

Pioneer Conducts Open House At New Holland Research Station

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.)—About 65 guests of Pioneer Hi-Bred International Plant Breeding Division attended an open house Monday morning conducted at the new research station on New Holland Road south of New Holland.

Farmers and agri-industry representatives viewed the new station, situated on 60 acres that will test new Pioneer corn hybrids.

The station, which houses a corn pathology laboratory, seed handling room, a conference room, and storage facilities, measures more than 10,000 square feet. The facility was purchased in September 1992. Construction, at a cost of \$550,000, began in August 1994 and was complete in December 1994.

"We first started doing research in Lancaster county back in 1938," said Terry Williams, research project manager, to the guests after a breakfast held at the station. "Pioneer has been in Lancaster County breeding corn and testing corn hybrids since that time."

Williams said that the station is one of 33 corn breeding stations in North America. The New Holland

research station will do traditional plant breeding on whole-plant basis and will also be conducting extensive silage research.

"We do a lot of silage research at this location," said Dave Whitaker, assistant project manager at the station. "Here in the East, 30-40 percent of the corn is used for corn silage."

Whitaker said, "We are trying to characterize our hybrids for silage digestibility, to determine which ones are the best and the most digestible."

The station will also research the development of a hybrid corn that will resist ear mold.

Whitaker said that work will be undertaken to "try to find out why the molds produce toxins." Whitaker said a plant pathologist will be working on developing those types of hybrids that resist ear molds and possibly eliminate the toxins that the molds produce.

At the station, racks of corn seed are carefully maintained by test, site, row location, and hybrid type. Computer records carefully track the seed placement, germination, standability, and harvest record.

The station makes use of standard corn planting and harvesting



About 65 guests of Pioneer Hi-Bred International viewed the new station, which will test new Pioneer seed hybrids. Pictured from left, Dick Gosselink, building projects manager; Terry Williams, research project manager; Dave Whitaker, assistant project manager; Jean Linn, director of real estate for Pioneer; Kelly Bechtel, research associate; and Dale Slaughter, research associate.

equipment with extensive modifications. The four-row planter is modified so the seed hoppers can accurately distribute individual test packets of 25 seeds each. Seeds are planted in 17½ foot rows. At harvest, a combine is specially modified to harvest individual test rows and harvest records on individual rows are computerized.

At the station, about 20 acres are under test. In all, the station will

collect data on about 30,000 plots of various hybrids throughout the region.

At the breakfast, Jean Linn, director of real estate programs for Pioneer, thanked all those who contributed to the founding and construction of the research station.

Williams said that someday Pioneer, which is recognized by many farmers as a seed company, will be known as "Pioneer — The

Biology Company," known for its work at the plant's cellular level.

"There are some really exciting things happening with biotechnology, and Pioneer is a part of it, and we intend to be doing some of that work at this location," he said.

The next open house is scheduled on August 29-30 at the station. For more information, contact Terry Williams, (717) 354-6044.

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