

# P.L. Rohrer Cooperates

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and marketing outlet to the United States for French-owned Co-op De Pau, the third largest seed company in Europe.

They do research on wheat, soybeans and corn and make the varieties available to AgriPro.

Through close contact with

AgriPro, and through helping with making test plots available for developing hybrid varieties, Rohrer Bros. stays on top of what is being offered and how it compares.

Through established and continuing communication with farmer-customers, Rohrer Bros. is

able to represent them better in development and availability of varieties that will perform best.

Last week, Wayne B. Knerr, was on hand to help the Pau Seeds crew harvest trial varieties and collect data.

Phil Bartlett, assistant breeder for Pau Seeds Inc., drove an old, customized two-row combine with specialized compartments for

weighing and testing corn moisture. The combine is kept locally and has been used for years to harvest Lancaster County test plots for yield and performance data.

Bartlett said he is an assistant breeder for the company and has been working with the company for 15 years, based out of Brookston, Indiana. Along with him was

a technician, Todd DeLong, who performed moisture and yield calculations in the research combine.

The two had traveled from Brookston in order to harvest the plots, which took about four hours.

While the data they gathered is to be compiled and compared against other varieties, Bartlett said that the Smoketown trial site

provided by P.L. Rohrer Bros. provides good data. "This is the extreme east (of the geographic area the company uses to conduct trials), but it provides good data."

He explained that back in the mid-West growing conditions are very good and also consistent, whereas here conditions are much more diverse — more plant pests, diseases and varying humidity and weather.

This makes this area very good to test hybrid varieties because the more and different stresses that varieties can be subject to, the better desired traits can be selected.

He said that the drought and pest problems of this year actually can help breeders arrive at their breeding goals much faster, by making it easier to narrow down those varieties which can make the cut.

Also, he said the this area helps the company with its marketability of its offerings because "What you need for Europe is what you need for here."

He said he specifically is looking for high yield, standability and disease resistance.

They don't work with recombinant-DNA genetically altered varieties right now, nor are they working with varieties specifically for silage, or specifically for higher starch content.

According to Bartlett, over the seven test plot sites (35 acres total) he has been working with, he evaluates about 400 varieties. At the Smoketown site, he said he had about 250 different hybrids in the one-acre test plot.

At a Mexico nursery, the parent stock are kept and hand germinated to produce different varieties for testing next year, and for reevaluating those varieties that succeeded in making it to a second trial.

The goal of Pau Seeds is to become a completely independent breeder stressing elite inbred stock or proprietary hybrids.

The difference is in who owns the rights to parent stock. Currently, the company has some of its own elite female stock, while pollinating with other male stock.



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