

Increased Yields

Good Weather Leads To More Crops In The Midwest

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There have been some arguments that corn and soybeans rates have increased since the 1990's because of new advancements in technology. Dr. Scott Irwin, a professor in the department of agriculture and consumer eco-



“increasing at a faster rate in the last decade than they did before.”

“Basically we just had a run of very good weather that makes it look like yields are increasing faster,” said Irwin.

“Don’t mistake good weather for technology,” said Irwin, “Corn yields have been going up at about 1.8 bushels per year since 1960 and they are going to continue due to improved seed varieties, improved production practices, and so on but the data doesn’t show that we are growing any faster in the last ten years than we did in the previous 35.”

“This doesn’t mean that we might not be on the cusp of a sharp increase in the average rate of yield growth,” said Irwin, “There are a lot of exciting biotechnology developments in the lab and the field but to date it hasn’t shown up in state average yields here in the Corn Belt.”

“A lot of people have talked about this idea,” said Irwin, “If you look at charts of corn yield it looks like they are increasing at a very

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Photo by John LaRose, Jr.

nomics at the University of Illinois says otherwise.

This thought is based on research that Irwin and his colleagues have done on the trend yields of corn and soybeans in the Corn Belt here in the United States. According to Irwin the yields seem to be

fast rate but what we have done in this research is to show that after you adjust for the effects of weather, we can’t in fact find any evidence that the trend rate of yield increase for corn and soybeans here in the Midwest has been increasing at any faster a rate.” Δ