

No-Till Corn Did Well In Drought

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cover retained the moisture and improved the overall crop.

Not all ground, Hess noted, is no-tilled. Some owned ground is a clay-loam, which has to be plowed to guarantee consistency in the stand and to allow the soil to warm up.

Hess noted that when he saw the 138-bushel per acre average, "I was shocked," he said. "I did not expect that."

Hess set his sights, he noted, on 80 bushels per acre. Even that looked promising at times.

But with several 100-degree days and lack of rainfall last summer, at times the corn "never looked stressed real bad," he said.

Sometimes the corn became "pointy," he said. But timely showers at two- or three-tenths of an inch literally held drought damage at bay.

This year, some cold, wet ground proved difficult to no-till. Though the entire farm is

no-till, Hess still questions the practice on the heavy clay/loam soil.

Yet this year the corn is doing well.

But Hess noted that he is moving quickly to no-till based farming.

"I started farming 11 years ago," said Hess, at the family farm a short distance away. His parents, Andrew and Dorothy, farm 103 acres.

In October last year, Bob decided to feed steers for his cousin Dwight Hess, Marietta. The steers are brought in at 600 pounds each and fed to they reach about 800-900 pounds each.

Hess keeps about 150-170 head of feeder cattle in the barn. Cattle are shipped out when they reach the proper weights.

Hess is concerned about possible nutrient management law changes that may take into consideration phosphorous limits on farms. And with the develop-



This year's no-till corn, like last year, is showing great promise at the Bob and Sharon Hess farm.

ment in Lancaster County, in addition to heavy traffic, he's had to restrict manure hauling and other work to the nighttime. Hess farms with wife Sharon,

who has her own floral business (Sharon's Floral Design), and sons Travis, 7; Philip, 4; and Ethan, 3. The Hess's belong to East Pe-

tersburg Mennonite Church. Bob is a Junior Boys Activities leader at the church.

Travis is in the second grade at Kraybill's Mennonite School.

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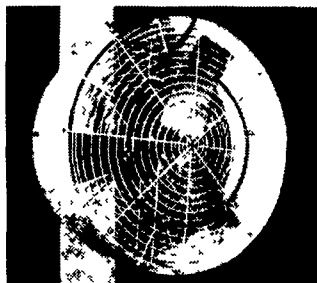
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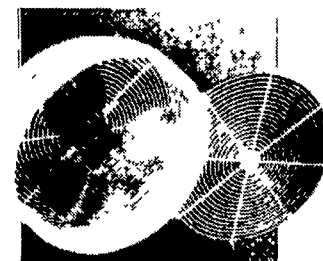
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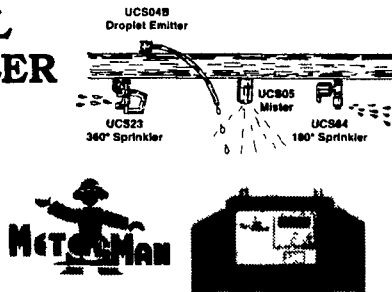
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