

CORN TALK

PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOC., INC.

Corn Talk, Lancaster Farming, Saturday, October 14, 1995

In Wake Of Drought, Wolfes Worry About Corn Test Weights

CENTRE HALL (Centre Co.) — Centre County corn grower Wade Wolfe is just beginning to pick corn, so he is not sure how much of an effect this year's late season drought will have on yields.

Both he and his father, Glenn Wolfe, say that in the 45 years the family has been on this farm, they have seen worse years than this.

So far the test weights are down, said Wade, because of

low moisture, reducing the fullness of the kernels. The average test weight so far has been 52 pounds/bushel — it should be around 56 to avoid being docked when selling the corn.

Another problem this year is a big variation in kernel moisture. Wade said the monitor on his combine indicated a range of from 15 to 40 percent in one field with higher moisture levels in spots with deeper soil.

When the kernel moisture is higher or lower than what the combine is set for before harvesting, the kernels are broken up, cutting down yields and increasing spoilage in storage bins if moisture is too high.

Glenn estimates a 25-50 percent drop in corn yields this year, as the ears are half the normal length, and there are some barren stalks. Later corn varieties didn't pollinate, he said. Also, if they get high winds before the corn is harvested, the unusually tall stalks, which are brittle from the drought and are carrying the ears four feet off the ground, will go down.

Another harvesting problem resulted from sap leaving the stalks too quickly, which meant that a lot of corn cut for silage was too dry. Wade tried adding water to the silage as it was being unloaded, but that didn't work because the silage was so dry that they couldn't add water fast enough to do much good.

But there is some good news about this year's corn. Wade is pleased about the quality of the yellow coloration in the corn,



Wade Wolfe, left, vice president of the Pennsylvania Corn Growers' Association, and his father Glenn Wolfe check the corn they have harvested so far this year for drought effects.

PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Between The Rows

Dr. Greg Roth
Penn State Agronomy
Associate Professor



OBSERVATIONS FROM ANOTHER STRANGE YEAR

The 1995 growing season was, to say the least, a different corn growing experience than many of us have experienced in the recent past.

For many of us it was a learning experience which is what keeps this business interesting.

Let's examine a few of the challenges that occurred during the last half of the 1995 corn production season in Pennsylvania and discuss the lessons

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Seed Treatments May Stem Problems Of 'Overwintering'

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
LANDISVILLE (Lancaster Co.)

— Untreated seed and an unusually mild winter this year may have severely affected corn stand and possibly overall harvest, according to a Penn State researcher.

At this year's Weed Field Day held in July at the university's Southeast Research Laboratory in Landisville, corn plants showed evidence of a lack of seed treatment — problems with emergence in spots, corn height variability, and overall population decrease because of overwintering insects and disease.

According to Greg Roth, associate professor of agronomy at Penn State, the unevenness and spotty growth could be blamed on "a flush of soil critters due to the open and relatively warm winter we had." The uneven height could be a secondary symptom, he said.

Fields inspected throughout the state showed similar problems with brown discoloration in the root system from wireworms, seed corn infestation, and seed fungus.

All these problems could have been reduced with a

"three-way" seedbox treatment, combining a fungicide, insecticide, and a chemical

treatment to improve germination.

In one example, corn was



Greg Roth, right, shows healthy root growth of corn to Tom Oyler, Gettysburg, at this year's Ag Progress Days.

planted at the research station on May 1. Corn emergence should have topped 21,000 plants per acre. However, only 15,000-16,000 plants emerged, said Roth, "a pretty significant drop in population."

Of the problems reported throughout the state, many were a result of the "second wave" of corn planted, in the May 1-May 10 timeframe. Not every field was affected. Nonemergent corn should not exceed 10 percent of the total planted. But in many cases, nonemergent totals approached 20 percent of total planted.

In some cases, Roth has seen fields drop down to 15,000 plants per acre or less. Some fields needed to be replanted.

"I don't have the complete answer," said Roth. "We're not sure what causes the problem."

Whatever the cause, Roth said that a number of growers that he visited do not routinely use a seedbox seed treatment. "That's probably a mistake," he said.

Researchers at Cornell have done more research than Penn State on the use of seed treatments, and "they find that the use of these 'three-way' products gives you the most broad-spectrum control" of problems.

Roth said that Penn State will inspect and monitor fields to see if there are some direct benefits to using the seedbox treatments. Cost equals about \$2 per acre.



CORN TALK

Farm Calendar

Tuesday, November 7
Solanco Young Farmers meeting, corn grain management, Solanco High School.
Monday, November 13
Dairy Feed Industry Seminar,

Lighthouse Restaurant, Chambersburg.
Tuesday, November 14
Dairy Feed Industry Seminar, Harvest Drive Family

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