

PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION



Between The Rows

Dr. Greg Roth

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What does this mean for the future of high oil corn in our region? I think the TOPCROSS still provides us with an opportunity — but we have to cautious with it, continue to evaluate it, and learn to manage it carefully to minimize risks associated with the pollination process. If we can learn to manage it to improve yield during stress years like last year, the technology may have a place in our cropping systems.

Dr. Peter Thomison at Ohio

State recently put together some management suggestions for TOPCROSS blends that I support. He suggests to try the following: 1) select fields with high yield potentials; 2) use crop rotations to minimize drought, rootworm, and disease stress potential; 3) isolate by at least 30 to 40 rows from normal corn; 4) select adapted TC blends with good yield potential; 5) prepare a uniform seedbed; 6) increase seeding by 2,000 plants per acre up to 30,000 plants per acre; 7) plant

early to optimize oil yields; 8) scout fields during the season for potential pest problems, especially rootworm beetles; and 9) segregate the grain at harvest to preserve its identity.

As with any new hybrid, I would start conservatively on a few acres and evaluate the product compared to normal corns to determine the profit potential. If successful, I would gradually increase my acres accordingly.

So in 1997 reviews of high oil corn were mixed. In the future, we may see newer pollinators developed that contribute more to the final yield and are more drought tolerant. The technology may also bring us access to other grain quality traits. We should also gain more insight into the manage-



CORN TALK NEWS

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ment needs of these blends under our conditions and where

and when these products are a profitable alternative.

The 'Dead Zone'

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Jersey) in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Louisiana and Texas that has appeared during the past four years.

You may not have heard about the "Dead Zone" — or think it sounds like a horror movie title — but it may have serious implications for many U.S. corn producers in the future.

The Dead Zone is a 6,800-square mile area (slightly smaller than the state of New

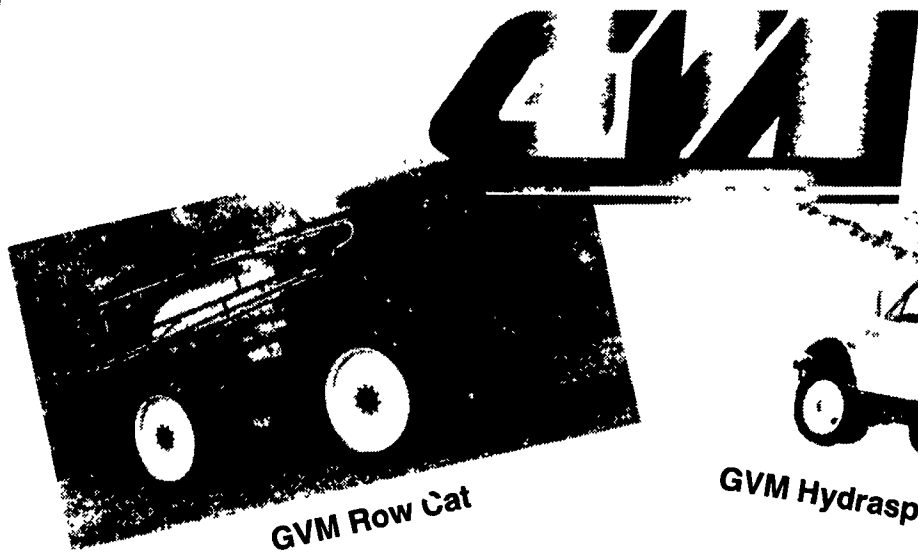
Oxygen levels in the water in this area become so depleted that fish and shellfish in area either move out or die. The zone has reduced fish and shrimp catches in the region and is causing hardships among the those involved in fishing industry in Louisiana.

Scientists are not completely sure what causes the dead zone but many believe that fertilizers, manure, and sewage from the Mississippi River has caused an overfertilization of this area of the Gulf, which in turn causes a bloom of algae during the heat of the summer. When the algae die and decay, oxygen levels in the water are reduced to the point that fish and shrimp can't survive.

While the Dead Zone has appeared in the Gulf for some time, it doubled in size after the 1993 floods and has reappeared each summer since.

The American Farm Bureau and NCGA have both been actively monitoring the issue. Several articles in the press have drawn parallels between the Dead Zone problem and the Chesapeake Bay issue that we have experienced here in the Northeast. It may be that programs similar to those used in the Chesapeake watershed will be instituted in the Mississippi basin. This problem will be more difficult to manage than the Chesapeake, since the Mississippi watershed includes 31 states, most with an intensive agricultural base.

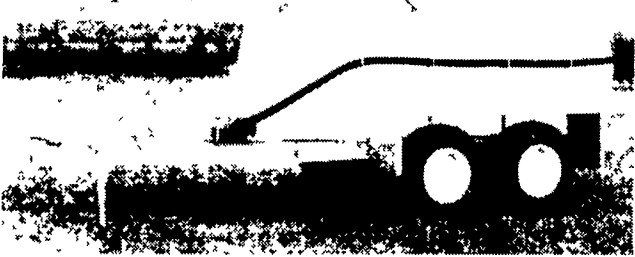
You can expect we will hear more on this issue in the future.



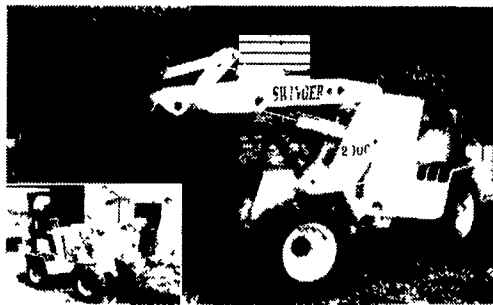
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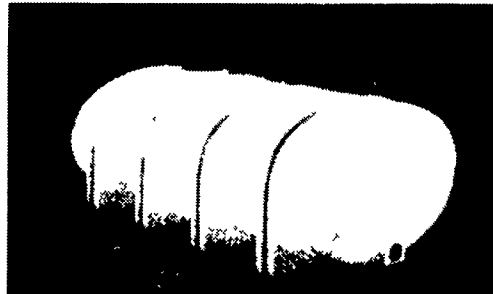
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