

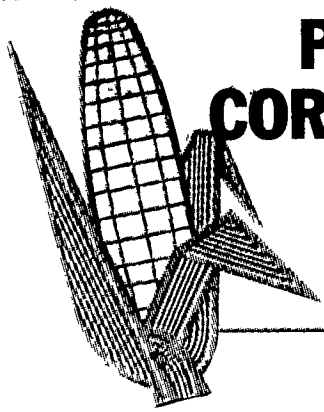
CORN TALK

Corn Talk, Lancaster Farming, Saturday, October 11, 1997



Corn yields are becoming evident as harvest is in full swing with a wide variation in yields because of weather conditions. Clarence Hoover runs the silage harvester on the John S. Nolt farm north of New Holland.

PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION



Between The Rows

Dr. Greg Roth

Penn State Agronomy Associate Professor



ANOTHER TOUGH YEAR FOR CORN

Corn never ceases to amaze me. In many fields this year in Pennsylvania, corn endured cold, hot, dry, and even wet conditions along with insect pressure and still came through the season in reasonable condition.

At the low point of the season in late July, I was beginning to wonder if we had a full-scale disaster on our hands, but fortunately drought-ending rains arrived for most in August and the recovery process began in many fields.

Let's review some of the issues that surface this year in corn production so that we can learn from the success and the failures of the season.

Early in the season conditions were good and planting was completed in a timely fashion. By the end of May, 88 percent of our crop was in the ground, compared to 80 percent

on average. Temperatures took a plunge in early May and corn emergence slowed, with some fields taking 4-5 weeks to emerge. Fields planted deeper than normal or no-tilled into last year's heavy corn residue took the longest to emerge and this resulted in the most uneven stands. Shallower (1.5-inch) planting, row cleaners, and no-tilling corn stalk fields last could help to reduce emergence problems in the future.

Crop development was delayed by the cool weather and again by the drought stress. Those paying attention to growing degree days noticed that corn silked well past the expected date based on GDDs, basically because it went dormant for a week or so during the drought. The late silking dates of some of the corn resulted in maturity concerns in some areas.

The cool weather also delayed the hatch of rootworm larva in some fields. This

resulted in less than ideal control from rootworm insecticides in a few fields, since the hatch was delayed until 6-8 weeks after the insecticides were applied.

The heat and drought stress near silking caused problems with pollination in some fields. Silking was delayed a bit relative to pollen shed and corn rootworm beetle feeding on silks and tassels was heavy in some fields. Both factors contributed to less than desirable kernel set.

The drought also resulted in heavy smut infestations in a few fields. Smut is caused by an airborne fungus that infects young plants or growing tissues of older plants. The disease is favored by warm and dry conditions. No mycotoxins are associated with smut, so its impact on feed quality should be minimal.

The drought also appeared to

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New PMCGA President Wants Vote On Corn Checkoff

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
SHELOCTA (Indiana Co.)
— Chris Kimmel is steadfast about his plans.

The new president of the Pennsylvania Master Corn Growers Association (PMCGA) intends, within the next two years, to put a referendum before the state corn growers.

That referendum will address the question: will Pennsylvania have a corn checkoff?

Already, the PMCGA knows the direction it must take. At the Crops Conference in Grantville early this year, corn growers returned ballots heavily in favor of the checkoff (out of 40 ballots returned, Kimmel indicated, 32 were in favor and eight against).

"The industry wants to prove it is responsible for itself," Kimmel said in a recent telephone interview with *Lancaster Farming*. "If we want research and promotional programs, corn growers should be the ones to help fund it."

Kimmel's Creekland Farm is home to a total of 1,500 acres of

crops, including about 800 in corn. The passing of a checkoff, calculated at point of sale and based on a similar program in Maryland, would mean a lot to the commercial growers who want to see better promotion of the product, in addition to money for research at land-grant universities. (Those same universities are already experiencing the withdrawal of government money — those dollars have to come from somewhere.)

This is the first time Kimmel has served as president of PMCGA, although he has served as vice president for a few years. He serves on the corn checkoff committee in the state. Kimmel, who replaces long-time president Curt Rakestraw, was elected at this year's Ag Progress Days in Rockspring in August.

Kimmel, who farms land in both Indiana and Armstrong counties in communities about 50 miles northeast of Pittsburgh, raises 600 head of beef finishing cattle. The black crossbred calves are purchased in West Virginia and finished

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CORN TALK

Farm Calendar

Tuesday, October 14
Solanco Young Farmers meeting, Silage Corn Management, Solanco High School.

Tuesday, November 4
Ag Service School, Meadville. Contact Joel Hunter, (814) 333-7460.

Friday, November 7
Ag Service School, Somerset. Contact Don Fretts, (412) 438-0111.

Tuesday, December 9
Ag Service School, Williamsport. Contact Tom Murphy, (717) 327-2350.

Wednesday, December 10
Ag Service School, Carlisle.

Contact Duane Duncan, (717) 240-6500.

Thursday, December 11
Ag Service School, Lancaster. Contact Bob Anderson, (717) 394-6851.

Friday, December 12
Ag Service School, Reading. Contact Mena Hautau, (610) 378-1327.

Wednesday, December 17
Ag Computing and Electronic Expo, Lancaster. Contact (717) 761-6050.

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