

# Between The Rows

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some of the issues we've discussed in the pages of *Corn Talk* here during the last 10 years.

In some ways it seems as if corn production hasn't changed that much, but if you take a minute to think about it, there have been an incredible number of changes in the technology that we use.

Perhaps some of the most striking changes have come in the area of biotechnology. In the mid-'90s, Bt corn was introduced and soon several different events were available. The great debate on Bt corn developed with the Monarch butterfly issue and then came the Starlink issue, which affected many producers.

We all became familiar with the issues surrounding the use of biotechnology, perhaps more than any other part of agriculture. Then in the late '90s, Roundup Ready corn arrived on the scene. At the time the standard thinking was that it would never take off and the benefit of Roundup resistance was not nearly as beneficial in corn as in soybeans. Now Roundup Ready corn is a sizeable and growing part of the corn hybrid market.

More recently, we have seen the introduction of the rootworm Bt corn and, as with all the other technologies, we have been conducting intensive research programs on the use of these products and will be reporting on them in future issues of *Corn Talk*.

In the equipment area, there also have been many, many changes. Think about the introduction of yield monitors and the development of yield mapping — a precision ag technology. I remember how we did lots of calibration studies with our new yield monitor and how exciting it was to develop that first yield map of one of our fields at the research farm. I also remember all the hardware and software problems we encountered in the early days and how close we came to throwing \$20,000 worth of equipment in the pond. Now, it seems so effortless to collect yield data, and many farmers have them on board and use them routinely.

Another equipment innovation that has really taken off has been the row-neutral or Kemper head for silage choppers. I remember driving four hours to western New York to get video of a farmer with a Kemper head in 1993 — now these heads are commonplace. Other equipment innovations that have occurred in corn production include the many planter medications — the

zone tillage systems, the row cleaners, the seed firmers, and now the spaded closing wheels. Now we have many planter test stands for fine-tuning planter performance. All of planter technologies were rare back in the early '90s.

Herbicides have undergone changes as well during this period. There have been lots of new, low-rate products that added to things like Beacon and Accent that were available in the early '90s. We also got safeners added to some of our traditional products. And we've seen a move away from Paraquat to Roundup for many burndown applications.

We've also seen many changes in how fertilizer management has developed in corn production in our state. We've seen the development of nutrient management plans based on N and now the P index is being introduced. We see farmers moving away from the use of starter fertilizers in some situations and some producers putting all their N in bands 4 inches from the row. These are all relatively new developments in the last 10 years or so.

Another change that has happened has been continuing industry consolidations. Common names like Muncy Chief, Hoffmans Seeds, Cargill Seeds, Jacques Seeds, and others have faded into history. Similar trends have occurred in the chemical industry and in the equipment industry.

We've also seen changes in our silage evaluation. We saw the introduction of the BMR hybrids, the leafy hybrids, and the silage only hybrids. We saw the development of in-vitro and in-situ tests for evaluating feed quality. Now we hear about differences in the kernel texture among hybrids and its importance to the dairy farmer.

All of these innovations during the last 10 years have required a significant amount of knowledge to understand and to use effectively. Its gratifying to know that extension and industry representatives have accomplished this education through meetings and publications such as *Corn Talk* and others.

I'm proud to have played a role in studying these technologies over the years and sharing our findings with you in the pages of *Corn Talk*. I think together we've made some real differences in how we grown corn and I look forward to working on issues like these for another 10 years or more in the future.

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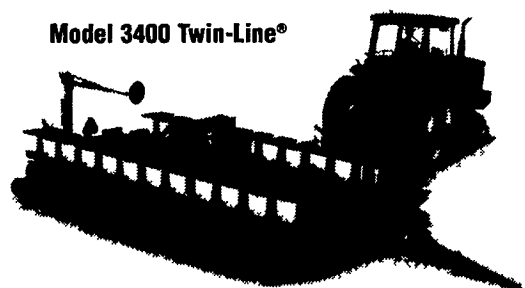
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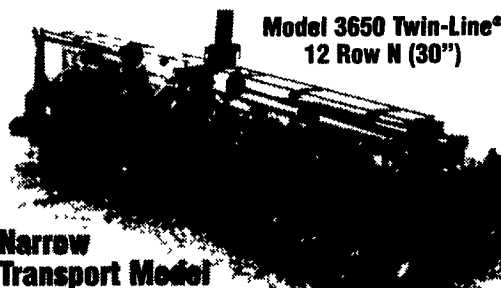
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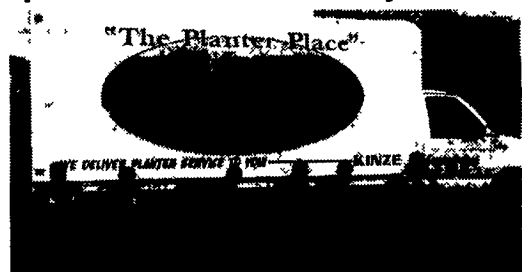
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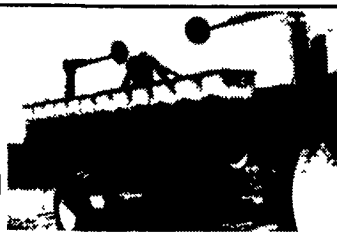
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