Hybrid Corn Development in Europe and Mediterranean Countries

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HYBRID corn, a product of North American agriculture, has emigrated to all parts of the world. Directed against hunger and poverty, hybrid corn has started a peaceful, constructive revolution in Europe and Mediterranean countries.

International Agencies Cooperate

The present national hybrid corn programs in Europe and the Mediterranean countries are supplemented in various ways through the activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Foreign Operations Administration of the United States (FOA), and the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). Time does not permit giving the names of many persons who contributed to this program. Some references to the program are listed at the end of this report.

FOA and OEEC have provided technical assistance in the breeding and production of corn. They have sponsored the importation of seed for commercial plantings, and of seed for European production of hybrid seed. These organizations have also sponsored two surveys of the work on hybrid corn. The aims and objectives of FOA have been presented on this program by Mr. J. Walker.

The primary function of FAO is to promote international cooperation in the fields of food and agriculture. FAO has a membership of 71 nations. Appropriately, its motto is “Fiat panis” which means, “Let there be bread”.

Headquarters of FAO are in the center of historic old Rome. The staff totals over 1,000 employees at headquarters and 350 experts throughout the world. Cost of the entire FAO program to the United States is about one cent per person per year. Technical divisions of work include agriculture, economics, fisheries, forestry, and nutrition.

FAO guides and stimulates cooperation of corn workers in 25 European and Mediterranean countries. The program involves testing American hybrids, and conducting scientific research to develop inbred lines and hybrids especially adapted to widely differing conditions.

The hybrids in test represented a maturity range from 70 days to 155 days. Locations of the nearly 200 tests ranged from Apelsvoll, Norway, at a latitude of 60° 42’ North, to Sids, Egypt, at 28° 54’ North, and from Western Portugal to Eastern Turkey.

On the basis of data from the various experiment stations, reports were prepared of regional performance tests, plant density experiments, cultural trials, and fertilizer studies conducted in 1950, 1951, and 1952. Printed copies of these reports, summarizing the work in the various countries, are available from FAO, at Rome, Italy.

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