

Weidman Retires After Lifetime With Pioneer

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

MOUNT JOY (Lancaster Co.) — For the young man who at age 19 won the last official corn husking contest that was ever held in Lancaster County, the past 50 years of association with Pioneer has been one of enjoyment. John Weidman has announced his retirement effective the end of this month.

"Farmers are the best people in the whole world," Weidman said. "They know how to deal with mother nature and they know what it is to work with their hands. I learned more from them than they learned from me."

In the early days, farmers were planting 42-inch rows with 12,000 to 14,000 plants per acre. Most farmers were planting U.S. 13 and some were hill-dropping two kernels per hill. Later in the '60s farmers began planting in 38-inch rows. By the '70s farming became serious business and much more specialized.

Although farmers were slow to accept hybrid varieties until they saw the increased yield now 98 percent of the corn grown in the

country is a single cross. With these new hybrids growers can expect to pick up at least one or two bushels per acre each year.

Weidman's first experience with Pioneer came when he spent summers between high school classes in Indiana at the Pioneer research farm helping to detassel corn. Upon graduation in 1945, Pioneer hired him to work out of the Mount Joy warehouse where he had a wide range of duties—deliveries, manning county and state fair booths up and down the East Coast, plot planting, and some selling.

In 1952, Weidman became an assistant district sales manager and a Pioneer sales agent. He became a district sales manager in 1955 and was named regional sales manager in 1957. He was a regional manager for the eastern division through the '60s, '70s and '80s. And he was named area sales manager for the eastern sales area when it was created in 1986.

"My greatest satisfaction has been to watch people succeed," Weidman said "In many cases, I'm working with the third generation

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A collection of mechanical devices found around early farm kitchens have a special interest to John Weidman because they were manufactured in his home town of Mount Joy.

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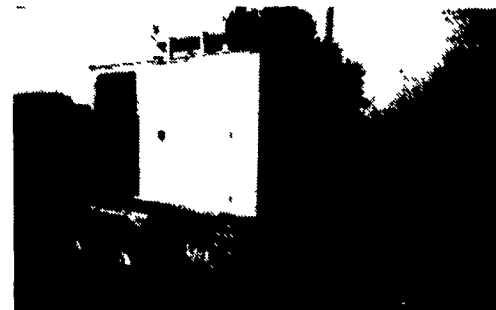
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