

Management Strategies Essential When Planting Rootworm-, Corn Borer-Resistant Varieties

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with insect resistance — preventing the CRW from becoming resistance to the effects of the toxins — are still evolving.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations insist that 20 percent of the corn acres should be non-Bt corn to act as a refuge to deter resistance.

If spraying, the number jumps up to 40 percent. So other integrated strategies must be incorporated in fields.

Some growers plant Bt and non-Bt corn in strips. An example would be two rows of non-Bt along with 12 rows of Bt.

Another strategy — a popular one — is to plant blocks of corn, where 80 percent is Bt and another 20 percent aren't.

Another option, adopted by some growers, is to plant different fields — one containing Bt and another with non-Bt corn.

But with the CRW varieties, growers should understand the rootworm's life cycle is different from the corn borer. The rootworm doesn't move as far — it won't move from field to field. Mating is close by.

So growers may have to take CRW and non-CRW controlling varieties and somehow mix them together, according to Calvin.

"What is the best strategy?" said Calvin, regarding finding economic thresholds. He believes it's essential for researchers to see what is in the marketplace first and then determine what to do.

"It's going to be an issue we'll have to contend with, and we have to generate data to deal with it," he said.

For now, growers selecting ECB resistance through Bt corn should consider an overall strategy when dealing with pests.

Growers should select not just ECB-resistant corn varieties, but look closely at yield and other characteristics.

"Look for (a variety) that performs well, not just one that has the genes in it," said Calvin.

Deciding whether the technology is a benefit depends on the cost factors. Getting

the genes will cost a premium.

And some hybrids can out-yield Bt and those with stacked genes — combining CRW and ECB control — so it is best to consider planting and yield intentions.



CORN TALK NEWS

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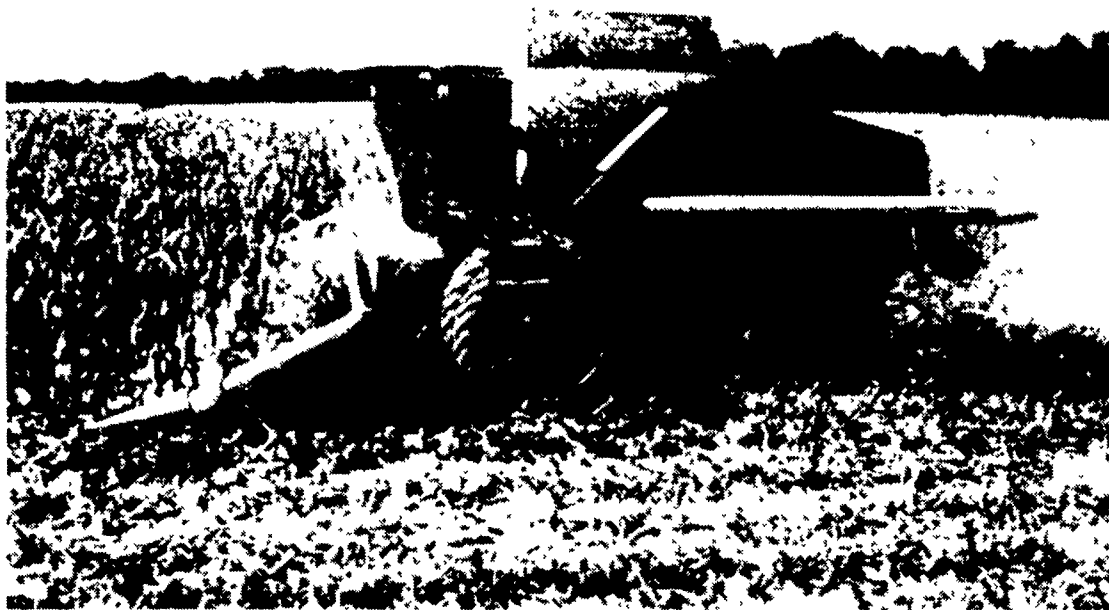
ALLENTOWN (Lehigh Co.) — Bob Utterback, ag marketing adviser for Farm Journal magazine, is the featured speaker at the Decisions For the Real Beginning of the 21st Century Seminar Jan. 23 here at the Days Inn and Conference Center.

Paul Knight, Pennsylvania State climatologist, instructor of meteorology at Penn State University, and manager of the Weather Communications Group, will also talk.

Paul has been the senior forecaster for The New York Times since 1986. Paul is also the producer, co-host, and on-camera meteorologist for WPSX-TV's Weather World.

Dan Wolf, president of the Pennsylvania Master Corn Growers Association, will give his organization's perspective on public policy.

For information on the conference, contact John Berry at the Lehigh County Cooperative Extension office, (610) 391-9840.



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