

The Corn Cob

A focus on Corn Production

May 1, 2009

THE MANITOBA CORN COMMITTEE – WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Back in 1942, Manitoba corn producers had the option of growing 3 varieties: Falconer, Northwestern and Minnesota No. 13. Today, there are over 75 hybrids being marketed in Manitoba by over 15 companies. With all the options, producers may be having a hard time deciding which corn hybrid to grow. This is where the Manitoba Corn Committee (MCC) can help.

THE BEGINNING

The Manitoba Corn Committee has a long history in Manitoba. Prior to 1955, the MCC had operated on an ad hoc basis. In June 1955, the MCC was reconstituted and officially formed by J.R. Bell, Deputy Minister of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture and Immigration.

WHO WE ARE

The MCC membership has changed many times since it was officially formed in 1955. The originally committee consisted of seven members: one from the University of Manitoba, four from the Canada Department of Agriculture and two from the Manitoba Department of Agriculture.

Currently, the MCC is composed of eight members, who are:

*Manitoba Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives
(MAFRI)*

Pam de Rocquigny – Chair
John McGregor

Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA)
Wilt Billing
Rick Storoschuk

Manitoba Corn Growers Association (MCGA)

Don Enns
Ryan Thomson
Gene Graham
Murray Pritchard
Theresa Bergsma

The chair of the MCC is the Corn Specialist with MAFRI. With the exception of members from MAFRI, membership to the MCC is by appointment and at the request of the chair. The CSTA appoints their representatives at the CSTA annual meeting. The MCGA appoints their representatives at the MCGA annual reorganization meeting.

WHAT WE DO

The roles of the MCC have change substantially over the years. In 1955, the main functions or terms of reference of the committee were:

- To organize tests for corn hybrids developed by commercial seed companies who wished to include their hybrids in the tests.
- To compile and assess the test data and support the licensing of the suitable hybrids.
- To make recommendations to the Forage Committee of the Agronomists Conference regarding hybrids which should be recommended for production in Manitoba.

Today, in simplest terms, the MCC provides unbiased information on grain and silage corn hybrid

performance to Manitoba producers. Coordination of the tests is undertaken by MAFRI and the Crops Knowledge Centre in Carman. There are two meetings annually. A spring meeting occurs in February to plan for the upcoming season (sites are finalized, entry fees determined). The second meeting occurs the last week of October. The main purpose of the fall meeting is to approve data for publication. The MCC also tours all sites during the season to ensure sites are being properly managed.

The MCC's main publication is the "Manitoba Corn Hybrid Performance Trials" brochure. The publication contains the current year's data on grain and silage corn performance, long term averages for hybrids where data is available and company contact information. The brochure is mailed to all members of the MCGA and is posted on their website (www.manitobacorn.ca/mcc). The results are also published in SEED MANITOBA and on their website (www.seedmb.ca). In addition, companies who enter hybrids into the MCC trials along with corn seed retailers often use the results for their marketing and promotional programs. The MCC does not discourage this as long as the companies/retailers reference the "Manitoba Corn Hybrid Performance Trials" brochure and indicate the complete brochure can be obtained from any member of the MCC.

PLANS FOR 2009

For the upcoming year there will be 6 grain corn trials. The four core sites will include Carman, St.Pierre, Reinland and MacGregor. New for 2009 there will be satellite sites at Melita and Beausejour. The Westman Agricultural Diversification Organization (WADO) in Melita and Agassiz Soil and Crop Improvement Association (ASCIA) in Beausejour had approached the MCC with the goal of providing local data and the MCC is happy to be collaborating with these two groups. As in previous years, there will be two silage corn sites located at Elm Creek and St.Pierre. The MCC has contracted Keith Murphy of Murphy et al. Inc. for the 4 core grain corn sites and the two silage corn sites.

FINAL NOTES

The Manitoba Corn Committee aims to provide unbiased corn hybrid performance information to Manitoba corn producers to help them attain greater success and profitability. The MCC will continue its efforts to test and evaluate corn hybrids across corn growing areas of Manitoba, both for grain and silage production.

If there are questions about the Manitoba Corn Committee, please don't hesitate to contact me at (204) 745.5676 or by email: pamela.derocquigny@gov.mb.ca

Pam de Rocquigny

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Crops Knowledge Centre – Carman
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