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HOW TO RAISE ONE HUNDRED BUSHELS OF CORN ON AN ACRE

Contributed by
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sociation

To raise one hundred bushels of corn per acre is not a difficult thing to do, if all of the features of modern farming are carefully observed. If all of the "ifs" are overcome, and they can be, the task is an easy one. The following figures will give the farmer an idea of what must be done to accomplish the results. An acre of corn should have 3,556 hills, and each hill should contain at least three stalks, or 10,668 stalks on an acre. Each stalk should have one ear and an acre as many ears, namely 10,668 as there are stalks. The average ear of corn weighs twelve ounces. If, however, the ears weigh an average of 10 1-2 ounces each, which is below the average, there would be 112,014 ounces. One bushel of 70 lbs. contains 1,120 ounces. Divide the total number of ounces on an acre (112,014) by the number of ounces in a bushel (1120) and we have 100 bushels and a slight fraction.

1. In order to accomplish that result, the soil must be rich enough to grow three healthy stalks in a hill and mature at least three ears.

2. A sufficient amount of water must be stored in the deeper subsoils to prevent a retarding of growth in case of drouth and the seed bed must be deep and of good tilth.

3. The seed must be pure-bred and not fertilized by pollen from barren stalks.

4. The cultivation should be to maintain a mulch to prevent the escape of moisture and remove weeds.

5. Great care should be taken not to disturb or prune roots in cultivating.

Fertility. The first thing to consider is fertility. The plant must be supplied with an abundance of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash in an available form, and the soil must be in a healthy physical condition. Corn requires an abundance of nitrogen, and without it the crop will be deficient. This valuable element can be supplied by planting a legume, preferably clover, in a rotation, plowing the second crop under and planting corn the following spring. Clover or any of the legumes not only furnishes nitrogen, but the substance of the plant furnishes, when well rotted, organic material which is finally resolved into humus.

Phosphorus can be supplied by the application of barnyard manure. If the land is very deficient in that element, it may be necessary to make an application of raw rock phosphate in the form of a compost. If manure cannot be obtained to make a compost, the raw rock phosphate can be sown on the clover before the ground is plowed. There is little use, however, of attempting to profitably raise corn and not apply manure to the land, for barnyard manure possesses so many fertilizing qualities that it should not be dispensed with. Manure not only furnishes plant food, but the organic matter it contains renders available other plant food elements. It must also be remembered that manure in a soil causes the soil to rapidly absorb water and it also acts as a regulator of the temperature of the soil.

Lime may be necessary. Old land is apt to be sour, a condition disastrous to many forms of soil bacteria, especially those that make available organic nitrogen. When soil is sour, finely ground lime rock should be applied in amounts ranging from two hundred pounds to two tons per acre. The lime not only

neutralizes the acidity of the soil but it stimulates the soil, giving it new life and also renders potash available. The farmer must remember that if he ignores rotation and the use of legumes, and follows corn with corn each year, that instead of increasing the production it will be a little less each year. He must also bear in mind the fact that plant food in the deeper subsoils beyond the reach of the plow can be made available only by planting legumes. When clover or alfalfa cannot be grown, cow peas, soy beans or vetch should take their place.

Water. No crop is more exacting in its requirements of water than is corn. Every pound of dry material in the crop requires at least three hundred pounds of water, which means from five to seven hundred tons for each acre. Capillary attraction is nature's way of feeding water to the plant, hence it must be stored in the deeper subsoils and its escape prevented by cultivation or the crop is almost certain to suffer at some stage of its growth.

Water is stored by plowing deep, using a subsoil plow and by thorough tillage. It must also be remembered that the absorbing ability of the soil is increased just in proportion to the amount of humus it contains. If soils are soggy they are lifeless, due to the lack of atmospheric oxygen. That condition is remedied by placing drain tile, which not only carry off surplus water, but admit air to the soil.

Seed Selection. Seed selection is no less important than the other features mentioned. Inbred seed always produces a deficient ear. If the farmer will take the trouble to count the number of barren stalks and sucker stalks on an acre, he will find that from fifteen to twenty per cent of the stalks he has cultivated produced no ears. The power of heredity is so strong in corn that if the ears are fertilized from pollen of barren stalks, and that corn is planted, a large per cent of barren stalks will result.

Hence, the necessity of having a breeding plot where pure bred seed corn is raised and the possibility of barren stalks eliminated. Seed should be gathered while the corn is standing and before it freezes. Only ripe, well formed and well located ears should be selected and then stored in a seed house where rapid evaporation of moisture will take place and where there is no possible chance of re-absorption of moisture or of freezing before the corn is thoroughly dry. If the farmer will eliminate barren and sucker stalks, he is certain to make a gain of from fifteen to twenty per cent. If he plants pure-bred corn, the per cent of imperfect ears is reduced to a minimum and the per cent of corn greatly increased.

Cultivation. The matter of cultivation must not be overlooked. After the corn is planted, in order to secure rapid germination and quick growth, the land should be rolled for the purpose of packing the dirt around the seed. In sections of the country where the soil blows, the corrugated roller should be used. As soon as the corn breaks through the ground, or even before, the weeder or harrow should be used; first to prevent the escape of moisture and second to destroy weeds before they have attained a growth sufficient to rob the corn of plant food and moisture.

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