

North Carolina Corn Yields Far Below Average Yield

Only 1-3 To 1-2 Yield Of Corn Producing States: Tests Conducted To Increase Yields

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Tobacco yields have increased tremendously in recent years, and North Carolina cotton yields are the highest of any cotton producing state. On the other hand, corn yields are consistently 1-3 to 1-2 those produced in the corn belt. This is true in spite of the fact that North Carolina is a feed deficient area and ships in a considerable amount of the corn that is used in the State.

There appears to be a tendency to make up for low yields in North Carolina by planting and cultivating more acres. This is shown by the fact that one acre out of every three tilled acres is in corn.

The increased yields of cotton and tobacco were closely related to controlled acreages. This resulted in more attention to selecting varieties, seed bed preparation, spacing, fertilization, cultivation, rotations, and other factors which result in higher yields.

No reduced acreage program for corn has been adopted for North Carolina. However, this does not prevent us from considering those factors which can do so much to increase the acre yields.

In 1944, the North Carolina Experiment Station conducted eleven comprehensive tests throughout the Coastal Plain and Piedmont areas.

These tests were conducted on the basis of five main points.

1. A proven local variety or an adapted hybrid seed was selected.
2. Fertilizer applications were made in line with the requirements of the crop. For example, a fifty bushel crop of corn, with the stalks and leaves, actually takes up around 83 pounds of nitrogen, 36 pounds of phosphoric acid, and 57 pounds of potash. This would be equivalent to 519 pounds of nitrate of soda, 200 pounds of 18 percent superphosphate (acid) and 114 pounds of 51 percent muriate of potash. One can easily see that with the present use of fertilizer, it would be impossible to grow high yields unless the fertilizer was already in the soil.

3. Plants were spaced thick enough to produce high yields. Corn is like broilers or hogs, the food or feed is most efficiently used up to certain weights. In the case of corn, the fertilizer is used most efficiently, and higher yields result, when the ear size is below 8 ounces (1/2 lb). This is a small ear. Most farmers grow large ears which do not use the fertilizer efficiently. The stands of corn were regulated so that the desired yield could be produced with about 1/2 pound ears. With plants averaging 1 to 1.5 ears per stalk, the following spacing is required:
For fifty bushels per acre, 24 inches in 3.5 foot rows.
For seventy-five bushels, 21 in-

ches in 3.5 foot rows.
For seventy-five to one hundred bushels, 16 inches in 3.5 foot rows.

4. Cultivation was shallow enough to kill weeds without damage to the corn roots. The corn root system is very extensive and close to the surface of the ground. Deep cultivation destroys roots, which injure the plant, and prevent the plant from feeding in the surface soil which contains most of the fertility. These roots are closer to the surface than most people think. They can be easily observed by digging in the surface soil where deep cultivation has not destroyed them. Shallow cultivation means using a weeder, spike-tooth harrow, or similar implement, until the corn is 6 to 8 inches high. Then using a sweep which will just scrape under the surface but supply enough soil to cover the grass and build the type of ridge desired.

5. The side dressing with nitrogen, and potash where needed, was applied when the corn was about 2 1-2 feet high. The corn was laid by at this stage, as later cultivation would destroy too many roots close to the surface.

The results from these tests are published in Agronomy Information Circular No. 139 by the Agronomy Department of the North Carolina Experiment Station. This publication is available upon request. The outstanding yields demonstrate that North Carolina can produce high yields

of corn even under unfavorable conditions when the same factors are put into practice that are being used on tobacco and cotton. The results of this outstanding work are being tried out in demonstrations all over North Carolina this year. With very few exceptions, there are 3 to 10 demonstrations in whatever county you live. Ask your County Agent where these demonstrations are located and see for yourself what can be done on corn production.

GILDING THE LILY

Mose Jackson was dead and was having a large funeral. The minister told all the good things he could think of about the deceased. Mose had been such a loving husband, a wonderfully kind father, a genial neighbor, a very solicitous provider for his family and a constant and benevolent church member, according to the minister.

About this time—Eliza, the widow, began to get uneasy. Leaning down to her young son she said: "Rastus, you all go look in dat coffin an' see effen dat's yore paw inside."

SPRING PIG CROP WAS SHARPLY CUT

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ten-year (1934-43) average. According to the Crop Reporting Service, approximately 95,000 sows farrowed during the spring of 1945, as compared with 140,000 in 1944 and 159,000 in 1943. Morgan asserted that North Carolina hog producers now plan a reduction of 12 per cent in the number of sows to farrow this fall as compared with a year ago. If these plans materialize, the fall pig crop will be about 40 per cent less than the peak season of 1943.

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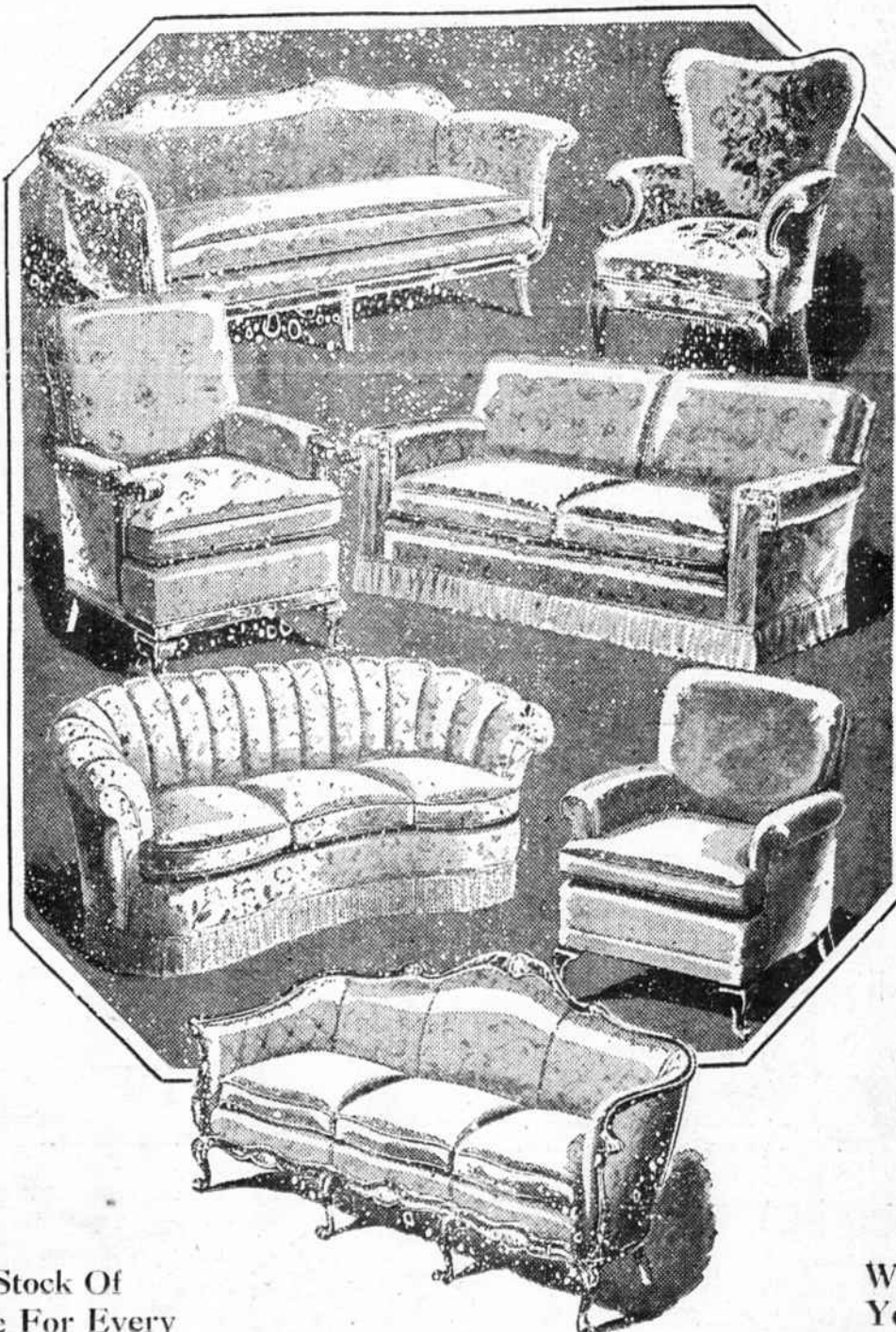
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