Harvesting Storing and Marketing the Corn Crop

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Recommended Citation
http://openprairie.sdstate.edu(extension_circ)/145
HARVESTING, STORING AND MARKETING THE CORN CROP

by

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A. HARVESTING THE CORN CROP:

There are a number of ways of harvesting corn. Some will prefer one way and some another, but we believe that many farmers in South Dakota would do well to use some of the newer ways of harvesting corn in place of the old fashioned way of going into the field and snapping it off by hand.

Hogging down. By hogging down corn we mean to turn the hogs into it after it is nearly ripe, say about the 1st of September. The hogs will harvest the corn themselves and enjoy the job. That saves all the hard labor of picking it or husking it by hand and at the same time is good for the hogs. It is a good plan to have a field of alfalfa joining the corn field that is to be hogged down so that the hogs can run back and forth. They should also have a trough or feeder where they can go and get what ashes, charcoal and salt that they may want. The hogs themselves know pretty well what they need along that line. Corn alone does not make a good balanced food, but with the other things mentioned, the hogs will have a first class diet.

Silage. Another good way to save the corn crop is to put it in the silo. Corn should be cut for silage when it begins to dent nicely, that is, just a short time before it is ripe. If it can be put in before frost, it will be better than if put in after frost, because it will be more leafy and the leaves will not be so dry. Silage corn is cut with a corn binder or hauled in and put through a silage cutter which cuts it up into small pieces and blows the pieces up through a tube into the silo. If the silage is packed well it will keep and make the best of feed for cows and other stock during the winter time. Saving corn for silage saves the entire crop and gives the corn grower the full value of the crop.
Fodder and Grain. Most farmers like to cut up part of their corn for dry fodder. A few years ago this had to be done by hand and was very hard work but now days the corn binder will enable a man to cut up several acres every day and tie it in bundles so that it can be set up in shocks to wait until one is ready to haul it in. When the corn harvested in this way is hauled in, it can be run through a shredder machine which will separate the grain from the fodder and tear the fodder into shreds. The fodder in this shape is eaten up cleaner by the stock and therefore gives more food value per ton than if it is fed without shredding.

Picking by Hand. This is the old fashioned and most laborious way of saving the corn crop, but is still used by thousands of farmers throughout the United States. Some husk the corn by pulling back the husk and breaking off the ears and others snap off the ears, husk and all, letting the cattle or hogs husk them out as they are fed. Either method is all right and one can choose whichever he thinks is most convenient.

Mechanical Pickers. Machines for picking corn are now on the market. These machines do good work if the corn is fairly even, but if the corn is uneven of course they might miss some of the lower ears. For those who have a large number of acres to harvest these mechanical corn pickers are very good. They leave the stalks in the field where the cattle can be turned in later for pasture. The cattle do not clean up the stalks very closely when this method is used, so that the method mentioned first give a greater value per acre from the corn crop, but some prefer to do it this way because it saves labor. Whatever the cattle leave of the stalks in the field will gradually decay and become fertilizer for the land so that the method has it's advantages after all.

B. STORING THE HARVESTED CORN:

In several of the foregoing methods of handling the corn crop, the problem of storage for the crop is taken care of automatically. When the corn is cut by a corn binder and shredded, unless the bundles are fairly well dried out, heating may result in both the grain and shredded stalks.

If corn is picked by hand it should be put into a well ventilated crib. The heating, even in well-ventilated cribs, often destroys the germinating powers completely. Consequently seed should never be taken from a crib unless each ear is tested. (This practice of getting seed from the crib in the spring is not at all uncommon and is the main factor causing poor stands and consequently low yields.)
C. MARKETING THE CORN CROP:

There is no one method of marketing the corn crop that can be considered the best way. There are many ways but a very large percentage of the crop goes to market 'on the hoof.' Herewith is shown a chart giving the uses of the corn crop, which shows that only about 17 or 18% of the crop ever gets into the channels of trade. The great bulk of the crop is condensed into animal products on the farms where the corn is grown. Only about 1.5% of the total corn crop is exported.

The price of corn is, as a general rule, low enough to make it most profitable to feed it to livestock and market it in that way.

No rule can possibly be given as to just which method is the most profitable way of marketing corn. Factors of distance to market, prices of livestock, prices of corn, facilities for feeding, etc. all have a bearing on the situation. Each individual corn grower must decide which is the best way of marketing the crop, but the grower who consistently year after year feeds a rather large percentage of the corn he raises to good livestock (either as silage or grain) is following the method of marketing which disposes of most of the crop.
PRELIMINARY PREMIUM LIST FOR
CROPS CLUBS - 1923

C O R N C U B

To be offered as State Premiums to be awarded Nov. 15, 1923:

One free trip to Chicago for Champion Corn Club Member District I.
One free trip to Chicago for Champion Corn Club Member " II.
One free trip to Chicago for Champion Corn Club Member " III.

These trips are awarded to Corn Club members by the South Dakota Bankers' Association and are to be taken at time of International Exposition Hay & Grain Show. Trip will include visits to Stock Yards, Packing Plants, Lincoln Park, Field Museum, Department Stores, Theatres, etc. Entire trip to be chaperoned by Mr. P. J. Scarbro, State Club Specialist.

The winners for this trip will be determined according to the following basis of achievement:

Yield - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 30%
Economy of production - - - - - 30%
Record of year's work - - - - - 15%
Story, "How I grew my crop" - - 15%
Exhibit (To determine quality) - 10%

Report blanks will be sent all members September 15th. Record of year's work should be kept in Junior Account book.

At the State Fair:

Amount offered in Cash Premiums - - $180.00
Specials valued at about - - - - - - 92.00
(See Premium list of State Fair)

Total premiums - - - - - - - - - - $272.00

The Champion Crops demonstration teams will get a free educational trip to the State Corn and Grain Show at Sioux Falls during January. (Definite dates to be determined.)
At The State Corn and Grain Show:

Sweepstakes for State Ten-car exhibit, 15-Jewel Elgin Gold watch.

Cash Premiums amounting to --- --- --- --- --- --- --- $177.00
(Premium list to be printed later)

Specials amounting to about --- --- --- --- --- --- --- 40.00
(Specials include a Silver Loving Cup)
(offered by Dakote Improved Seed Co.)
Mitchell, S. D.

All Club members eligible to compete for Grand Sweepstakes of Cash --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- $25.00

POTATO CLUB

To be offered as State Premiums to be awarded Nov. 15, 1923:

One free trip to Chicago for State Potato Champion. (Award to be made according to same Basis of Achievement as Corn Club (shown on previous page). This trip is to be awarded by the S. D. Bankers' Association and is to be taken at time of International Exposition Hay & Grain Show.)

At State Fair:

Cash premiums ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- $50.00
(See State Fair Premium List)

Specials amounting to about ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- 20.00

The Champion Crops demonstration team wins free Educational trip to Corn & Grain Show at Sioux Falls during January.

At State Potato Show:

Cash premiums ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- ---- $50.00
(Premium list to be printed later)

Specials ---