



LULING FOUNDATION

AGRICULTURE DEMONSTRATION FARM, ESTABLISHED BY EDGAR B. DAVIS IN 1927



The Life of Corn By Geri L. Kline, M.S.

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Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from the corn field- Dwight D. Eisenhower. In 2015 more than 2 million acres of corn were planted in Texas. Corn production is important to Texas's economy, last year about \$3.5 billion was contributed to the state's economy. Corn in Texas can be planted as early as mid-February and will be harvested as late as mid-June.

To plant corn first the farmer needs to pick a variety of corn. Varieties are chosen for where the farmer plants. They might want a drought tolerant or disease resistance variety. Or a variety that is resistant to weeds or pests that they have in the area. Corn is susceptible to many diseases, which can affect each part of the plant. There are seedling, root, leaf, stalk rot and ear rot diseases. Beetles, grubs, maggots and aphids are pests that can attack corn, that's just to name a few. After plowing the field, farmers plant the corn seeds. Only about 40% of corn grown in Texas is irrigated with supplemental water. A combine harvester is used to harvest the corn. The combine cuts the ears of corn off of the stalk and separates the kernels from the cob. The corn husks, cobs, bits of leaves and stalks exit the rear of the combine. Some combines can drop the material into a row that can be baled for livestock feed. Some farmers have grain storage bins on their land and they can store their corn there. If they do not have a grain bin then the corn gets taken to a coop for the grain to be sold or stored until the farmer decides to sell it. When a farmer is trying to decide to sell the grain or store it there are many factors that they have to think about: what is their break-even price, how much could the price increase (or decrease), do they need the money to buy next year's inputs?

There are 6 major types of corn based on kernels: dent, flint, flour, sweet, pop and pod corn. Dent corn is used mostly in animal feed, but can also be used for corn syrup, ethanol or beverages. Flint corn is grown more in Central and South America for use as human and animal feed. Flour corn has soft kernels that consist of soft starch content. Since it is softer this type of corn is easy to grind and is used in baked goods and other foods. Sweet corn is the corn you are probably most used to seeing. It's the corn that you can buy at the grocery store. The popcorn type of popcorn is the popcorn you buy in the stores. Popcorn has a tough outer shell that covers a small amount of soft starch content. Pod corn (also known as Indian corn) is just grown for ornamental purposes because of the uniquely elongated kernels and varied color patterns.

1 bushel of shelled corn weighs 56 pounds. 1 bushel of corn can make 258 six packs of soda or 2.8 gallons of ethanol or 33 pounds of starch (that is used in crayons, rubber tires, beer, and pancakes) or feed 10 broilers from birth to finishing weight or 38 boxes of 12 oz cereal. Corn is not just used for human consumption. It is also used in packing materials, chemicals, paint, paste, soaps and plastics. Corn is an important crop and can be found in about 4,000 items in a typical grocery store. It is also used to feed livestock, in paper goods, cardboard packaging, in certain drugs and is used as a sweetener. Remember to take pride in agriculture and thank a farmer/rancher.

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