

Corn Growers Praise President Bush For Pro-Ethanol National Energy Plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President George W. Bush, in remarks made to Farm Journal's sixth annual forum in Washington, D.C., emphasized the importance of ethanol to national security, the environment, and the farm economy.

After praising farmers for representing and preserving the values of the U.S., the president gave a strong endorsement of renewable fuels and encouraged the Senate to pass a national energy bill.

During the pro-ethanol speech, President Bush stated, "I also want to improve our homeland security and our economy by having a national energy plan. I want to thank the Farm Journal Forum for emphasizing the importance of ethanol and biofuels. These fuels are gentle on the environment. They are fuels that can be renewed year after year, and fuels that can expand our farm economy. These fuels are made right here in America, so they can't be threatened by any foreign power."

President Bush continually reiterated his support for ethanol, adding, "Ethanol and biofuels are fuels of the future for this country. Since the beginning of my adminis-

tration, I have strongly supported ethanol and biofuels. And the energy plan I sent to Congress back in the spring supports biofuels."

"President Bush was right on target in his remarks today," said Boyd Smith, a York, Neb., corn farmer and chairman of the National Corn Growers Association Ethanol Marketing Committee. "The president echoed NCGA's long standing position that renewable fuels — like ethanol — promote the national interest, and are good for both the environment and the economy, while enhancing our national security."

Noting that one of NCGA's top priorities is inclusion of a Renewable Fuels Standard in energy legislation, Smith went on to say, "With support like this from the president we are hopeful we will see legislation expanding the role of renewable fuels in our national energy policy."

It is estimated that in 2001, ethanol production will use 675 million bushels of corn, producing nearly 1.8 billion gallons of the renewable fuel.

For more information on the National Corn Growers Association and Ethanol, log onto <http://www.ncga.com>.

PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Between The Rows

Dr. Greg Roth

Penn State Agronomy Associate Professor



More Lessons From An Interesting Year

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Last year is in the history books now but it will go down as another interesting one for many corn producers. Perhaps the one thing that I remember most was the unusually dry spring and fall that both had dramatic impacts on corn management. The crop also seemed to yield reasonably well despite the lack of moisture in some areas.

The dry spring allowed for a rapid planting season with many folks finishing corn planting by the first week of May. According to USDA figures, 68 percent of the Pennsylvania crop had been planted by May 13, up from an average of 41 percent. The dry soil conditions contributed to less than ideal emergence in some fields and some concerns about weed control in others. In our own trials, we paid careful attention to our planting depth and got reasonable stands, especially where we no-tilled. Where corn was planted shallow in tilled ground many folks reported some cases of severe delayed emergence. I was also impressed with the level of weed control we did get from our preemergence herbicide programs despite the dry season. The big lesson — plant corn 1.5 to 2.0 inches deep, not any shallower, and perhaps a bit deeper if the soil is warm and dry.

The dry summer was a mixed blessing for corn pro-

ducers. In some areas disease pressure was low and this helped yields. But for most fields suffered some drought stress. Yields dropped statewide to 94 bushels per acre down from 127 last year. That means we produced about 40 million bushels less corn this year than last.

The dry conditions in late summer also resulted in a drier than normal silage crop that dried down rapidly once it got to about 60 percent moisture. The lesson here — measure silage moisture — don't guess and plan accordingly.

On the plus side the grain crop dried down rapidly and the soil was dry at harvest in most places. This resulted in record low grain moistures, good test weights and not much potential for soil compaction during harvest. Much corn was harvested and stored without being dried. Harvest was also completed in a very timely fashion. By the 4th of November USDA estimated that 74 percent of the Pennsylvania crop had been harvested compared to a five-year average of 55 percent. Don't count on many more harvest years like this in your career.

One concern an early fall might generate is that corn growers now might have some tendency to shift to later maturing hybrids. Then, in a more normal year, hybrids won't dry down well and test weights suffer. I suspect this won't be a big problem — in fact I see more and more producers relying more on hybrids that are on the early side of their maturity

zone. The reason seems to be that many of these early hybrids are yielding close to or better than the full season hybrids, they allow an earlier start to harvest and drying costs are greatly reduced. Data from our hybrid test reports in this issue of Corn Talk suggest that there are high yielding early (low moisture) hybrids with good test weight available in each maturity zone.

The other issue that impressed me, and many producers, was how well the crop yielded given the rainfall in some areas. I attribute this to the early planting, drought stress tolerance of the hybrids we are using now and the adoption of no-till and conservation tillage by some producers. Because of these advances in genetics and crop management, corn yields have been increasing in our state by about 1.1 bushel per acre per year in our state during the last 40 years.

Hopefully in 2002 yields should improve again. It will be an even numbered year, which seems to help with rainfall for some reason, and there should be a few factors like reduced compaction, reduced N leaching losses and fall tillage that should have positive effects on yields as well.



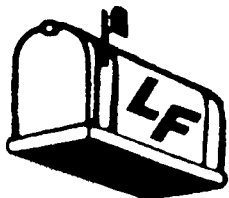
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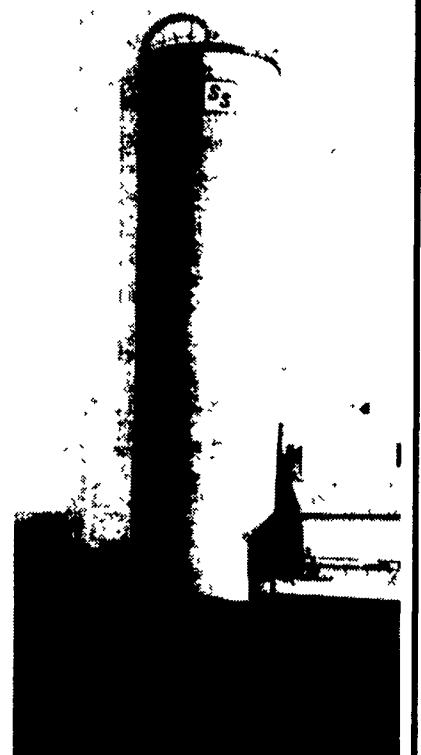
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