

# Despite Dry Weather, Webster's Corn Posts High Yields

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high moisture corn. In recent years, he's noted that it can be difficult to market the product and that many other farmers in the valley who have retired from their dairy operations are now growing corn for sale.

"I've found with the dairy-men being squeezed so much on trying to make a living, it's bothering some to find a market for our high moisture corn," Webster noted.

He now has a steady market for the corn from a local dairy farmer. Any extra is marketed on the open market.

In the past, Webster has also been a member of the 5-acre-corn club and won the top award in 1989 with Pioneer hybrid 3751.

"I used to stick to an old variety they had for years, but it was a slow dry-down corn. I got away from that because I sell for high moisture corn. That way we can get in the fields and harvest quicker before we get into bad weather."

He said, "Pioneer wanted me to try out this corn borer resistant variety and I was planting the other variety of Pioneer along with 3751. Then Dave Potter of Agway contacted me and wanted me to try some DeKalb. I wished I'd tried more, I guess," he said.

"I always thought I wanted to try the Roundup ready corn, but we have so much trouble with Japanese bamboo and the only thing I've found that will touch it is Banvel. That won't kill it, but it will knock it back enough that the corn can get above it and you can still get a pretty good yield," explained Web-

ster. "Whoever invents a weed control that can get rid of that bamboo will get rich quick, I think, because it's all up and down the river."

Webster has been farming for most of his life. He grew up on a dairy farm in the Mansfield area. He farmed himself during high school before having a two-year stint in the army, working for the electric company and trying out a factory job. Webster then decided that farming was the profession he wanted to pursue.

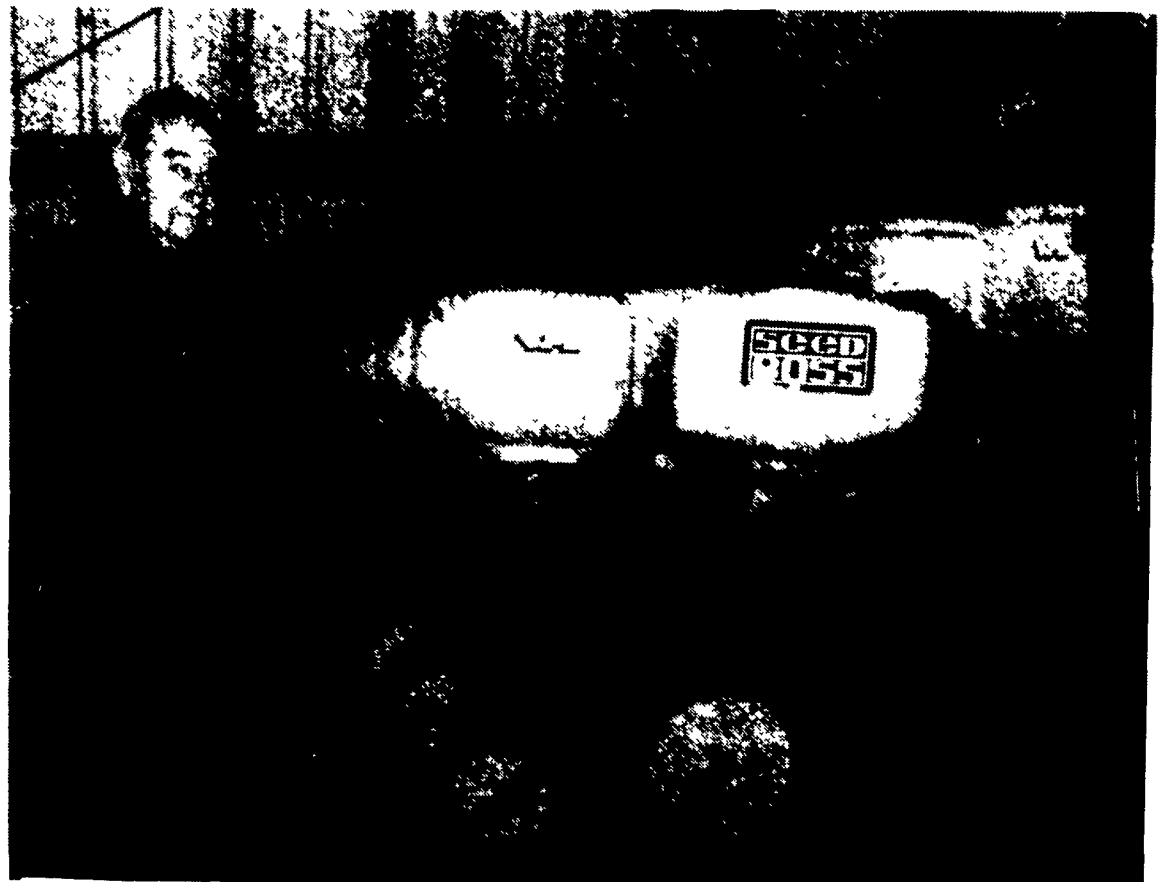
"I went in with my father on our dairy farm, and we were partners for quite a while. Then we got a chance to swap the farm in Mansfield for this farm down by the river, and I certainly haven't been sorry for it," said Webster.

The Websters milked about 50 cows at the new farm for many years before selling off the milking animals and concentrating on raising replacement heifers. When he saw what kind of crops he could get on the river bottom, he decided to just stick to crop farming.

Today Webster has sold some of his property, although he holds the farming rights for five years. He will also lose some land to the Rt. 15 expansion. He now raises corn and hay on about 640 acres.

Over the years, he has witnessed many changes in farming.

"There's better weed control," explained Webster. "and I have a computerized corn planter. That is really handy. You know whether you're planting or if you're not and it will tell you the population in each row. It's quite an improve-



Webster can fine-tune the planting rate with his computerized corn planter.

ment over the old 2-row corn planter."

Webster tries to do most of the work himself, although he does admit that the computer in the corn planter baffles him a bit.

"With the new tractors one man can do a lot of work. I generally do all the work myself except for planting the corn. I never have got to learn the computerized corn planter," said the 74-year-old Webster. "I have a nephew who knows computers pretty well. He generally does my corn planting. This year I had a girl who is interested in farming do my corn planting

and my son finished up."

With the help of others, Webster has learned more and more about the corn planter every year.

"I might have to do it myself," said Webster. "My son generally takes a week of his vacation to help me plant, but he has to ask for a week so far in advance. We don't know what the weather will be. It might rain all week."

Webster's other son lives in California. He and his wife also had three daughters, one of whom is deceased.

With land close to the river,

one might expect to have water in their fields from flooding, but the location of Webster's farm couldn't be better.

"They built some dams after 1975. And the difference farming here is like daylight and dark. Before they put the dams in, we spent almost as much time cleaning off flood trash as we did working the ground. Now we don't have any of that. They let the water out bank full — only what the river will take. It might take a week or two to get the dam back down to the right level, but we don't have the flooding. We feel real fortunate!" said Webster.

## NCGA Expresses Profound Disappointment At WTO Breakdown

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The nation's corn farmers are profoundly disappointed by the breakdown of the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks in Seattle recently. Nevertheless, they are heartened by indications from U.S. officials that negotiations on agriculture could resume soon.

"American farmers were among those who had the most to gain going into these talks, and we have a great deal to lose if the WTO fails to make progress towards further liberalization of global trade in food and agricultural products," said National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) President Lynn Jensen, a South Dakota farmer who headed a delegation of NCGA leaders to Seattle.

"Significant progress was made in Seattle in terms of developing a substantive agenda for future agriculture talks," Jensen noted. "In fact, from what we understand, agriculture was as close to being done as any of the working groups."

Jensen expressed hope



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that WTO members will capitalize on this progress and move quickly to jump-start the stalled agriculture negotiations.

"We export approximately 20 percent of the U.S. corn crop, and additional corn as value-added products," Jensen said. "We have the capacity to export much more, but trade barriers and competitors' export subsidies prevent the U.S. corn industry from realizing the full potential of our comparative advantage in corn production."

"Thus, NCGA will continue to press for a trade agenda that includes elimination of

export subsidies, tariff reductions, and further reductions in trade-distorting domestic support programs," he said.

"This week's setback makes the choice very clear. If the WTO can make significant progress on these objectives, it will enhance global food security and create real opportunities for U.S. farm exports."

"But, if the wave of protectionism sweeping the globe is allowed to proceed unchecked, not only will farmers lose, but so will the world's consumers who depend on abundant, safe, and affordable food."



Ansel Webster reviews the performance report from Pioneer. His fields included a new corn borer resistant variety as well as another variety of Pioneer Corn. He also planted some varieties of DeKalb.



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