NOTE

A METHOD FOR STORING SMALL QUANTITIES OF SEED CORN

Many growers store their seed corn on the ear throughout the winter in order to make a germination test of each ear individually prior to the time of planting. Corn which is exposed to the air fluctuates in moisture content with changes in atmospheric moisture and is also subject to mouse injury. With this in mind a test was made in the Plant Physiology Laboratory, University of Illinois, to obtain a simple method of storing small quantities of seed corn to reduce the chances for deterioration due to changes in atmospheric moisture and to mechanical injury.

Reid Yellow Dent corn was selected from the field in the fall of 1925 and was dried in a heated room until the moisture content was reduced to 9.0%. On December 2 of that same year it was placed in an uncovered metal container which was about half as large as a barrel. A layer of oats 4 inches deep was placed in the bottom of the container. Successive layers of ears of corn were then placed in the container with just enough oats to fill the spaces between the ears. A layer of oats 4 inches deep was placed on top of the uppermost layer of corn. One lot of corn which was used as a check was hung in the open air. Both the check lot and the uncovered container of corn and oats were placed on an open air porch sheltered from rain. Moisture determinations of the corn and oats were made at various intervals.

The oats contained 10.2% moisture at the beginning of the test. The moisture content of the corn which was used as a check increased rapidly from December 2 to December 5. The average relative humidity during this period was 84%. On December 10, after a period of eight days, the moisture content of the corn which was exposed to atmospheric moisture was 12.6%. The corn which was 4 inches below the surface of the oats contained 10.7% moisture, or about 2% less than the corn exposed to the atmosphere. On January