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SPECIAL INFORMATION ABOUT SELECTING CORN FOR SEED*

A Review of Many Points Not Generally Considered, But Which Influence Greatly the Yield and the Profit From the Corn Crop

EVERYONE recognizes the value of using an ideal pure-bred sire, in breeding up his herd or flock. The latter bred a herd or flock becomes, the more money it yields to its owner. These recognized facts, concerning the breeding of stock, are just as true concerning farm crops; and when practised will often yield better returns. There are few farm crops which may be improved so economically and so quickly as corn.

Many have the idea that, to start in right and grow good corn, they must seed elsewhere and get some new fancy kind of seed. Those who do this are usually disappointed with their first crop or two. It takes some time for corn to become adapted to a change in climatic and soil conditions.

For that reason, it is usually best to secure a variety of corn that has been successfully grown in the locality for a period of years.

In case the variety is not large enough, or does not mature, these faults can be corrected only by a careful selection of seed ears. If a good local variety is chosen, one will be more sure of securing a crop; and by the end of two years (which would be necessary to acclimate the outside corn) he would be much nearer success than if the same amount of time had been spent with a corn brought from some distant locality. We do not discourage the introduction of new varieties of corn, but such varieties should be tried in a small way first.

TO MAKE A FIELD SELECTION
In case one has no "special seed plot," in which his best and earliest maturing ears were planted, it is then necessary that his seed corn be selected from the field. The most practical method to do this is to go through the field with a sack tied across one's shoulder and select the choicest and best-matured ears. Two rows of corn may easily be examined at once.

During the process of selection, consideration of the strength and character of the stalk, the height of the ear from the ground, and the size of the shank, should be noted. A stalk does not necessarily have to be large to be a big producer. A tall spindling plant lodges very easily. The

*The information set forth in this article has been furnished Farm and Dairy by corn experts connected with the Minnesota Experiment Station. It applies especially to the selection of corn where a grain is used for ensilage or fodder; it is in view. In selecting seed for planting or for other uses, the stalk must be given more special consideration.

stalk should be of good size and strong at the base, gradually tapering, and not necessarily tall.

Strong, vigorous stalks, of medium height, usually produce the best and earliest matured ears. The ear should be attached to the stalk by a medium-sized shank, which is long enough to allow the tip of the ear to hang down.

All ears in a cornfield will not mature at the same time. A variation of 15 days in maturing of ears in a field is not uncommon. One of the reasons why a good selection of corn can not be made from the shock, or from the field late in the fall, is that one is not able to tell the time the ear matured.

Desirable ears may mature 10 or 15 days later than the average freeing-time; and, if those are selected, they will insure a late maturing crop. Again, if corn is left unhusked until late, the husks prevent the ear from drying out properly; and, as a consequence, it is likely to be frozen before it is husked, or at least before it has had time to dry out after husking.

It has been learned, by many tests, that ears of a certain form yield more than other ears different from the standard form. Ears of corn likely to give best results carry the butt diameter well towards the tip; they are free from indentations or other irregularities that would tend to decrease the yield of the ear; they have straight, regular rows of uniform kernels, and have kernels extending well over the tip and butt.

TYPE EAR FOR SEED CORN
In the choice of corn for seed, one selects the ears that he believes will give him the largest yield of good corn the following year. It is a good plan to choose an ear of corn that is as near the type wanted as possible; then keep this ear from year to year, or until you get a better one. At any rate have a sample ear that you can look at occasionally to help you in following one type. Keep this type-ear handy when selecting corn in the fall; and in the spring, when the final selection is made, it is well to compare all ears carefully with the type-ear.

It costs just as much to grow an ear of corn that has kernels covering three-fourths of the cob as it does to grow one with kernels covering the whole cob. The kernel contains most of the feeding value. The cob is of very little value as

food, hence the rows of kernels should round well down over the tip (not necessarily clear over) thus insuring a good proportion of corn to cob. The rows should run straight from the butt to the tip; because, in crooked rows, there are more irregular kernels, and kernels of irregular size make it impossible to plant a uniform number in each hill.

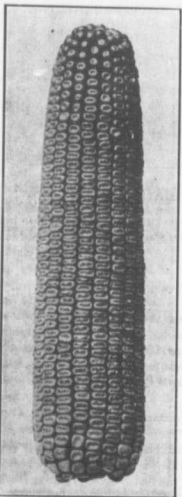
FURROWS IN THE EARS
In selecting seed corn, one should always have in mind securing a maximum yield. One cannot hope to secure a maximum yield of shelled corn if the furrows between the rows of kernels are wide and deep. On the other hand if there is severely any furrow, and the crowns of the kernels touch, it will be found that the ears are hard to dry. To be right, the furrows should be merely distinguishing grooves between the rows of kernels.

To get the most feeding value out of an ear of corn there should be no space between the kernels at the cob. It is the tip of the kernel—the end that contains the germ—that is richest in food nutrition. Pointed, chaffy tips indicate low feeding value and poor germinating power. Every precaution should be exercised to select seed corn that will grow and produce strong, vigorous plants. Space between the kernels at the cob, and lack of furrow, usually indicate a low proportion of corn to the cob, immaturity, and poor vitality. The tip of the kernel should be wide, allowing room for a long, broad and deep germ.

THE KERNEL
Nothing will aid more in making a high yield of shelled corn than a deep, well-formed kernel. But do not select a too deep kernel; because the heavier the kernel the greater is the length of time required to mature it; and, above all other things, maturity is the first consideration. A good dent kernel will be somewhat wedge-shaped, about half again as broad at the top as at the bottom. Flint corn has a more rounding shape. Being often as broad or broader than deep. A corn-planter can plant a uniform number of kernels in each hill only when the kernels planted are uniform in size. To secure uniform planting, the kernels of selected seed corn must be all of nearly the same size, not only on one ear, but throughout the whole selection.

PER CENT OF SHELLED CORN TO COB
Ears with large cobs are to be avoided, on account of being hard to dry. A great variation exists in the amount of corn to cob different ears will shell. The variation usually comes between 70 and 90 per cent. corn and 10 to 30 per cent. cob. From this it is seen that if one feeds one lot of hogs a bushel of corn that is but 70 per cent. shelled corn, and another lot a bushel which is 90 per cent. shelled corn, one lot will net 49 pounds of shelled corn and the other lot 63 pounds. Indications of per cent. of corn to cob are size of cob, depth of kernel, furrow space, and space between the kernels at the cob.

(Concluded on page 5)



Good Type Ear of Dent Corn

number of ears including the Minnesota Experiment Station. It applies especially to the selection of corn where a grain is used for ensilage or fodder; it is in view. In selecting seed for planting or for other uses, the stalk must be given more special consideration.

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