

# A Day For Media

## New Traits Aimed At Yields Will Highlight Pioneer Seeds In Future

**BETTY VALLE GEGG**  
MidAmerica Farmer Grower

### DES MOINES, IOWA

**P**aul Schickler, President, Pioneer Hi-Bred Vice President and General Manager, DuPont, addressed the group of agricultural journalists attending Media Day recently at Pioneer's headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa. Schickler called it an "exciting time in agriculture," noting that grain is now in strong demand and short supply.

"It is important, I think, to understand that the demand is not being driven by ethanol," he said. "A lot of the demand that has been generated is coming from developing countries particularly in eastern Europe and the countries of Asia, including China."

Increased population together with economic growth the past decade and a change to improved diets has had a dramatic impact on agricultural business. That has created greater export opportunities for the American farmers.

"Who would have thought in the last 10-20 years we would have had a sustainable level 90 million acres of corn?" he asked.

Outside the United States and Canada, Pioneer's business is focused on corn in all markets around the world.

"Where we do business, corn is our foundation," Schickler said. "Some pretty remarkable changes are occurring."

Today 40 percent of Pioneer's business is conducted outside the United States and Canada and that proportion is about double the figures of 10 years ago.

With corn planting season approaching, Pioneer will be selling 30 percent of its volume in triple stack trait.

"That is more than double what we sold last year so that kind of transition in one year is pretty remarkable," he said.

Another section of products will be single or double trait combined with seed insecticide treatments, so 45 percent of its sales this year will have insect protection. He added that 90 percent of sales this year will carry a trait.

Some exciting things are on the horizon for the future, including Optimum GAT, AcreMax, a first to the market with "refuge in a bag" to prevent corn rootworm resistance. That product will be introduced by Pioneer under a commercial demonstration release in 2009, with regulatory approval expected by 2010.

"The first phase of the new resistance management program offered by Pioneer will be Optimum AcreMax I, which offers Pioneer corn products with Herculex XTRA, combined with a small percentage of seeds with the Herculex I trait with the same genetics," said Schickler. "This offers growers a much reduced and more convenient corn rootworm refuge – all in one bag. Of course, growers will still have to plant a refuge against corn borer resistance."

"The next generation will be Optimum AcreMax 2, which offers the corn borer refuge in a single bag as well. This combines the Herculex I trait with the YieldGard trait for dual-action insect resistance prevention, eliminating the need for a refuge. In addition, we will be adding MIR 162 to these products which confers resistance to secondary insects such as fall armyworm, corn earworm, black cutworm and western bean cutworm for more complete insect protection.

"Pioneer recently signed an agreement with Syngenta to access that trait," Schickler said. "We have been operating with that technology in research organization for a number of years. We have experience with it, we know how it will perform, we know how it works and, most im-

portantly, we know how effective it is against pests. So now we have a commercial agreement with Syngenta to bring that trait into our product lineup, and that basically provides us a unique second mode of action to the secondary pest above ground."

Pests like European corn borer, cutworm, earworm, wireworm can be controlled with this product.

Schickler said Pioneer is expecting regulatory approval for the soy component in Optimum GAT herbicide resistance in 2009, and in corn in 2010. Optimum GAT is resistant to glyphosate herbicide as well as ALS herbicides, providing growers expanded options in their weed control program.



**Paul Schickler, President, Pioneer Hi-Bred Vice President and General Manager, DuPont**

"The real opportunity for us is in corn," he said. "It is going to be a great trait to add to our existing portfolio of traits in corn. It will give an additional option to a grower together with Glyphosate and a third chemistry, a urea chemistry, to give it a broader spectrum control."

Optimum GAT also applies itself very successfully to soybean products.

He said the new developments from Pioneer Research include are "industry leading technology for Pioneer to bring molecular marker technology into improving and speeding up the yield capacity of soybeans. Within soybeans, Pioneer is working to improve the defensive traits to ward off diseases and insects."

These efforts are being combined with such programs at Pioneer as Accelerated Yield Technologies (AYT), which helps breeders select for higher yields in soybeans. These concentrated programs can potentially provide Genetic agronomic defensiveness together with AYT with Optimum GAT traits, along with another product concept now being put together. They will become a combination of four concepts in a platform that can bring a 10 percent yield advantage over existing soybean products material.

"As we extend that to the future a 40 percent yield improvement in soybeans is expected between 2008 and 2018," he said. "I think we can all get our heads around that kind of improvement."

Earlier, Jerry Harrington, sales and marketing public relations manager for Pioneer, welcomed everyone to Media Day. He reported the company has some 60 agronomists that work with the customers, fulfilling a "fourth point" of the company's mission which is providing farmers with helpful management information after they purchase Pioneer seed. △