



Corn----It's Everywhere MP3

Gary Crawford [00:00:00] I know it's a little early for this, but you probably heard what they say about Santa Claus...

Female voiceover [00:00:09] He's everywhere, he's everywhere.

Gary Crawford [00:00:10] Everywhere. Yes, he is. But today we're going to talk about another thing that's omnipresent.

Singing voiceover [00:00:17] Corn, corn, corn is everywhere...

Gary Crawford [00:00:18] And indeed, corn is everywhere, even in our gasoline. And there's certainly here at the Agriculture Department's farmer's market in Washington, D.C., in the VegU-cation tent. Today we have guest VegU-cator and Maryland corn grower Chip Bowling and our resident VegU-cator, Chantel Oyi. They're out here answering consumer questions about corn or in some cases, correcting a misconception some of us non-farm people have. First chip, we heard you talking with the folks here about the basic types of corn, field or a feed corn and then sweet corn. But most of us just think corn is corn. Seems to look the same when we see it growing.

Chip Bowling [00:00:57] Well, it is all corn it's just a different type of corn. Feed corn, used for animal feed, is they typically gets hard. You have to grind it to make feed for animals and livestock, and that is the difference where sweet corn stays soft and field corn gets hard and you had to grind to feed.

Gary Crawford [00:01:12] And Chantel you were saying there's a vast difference, it turns out in the amount of land planted to a field corn and what's planted to sweet corn, which is what we shoppers buy at the store for corn on the cob.

Chantel Oyi [00:01:25] In the United States, there are more than 90 million acres where corn is grown and particularly areas such as the heartland region of the country Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kentucky, Ohio and Missouri. They all are major corn producers for the United States.

Gary Crawford [00:01:43] Wow 90 million acres of corn. That's got to be huge compared to what we grow for our own eating pleasure, the sweet corn right?

Chantel Oyi [00:01:51] Yes, about 99 percent of corn grown in the United States is actually field corn, and the one percent of corn grown is sweet corn.

Gary Crawford [00:01:59] So, Chip, you grow corn in Maryland, not one of those big corn states that Chantel was talking about. What kind of corn do you grow?

Chip Bowling [00:02:07] For me, growing corn in Maryland, we are lucky to have the chicken industry here. Most of the corn that I grow feeds a chicken. Some of the corn that we grow actually gets grounded into ethanol, but the chicken industry in the mid-Atlantic is huge and we're very fortunate to have it.

Gary Crawford [00:02:21] Now, I saw you talking to some folks who were concerned about genetically modified crops, and at first, they seemed very worried that the corn you grow for animal feeds then genetically modified might be bad somehow for the

environment. I did notice they seemed a little less worried at the end of the conversation. What did you tell them?

Chip Bowling [00:02:39] Genetically modified plants use less water, they use less fertilizer. They require less chemical and pesticides.

Gary Crawford [00:02:46] Which he says makes growing that corn easier on the farmers and a lot easier on the environment. From the USDA Farmers Market in Washington, D.C., this is Gary Crawford, reporting for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.