



13750 S. Sedona Parkway, Ste 5
Lansing, MI 48906

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Contact: Jamie Wilson
Phone: (517) 668-2676

Thumb Ag Research & Education

LANSING, MICH. – The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) understands the importance of agronomic research and the role it plays within the agricultural industry. It is through this research that advancements in technology and production practices are made, which ultimately improves the bottom line for the state's corn farmers. The CMPM funds a number of agronomic research projects, including various corn variety trials, in hopes of helping farmers find the best available technologies, hybrids and products for their operation.

To do this, the CMPM has partnered with the agricultural Extension educators of Huron, Sanilac and Tuscola counties for six years. This study, known as the Thumb Ag Research and Education (TARE) project, brings together thumb-area growers to conduct extensive corn and soybean variety field trials. "On-farm research and demonstration plots are critical to evaluate the value of emerging technologies, varieties and products to ensure the profitable production of corn," said Clark Gerstacker, CMPM president, National Corn Growers Association Corn Board member and a corn farmer from Midland. "As a result of on-farm plots, corn farmers across the state are able to make more informed decisions that will ultimately affect their individual farming operations."

For the 2010 TARE study, six corn trial sites and three soybean trial sites were planted. Each trial site included six rows, planted 30 inches apart and 100 feet long that were replicated four times. In total, 94 corn hybrids and 78 soybean hybrids were evaluated. Studies were also conducted on nitrogen fertilizer rates and starter fertilizer.

In addition to the variety trials in 2010, corn populations and Accolade seed treatment were also studied at the TARE project. The corn population study looked at the effects of using more or less seed per acre and compared fields with 24,000 to 38,000 seeds per acre in increments of 2,000 to determine maximum yield. The Accolade study assessed the seed treatment Accolade, which is labeled as a biological growth enhancer for corn, small grains, grain sorghum and non-legume forage grasses. The study showed that the effectiveness of the Accolade did not significantly increase corn yields.

The 2010 TARE study also looked at sidedress nitrogen rates. "The purpose of the sidedress study was to determine the economic optimum nitrogen rate from the economic perspective, rather than just fertilizing to meet yield goals," said Bob Battel, TARE Project Leader and Huron County Extension Agent. "By addressing the economic optimum nitrogen rate, it will give growers a maximum return for nitrogen applications." The data suggests that for the 2010 growing season, approximately 80 to 120 pounds of nitrogen per acre was sufficient for maximum corn yield. Nitrogen rates in this range differ slightly from the 2009 growing season where maximum yields were achieved at 120 pounds of nitrogen per acre.

The full results of the research were published in *Thumb Ag Research & Education, 2010 Field Trials*, which is available online at www.micorn.org.

Headquartered in Lansing, the CMPM is a legislatively-established statewide program that utilizes one-cent per bushel of Michigan corn sold. Investments are made in the areas of research, education, market development, and new uses in an effort to enhance the economic position of Michigan corn farmers. The CMPM works cooperatively with the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA), a grassroots-membership association representing the state's corn grower's political interests since the 1970's. Michigan's corn industry adds more than one billion dollars to the state's economy annually and in 2010, Michigan's corn farmers harvested a record setting crop of more than 315 million bushels. For more information, visit the website of the MCGA and the CMPM at www.micorn.org.