rows*

Dr. Greg Roth  
Penn State Agronomy  
Assistant Professor



#### THE EARS HAVE IT

With corn, you can tell some things about a crop by looking at the ears.

In a place like Pennsylvania, in a year like 1993, you'll encounter lots of different-looking corn ears. The appearance of these ears can tell you a little about the corn crop you're looking at.

Let's discuss a few of the

characteristics about ears and what they mean.

The first characteristic is size. The rule of thumb is that half pound ears mean that your population is about optimum for the conditions. Large ears are not necessarily an indication of a high yield. Last year, I checked a field that went just over 200 bushels with 18 rows of kernels per ear with about 37-38 kernels per row — not an

exceptionally long ear. The secret to success here was a uniform stand of 27,000 plants per acre at harvest. This year, despite the spotty weather we've had, there are fields that will repeat or top that yield.

One aspect of ear size is kernel rows. The number of rows on an ear usually varies from about 16-20 in a good year. The

(Turn to Page 6)

## Growers Urged To Voice Support For Ethanol

**ST. LOUIS, Mo.** — During the next two months, corn growers are urged to contact the Clinton Administration and strongly voice their support for ethanol, according to the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has until December 15 to finalize ethanol's role in the Clean Air Act's Reformulated Gasoline (RFG) program.

"There is no scientific or environmental reason why ethanol should not be allowed to fully participate in the RFG program on a year-round basis," said Randy Cruise, a Pleasanton, Neb., corn grower and NCGA president. "The

Clinton Administration and particularly EPA need to know corn growers fully support ethanol and that we expect it to receive the opportunity to fairly compete in the marketplace with other oxygenates."

Under current Clean Air Act emissions standards, during the summer ethanol cannot be blended into reformulated gasolines without significant restrictions. Critics of ethanol have erroneously charged that its higher evaporation rate increases ozone formation. But a recently completed independent study commissioned by the Council of Great Lakes Governors demonstrates con-

clusively that a 10 percent ethanol blend and an 11 percent MTBE blend perform similarly in improving air quality.

As market opportunities for ethanol grow, NCGA estimates demand for the home-grown fuel could eventually exceed two billion gallons per year, requiring 800 million bushels of corn.

To voice your support for ethanol, write to President Bill Clinton, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20500 or call (202) 456-1111, or contact EPA Administrator Carol Browner, USEPA, 401 M. Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460.



## CORN TALK

### Farm Calendar

- Tuesday, November 2**  
Election Day
- Solanco Young Farmers meeting, Corn Grain Management.**
- Thursday, December 16**  
Mid-Atlantic Conservation Tillage Conference, Ramada Inn, Hagerstown, Md.
- 1994**
- Friday, January 7**  
Deadline for corn entries in Farm Show.
- Saturday, January 8**  
Pennsylvania State Farm Show, thru Jan. 13.
- Tuesday, January 18**  
Pennsylvania Lime Fertilizer Conference, Days Inn, State College, thru Jan. 20.
- Friday, January 21**  
Extension Corn Production Satellite Conference (contact your local county extension office for details).
- Friday, February 4**  
Pennsylvania Corn Conference, Lancaster Host Resort, Lancaster.
- Tuesday, February 15**  
Extension Corn Production Satellite Conference (contact county extension offices for details).
- Thursday, February 24**  
Extension Corn Production Satellite Conference (contact county extension offices for details).