

Crop Improvement Activities

Comes Hybrid Corn

The early thirties brought several demonstrations to prove the advantages and adaptability of the newly developed hybrid corn to Grant county. Six demonstration plots planted in 1936 showed hybrid corn to out yield open-pollinated varieties by 26.8%. Hybrid corn was also rated as superior in resistance to lodging, resistance to disease, quality. Over 5000 bushels of hybrid seed corn were anticipated to be produced in 1936, prior to the growing season, by county agent Ben Walker. By that time, three producers had already installed seed drying equipment and a total of thirteen growers had planted 240 acres of corn in "crossing blocks."

In 1938, county agent Walker initiated six hybrid corn yield trial demonstrations at widely scattered areas of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Michigan. Plots were on the Charles Wilkins farm of Platteville. Results showed a yield advantage for hybrid corn over open-pollinated corn of 971 pounds of corn per acre.

Early Hybrid Producers Listed

Producers of hybrid seed corn in Grant county for the 1938 season were listed as follows: C. H. Andrew, Platteville; H. R. Andrew, Platteville; Elmer Biddick, Livingston; Emil Brandt, Fennimore; Harry Dieter, Livingston; Burnell Egan, Cuba City; Gary Ferguson, Mt. Hope; John Flitsch, Potosi; Joe Gates, Livingston; Lawrence Hauck, Stitzer; Claire Jerrett, Lancaster; Leonard Kalt, Glen Haven; Rud Kussmaul, Mt. Hope; Richard Metcalf, Glen Haven; Nuti & Kuenster, Glen Haven; J. C. Perrin, Bloomington; John Pleumer, Potosi; Frank Prohaska, Montfort; W. H. Rech, Lancaster; Clinton Staver, Lancaster; C. E. Tuffley, Boscobel; and Louis Vesperman, Lancaster.

Corn and Grain Certification

One of the services performed by county agents of this period was that of "field inspection" and subsequent certification of seed corn and other seed grains, including oats and barley. Grant county agricultural agents assisted the State Seed Laboratory by certifying hundreds of bushels of Grant county seed during this time.

Early Corn Husking Contests

First records of a county corn husking contest appeared in 1937, at which time Omer Koopman of Patch Grove won second place and then went on to win the state championship.

The 1938 county contest was held at the Peter Mergen farm, Glen Haven. It attracted twenty-one contestants and over 5,000 spectators. County champion was Lawrence Hauk of Waterloo township. Omer Koopman placed fifth. In going on to the state contest, Omer placed second and Lawrence placed third.

Grant county held its own contest in 1939 and was host to the State Corn Husking Contest as well. The county event this year was held at the Fred Vorwald farm in Beetown township. Lawrence Hauk won first; Omer Koopman won second; Norbert Reiser of Glen Haven placed third; and Alfred Johl of Bloomington placed fourth. In the state contest held later at Cuba City, Lawrence Hauk placed second and became eligible to compete in the national event in Kansas.

Omer Koopman of Patch Grove came back in 1940 to win both the county corn husking contest and the state event, held this year at Richland Center. He also participated in the national contest held in Iowa.

The 1941 county corn husking contest was held at the R. I. Griswold farm in Fennimore township.

Oat Production

Variety and fertilization results were secured on oat plots grown on the Robert Baumgartner farm near Fennimore in 1939. Among the varieties tested at the time were State's Pride, Gopher, White Cross, Spooner, Forward and Wisconsin Wonder. Fertilization brought earlier maturity and increased yields by 10.7 bushels per acre.

A new era in oat production was ushered in with the appearance in 1941 of Vicland Oats. Seventeen Grant county farmers grew Vicland this year and experienced yields of from sixty-five to ninety bushels per acre. At the time, Vicland was considered to be "practically rust resistant."