

State Soybean Contest Winner Uses Experience

(Continued from Page A1)

"We had a nice stand and I saw from the very beginning that it was off to a good start," the Marietta crop and cattle farmer noted. That included an ideally prepared seedbed.

But the biggest factor in making good yields was "the weather that the Good Lord sent for us."

Hess said, "We've been fortunate the last number of years to have decent growing weather here. We've had fairly ideal growing conditions. The weather is the final determining factor."

At the suggestion of his seed dealer, Hess used land that was previously in corn to grow the award-winning crop. He planted Asgrow A4045.

He keeps the crops in good rotation, from barley to soybeans to corn, and soil tests regularly. In all, Hess manages about 165 acres of tillable land on the home farm and rents additional acreage. In all, he grows 220 acres of corn, 35 acres of barley, and 50 acres of soybeans.

With the corn, he maintains 350 head of predominantly Angus steers. The barley is fed to the cattle and the soybeans are cash-cropped.

In all, he grows about 50 acres of soybeans. Some acreage is double-

cropped after barley (yields on the double-cropped soybeans in 1995 topped about 49 bushels per acre.) The 7.5 acres with the winning soybeans will be no-tilled into corn this year.

The soybean ground is chisel-plowed in the fall whenever possible. The ground is then worked in the spring with a field cultivator before planting. (The soybean ground receives steer manure as the only form of fertilizer.)

The winning field was planted right after the corn went in, on May 11 of last year. Hess prepares a very good seedbed and uses 30-inch rows to plant the seeds from 1/2 inch to 1 1/2-inch deep, depending on the weather, moisture levels, and heat units.

"If there's good moisture and plenty of heat, I will lay the seed right under the ground surface," he said. "If the moisture is lacking a little bit, then I'll plant a little deeper."

Hess uses a soybean meter on the back of the 30-inch planter. Soybeans are mixed with an inoculant and planted at the rate of 180,000 per acre.

Hess uses a postemergence herbicide treatment of Pursuit and Pinnacle about 20-25 days after planting. Occasionally, Hess uses

a field cultivator to work any weeds. Hess believes in keeping the ground open and aerated until it canopies, generally about mid-July.

Harvest conditions were excellent this year, according to the soybean grower. "The soybeans came off at 11.6 percent moisture," he said. "We had just excellent drying conditions for harvest." Harvest was the first week of October.

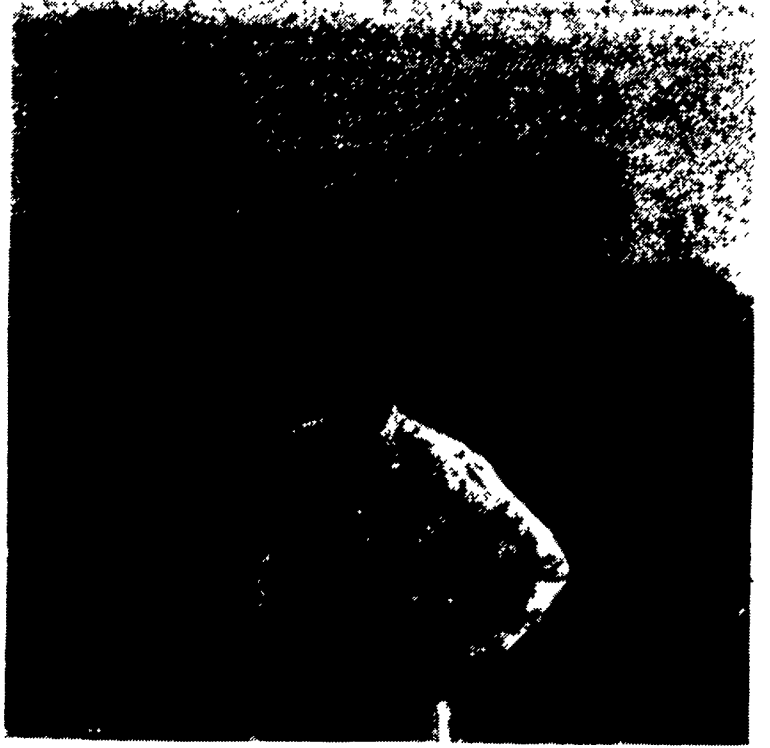
With the variety, he has been able to average about 70 bushels plus. His dealer suggested he enter the contest because of the good yields.

Contrary to what he sometimes hears about late-planted soybeans (switching to narrower rows of 15 or 6 inches), Hess plants his double-cropped beans also on 30-inch rows.

Hess attributes the good yields to "good, productive, Class 1 soils with a high state of fertility." He doesn't use a starter fertilizer with the soybeans and only rarely uses a starter fertilizer for corn.

The key to good soybean yields is to have acceptable stands and weed control. It's a matter of keeping careful records and "trying to control as many variables that I have control over," he said.

All through the growing season,



Dwight Hess concentrates on the details of his 265-acre farm, of which 50 acres are in soybeans. His painstaking attention to details and careful land management netted him 70.4 bushels per acre, placing him first in the Pennsylvania Soybean Yield Contest for 1995.

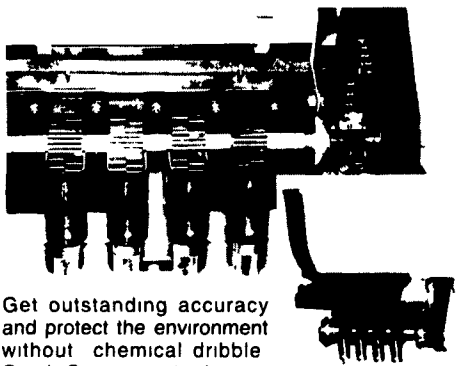
Hess keeps a close eye on all the crops he's growing, but doesn't actually walk the field on a scheduled basis.

Hess has help throughout the

season with wife Cheryl and sons Mike, 16 and Scott, 9. Mike helps with the fieldwork.

Hess vowed to keep things (Turn to Page A28)

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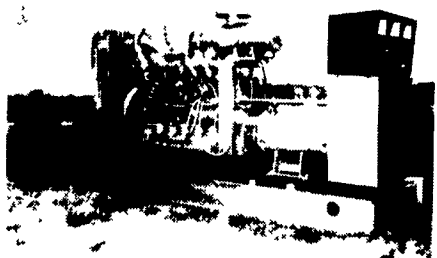
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