

Gettysburg Area Young Farmers Gather For Crops Meeting

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

HANOVER (Adams Co.) — Weeds and how to control them were main topics at the Gettysburg Area Young Farmers' twilight agronomy meeting Aug. 26.

Dan Winters, farmer and ag consultant, hosted the event on his farm near Hanover. For many years, Winters has conducted field trials for new corn and soybean varieties on his land.

This year, "the biggest challenge was getting it planted," Winters said, referring to the wet conditions this spring.

Farmers attending the meeting had a chance to view test plots, identify weeds, hear news from a number of seed and chemical companies, and earn spray applicator credits.

It was a challenging year for weed control, according to chemical company representatives at the meeting.



Dan Winters shows the group an asiatic day-flower plant. Asiatic day-flower is an invasive weed becoming more of a problem in the area.

John Flanagan of Syngenta said that wet years like this one showed that herbicides don't always work as well as farmers expect.

"Chemicals are just tools," Flanagan said. "They all have limitations."

Some weeds were tougher to control this year, especially weeds that grew too big for herbicides to do their job.

Flanagan gave velvetleaf as an example. Glyphosate is labeled for controlling velvetleaf to a maximum height of 12 inches. When the weeds are taller than that, farmers can't expect to get good control.

Weather and soil conditions also play a big role in the effectiveness of the chemicals, Flanagan pointed out.

"If conditions were perfect, probably every herbicide out there would work at half (the labeled) rate," Flanagan said.

Don Coulson of Miller Chemical talked about the need to check water hardness and alkalinity on a regular basis to make sure herbicides and surfactants work properly.

"(Water quality) can make a big difference whether you have control or don't have control," Coulson said.

Coulson recommended that farmers use drift control agents in sprays, especially around populated areas.

Seed and chemical representatives on hand included those from American Seed, Dekalb/Monsanto, Doebler, Gørst, Hubner, Mid-Atlantic Independent Tech Services, Mid-Atlantic Seed, Miller Chemical, Seedway, and Syngenta.

Dan Winters has also been experimenting with foliar (leaf) feeding of corn and soybeans to increase yields.

Winters has compiled two articles on the subject, discussing the possibilities of 100 bushel/acre soybeans, and increasing corn yields by 25 bushels/acre.

"We're learning every day," Winters said.

For more information, check his Website at winter-sag.com.



Donna Tuckey compares corn roots from hybrids with and without the *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) gene for controlling rootworm.



Rob Kauffman talks to farmers about his independent corn hybrid field testing service.

10 Years Of Corn Talk

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gestibility or those items critical to certain growers became a "lot more finely tuned," Troop noted, in those 10 years of research and development.

Those traits are now "very targeted" in corn varieties. Traits have also improved for overall crop protection, such as a Bt corn for European corn borer and now for corn rootworm; herbicide-tolerant hybrids, such as Roundup Ready corn; and other specialized crop protection.

Troop served as president of the association from 1992-1994.

Despite many changes, some things haven't changed in 10 years — such as the format for the Five-Acre corn results, published in the March issues of *Corn Talk*. And *Corn Talk* is published three times a year, with little change to the schedule in the past decade.

Roth calls the columns and inputs that appear regularly — in addition to strong feature reporting on the success of growers throughout the state — the strongest factors in the "collaborative effort" of the section/newsletter.



How Wet Was It?

Greg Roth
Professor Of Agronomy
Penn State

It sure seemed like a wet year to grow corn. How did we fare compared to the record books?

Here in State College, September was officially the second wettest on record and that followed August, which was the wettest August since they began keeping records 108 years ago.

Rainfall totals here were 5.32 inches in June, 5.41 inches in July, 9.1 inches in Au-

gust, and 7.21 inches in September.

This was the first time we have had four consecutive months with 5 inches of rain since records were being kept. By the end of September, we have received 42.83 inches of rain compared to our normal total of 38.5 inches in an entire year.

The bottom line — we just had another very unusual year, on the heels of a very unusual year in 2002. Let's hope for something more "normal" in 2004.

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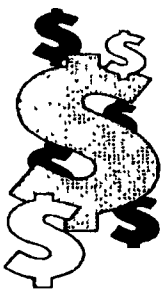


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