

Soil Organic Contents High — So Are Yields On Chester County Corn Grower's Farm

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testing on the soil. Also, no manure is applied.

With high organic content, good CEC, and impressive ENR, the soil was able to hold moisture, despite the drought.

Mitchell was recently honored as the champion of the 3-year average awards, shelled corn regular harvest size from a plot that garnered 206 bushels per acre in 1997. Average yield for three years was 197.5 bushels per acre.

Mitchell received his 5-Acre Corn Club Contest Award at the Pennsylvania Corn and Soybean Conference recently at the Holiday Inn in Grantville.

Mitchell, who grew up in Lionville, owns a 90-acre farm near Reinholds, Lancaster County. At the home farm last year he grew 45 acres of corn and some hay. This year he plans to grow 35 acres of corn and 17 acres of wheat.

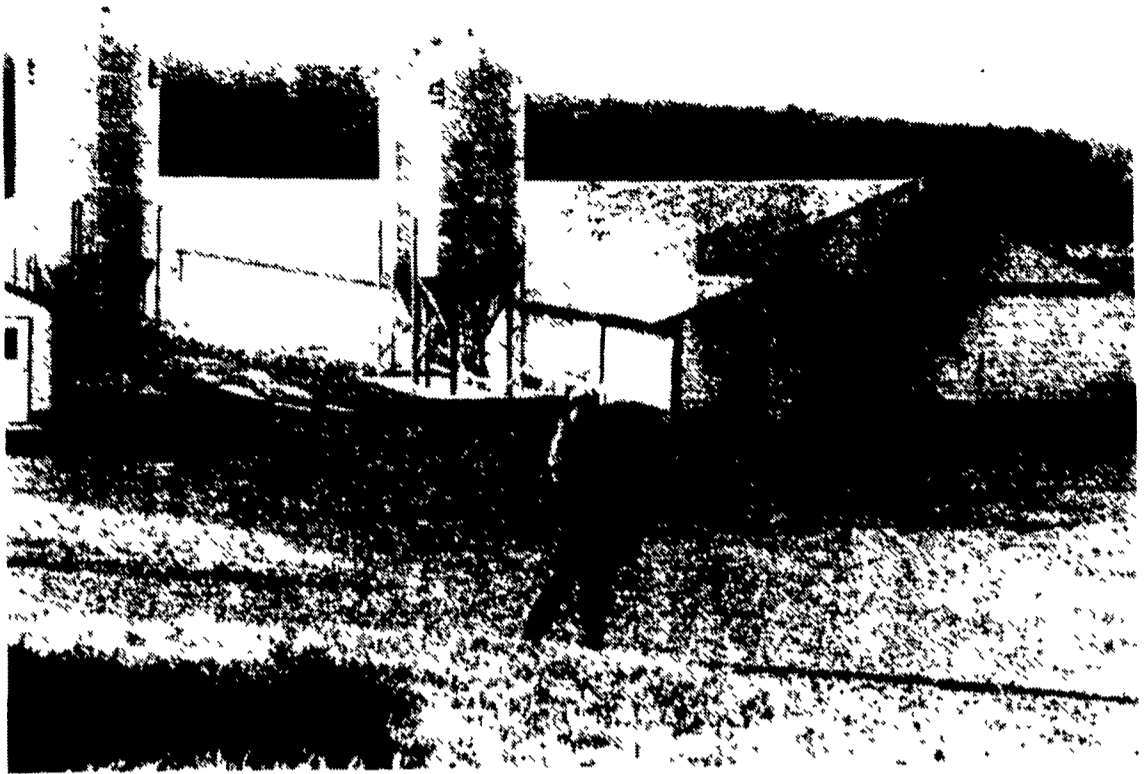
With additional leased land

in Chester County, altogether Mitchell hopes to care for about 700 acres of corn. "We used to do more than that in Chester County," he said. "But the land is lost to building and development."

All told, Mitchell cares for about 520 acres of corn, 260 acres of soybeans, 75 acres of wheat, 25 in alfalfa hay mixes, and 18 acres of barley. A large part of the corn land is in the Exton area.

In Reinholds, Mitchell manages about 66,000 chickens in two houses under contract for Pennfield. Mitchell and his wife Susie care for about five flocks per year. The Lancaster County growers also finished about 150 hogs last fall for Hatfield. He also maintains a small stock of finishing beef.

On the 5-acre contest plot, part of land owned by the Church Farm School — a single-parent boys boarding school from sixth through 12th



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grade — Mitchell follows a two-year corn program with soybeans.

Using no-till, Mitchell planted the Pioneer 3335 variety at a planting depth of 1½ inches on May 2, 1997 at a row width of 30 inches, for a final plant population of 25,265 per acre. He used a starter fertil-

izer of 250 pounds of 10-34-0 fertilizer.

No sidedress was applied. Herbicide applied was a Roundup/Broadstrike combination in a nitrogen solution. There was no cultivation at sidedress.

Mitchell saw little economic advantages to using insecti-

cides because little or no European corn borer or corn rootworm was evident. The most difficult weed to deal with in the area, Mitchell noted, is burcucumber, which is a "real nasty weed to control," said Mitchell. However, the weed can be handled by herbicides when the

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Jeff built this custom tractor bed for his son Matt in their newly renovated home.

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