

Tarheel State Works To Prepare Next Generation

MT. OLIVE, N.C.—North Carolina corn growers farm in part of the country where many crops will flourish.

In acreage, tobacco leads the state; corn comes in second.

Other "firsts" and "seconds" characterize the Tarheel State. North Carolina ranks second in hog production and first in turkeys. Overall in poultry, North Carolina ranks in the

nation's top 10.

"We're as diverse as any state," said Keith Beavers, a member of the Corn Growers Association of North Carolina (CGANC). Near Mt. Olive,

Beavers raises corn, tobacco, sweet potatoes, pickling cucumbers, coastal bermuda hay, wheat, soybeans, vegetables and cattle.

North Carolina's children are perhaps the commodity corn growers most want to raise well. CGANC invests a substantial share of its resources in "growing up" a generation of informed consumers.

Thanks to CGANC, many North Carolina fourth graders are learning about corn through the National Corn Growers Association's (NCGA) curriculum kit. Also, CGANC is developing new materials to answer the many individual questions children call and write into the association's office.

"We need to start early to teach children about agriculture," said CGANC staffer Joyce Woodhouse. "We want our kids to know how food gets to the grocery store and understand the important contribution farms make to our state's economy."

Year to year, in North Carolina, educating corn growers about the need to promote their crop is a continuing concern. Our state is corn deficient, observes Beavers. With a ready market, sometimes growers

need to be encouraged to look beyond state borders toward the world market where prices are set.

With a number of programs under way, what would be on Beavers' "wish list" for next year?

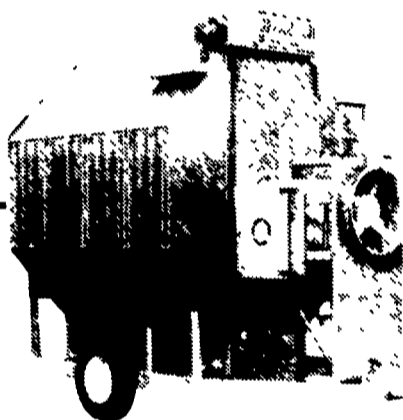
•First, more market demand for ethanol. Beavers wants ethanol to play a strong role in the Clean Air Act. With that accomplished, Beavers anticipates CGANC's efforts to attract an in-state ethanol processor may bear fruit.

•Second, more field days to highlight CGANC's commitment to research, such as a major agricultural research field day, to be held in cooperation with the state extension service. Beavers would like to see this effort expanded. The CGANC's 24 farmer-directors determine which projects are funded by the state's one-half cent per bushel corn checkoff program. Research to help the corn farmer lower production costs and increase profitability ranks high as a goal.

•Third, more dollars invested in CGANC's classroom education program. Every fourth grader in every county should know where corn comes from, believes Beavers.

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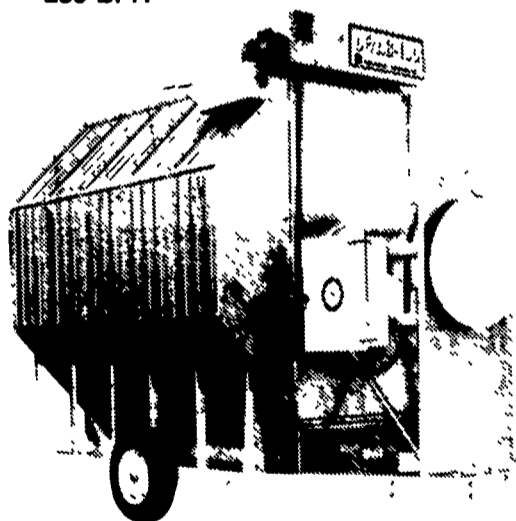
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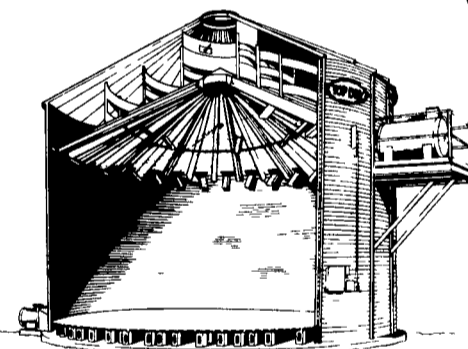
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