

# 20-INCH ROWS, 33,500 PLANTS, 301 BUSHEL

If you should stop by the farm of Richard M. Smith & Sons near Medina, Ohio this summer, you'd likely see an outstanding example of thick corn planting and what can happen under favorable conditions.

For the past six years the Smiths have planted a one acre plot of corn in 20-inch rows on bottom land soil. They attain a plant population of about 33,500. This is done by setting the planter to drop a kernel every 7 inches.

This exceptional acre yielded 301 bushels. His harvest stalk count on 40-inch rows was 20,000 per acre.

Admittedly, this plot is experimental, but it's an attempt to see what can be done. The Smiths account for their yields this way:

"First we put on lots of manure . . . at least 100 tons. Then we plowed down 1,000 pounds of 12-12-12. We plowed only once.

"At planting we applied 500 pounds of 6-24-12 with the planter. This past year we sprayed with Atrazine and didn't cultivate. At silking time we irrigated with urea dissolved in river water. We applied 125 pounds of actual nitrogen."

To irrigate with urea they dump it into a barrel to dissolve. Then they use a suction pump to take the fertilizer solution out of the barrel where it is mixed with more water and sprayed on the field.

To get 20-inch rows they use a standard 2-row planter set for 40-inch rows, then swing the drawbar and go over the field again in the same tracks.

Mr. Smith in commenting on this experimental plot observed: "This would be practical if it could be harvested by machine."

But the Smiths don't only get tremendous yields on "souped-up" experimental plots; they attain big yields on all of their cropland. In 1962 they averaged 150 bushels on the upland fields and 186 bushels on river bottom fields. Here's the corn growing program they followed this past year on their 61 acres of corn grown for grain, as well as the 16 silage acres.

1. They spread sawdust and sloppy manure all winter . . . whenever weather and ground permitted.

2. They spread 500 pounds of 12-12-12 on the bottom land that is in continuous corn. The upland got 400 pounds per acre. They spread just ahead of plowing.

3. Good plowing at the right time. This is one of the most important keys to getting high corn yields, Smiths believe. "We're never in a hurry to plow," Smith says. "We like to plow when it's not too wet, yet just ahead of planting. In fact, we like to plow one day and plant the next.

"If the ground is plowed at the right moisture, one disking is enough. Once over with a double disk and our ground is ready for planting."

4. At planting, 6-24-12 was applied at the rate of 250 pounds per acre.

5. Used chemical weed control. This year they used Atrazine on the bottom land, 2-4D on the upland.

"We've had continuous corn in our river bottom for the past four years and it gets better every year," observed Smith.

On the uplands the Smiths use a rotation system. "We leave the meadows as long as they're good; some of 'em are 8 to 10 years old," he said. "We re-seed after corn with alfalfa-brome."

One thing's for sure with the Smiths, when there's a chance for boosting corn yields through improved methods, they'll give it a try. "We try to do the same thing in our dairy operation. We can't afford to do otherwise," he says.



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Last year Keith Smith, Jasper, Michigan had a yield check showing 165.8 bushels per acre in a test area . . . and his whole crop from nearly 100 acres averaged out an even 150 bushels. "This is a jump of 20.8 bushels per acre from my yield check a year ago," says Smith.

Smith is a young farmer who aims for top efficiency as he steadily expands his business. Already the owner of 120 acres, he rents an additional 60 and he pushes for top yields of both corn and wheat on all the land he handles. He is now feeding 100 head of beef cattle and is working on plans to expand to around 300 head.

Using a special fertilizer program for corn, Keith Smith is following fertilizer recommendations based on a complete test of the soils in each field. Last year he applied 400 lbs. of 5-20-20 per acre at the row, placing fertilizer to one side and below the seed. Then he followed with a sidedress application of anhydrous ammonia. For continuous corn he figures a minimum of 100 pounds of actual nitrogen is probably needed in addition to the 20 lbs. or so contributed by the row application of fertilizer.

On his naturally fertile soils, Keith plants 21,000 kernels to the acre, aiming for a harvest time population of 18,500 to 19,000 ear bearing stalks. His high yielding corn in 1962 was one of the single crosses. With his fertilizer program, this single cross produced sound, well-filled uniform ears at the high population needed for 150+ bushels corn.

The program Smith follows is well within the reach of most Top Farmers in the Midwest.

### 150 + BUSHEL PER ACRE