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Retrospect and Perspective for Corn Production and Breeding Research in Heilongjiang Province of China

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Review paper

SUMMARY

Corn is a leading crop in Heilongjiang province which is the top corn producer in China. Short frost free period is the key limitation for corn production in this area and result in different conditions in production and breeding research.

The history and current situation in production, variety and seed company operation etc. are reviewed. The progress in germplasm innovation, germplasm group classification and heterosis utilization are summarized.

Most of inbred lines which are widely used in China can be traced back to several germplasm groups (SPT, Lancaster, LRC, P and Reid etc.) and the narrow in germplasm foundation still a big problem in corn breeding. The future for breeding research and production is predicted as well.

(SPT, Lancaster, LRC, P
Reid .).

SPT: Tangsipingtou,
 LRC: Luda Red Cob corn,
 SSR, SNP –
 SNP:
 (Rmb):
 GMO:

Key words: corn, seed production, breeding, germplasm, heterosis, early spring corn

Abbreviations

HLJ: Heilongjiang province
 CTZ: Cumulative Temperature Zones used in Heilongjiang province
 SPT: Tangsipingtou, local germplasm in China
 LRC: Luda Red Cob corn, local germplasm in China
 SSR: Simple Sequence Repeat marker
 SNP: Single Nucleotide Polymorphism marker
 Rmb: Renminbi (Chinese currency)
 GMO: Genetically Modified Organism

INTRODUCTION

Corn is a leading crop in China which can be widely used in animal feeding, human food and industry.

In 2017 the corn sowing area is 35.5 M ha and the grain output is 216 M t (Zhao et al., 2018a). In China corn production areas are divided as Spring, Summer, Spring and Summer complex and (sub) tropical zone based on seeding season and climate conditions. 15 provinces in the 4 zones provide up to 90% of total grain output in China.

Heilongjiang province (hereafter as HLJ) is located in northeast of China, it is the top corn producer in China, sowing area and grain output are 6.44 M ha and 31.3 M t respectively in 2017(Ma, 2018).

More than 70% of early spring corn is seeded in HLJ, others sparsely distributed in several provinces in north and west parts of China.

1. CORN PRODUCTION AND HYBRID UTILIZATION IN HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE

1.1 Cumulative Temperature Zones

Short frost free period is the top

limitation for corn production in HLJ.

For several decades, a grade system is used to classify the length of growing season for crop production.

There are 6 Cumulative Temperature Zones (hereafter as CTZ) with 200°C interval, which use cumulative daily average temperature ($\geq 0^\circ\text{C}$) in available growing season. This system is widely accepted by farmers, seed companies, breeders and government for variety location and selection in all crops.

Traditionally, the main corn production area was located in 1st and 2nd CTZs (2500 °C above). The 3rd CTZ was complex area for corn and soybean production. 4th and 5th CTZs were typical soybean and wheat zones just in 2 decades ago. Currently, corn is still leading the rain fed crop production in CTZ 1&2. Thanks to the successful hybrids adapt to early-maturity zones, the advancement of cultivation techniques, and the effects of global warming, corn has developed rapidly in the 3rd - 5th CTZs.

1.2 Hybrid Distribution

Because of the diversity in ecological conditions and profit orientation of the seed companies, HLJ has a great variety capacity compare other production area in China.

The research on hybrids which were widely cultivated in this region shows that 369 hybrids were grounded in 2016.

Fifteen hybrids each of them seeded more than 66.6 k ha respectively and occupy total area of 2.98 M ha, which took up 43.2% of all corn acreage in 2015.

The top 5 hybrids were DMY1, XY335, SY23, XX1 and DMY3. In 2016, there were 17 hybrids planted more than 66.6 k ha,

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2.57 M ha, ha, with total planting area 2.57 M ha and
 40.7% accounted for 40.7% of all corn area. The
 5 top 5 hybrids were DMY1 (0.51 M ha), XY335
 (0.25 M ha), XX1 (0.24 M ha), DMY3
 (0.21 M ha) LY9 (0.17 M ha) (Jin et al.,
 2016; Jiang et al. , 2016).

1.3

1.3 Stress for Corn Production

Except the limitation of temperature in North), cold tolerance in early stage is a quite important characteristic for choosing a proper variety. Also less rainfall in the spring on more than half of HLJ, there are still other factors that affect the yield in the production.

Since the farmers tend to use relative late varieties and plant them in early spring to prolong the growing season (usually late April in south of the province and early May the area, results in drought in seedling stage in some years.

Pests and weeds usually are not big threat in most of years if the crop is managed normally.

Corn borer (*Ostrinia furnacalis*) tends to take place often in recent years and very serious in some regions if the weather conditions are favorable. Disease resistance is crucial for a variety survival in this area.

(*Helminthosporium turcicum* Pass.)
 (*Sphacelotheca reiliana*)

The 2 diseases resistance, northern leaf blight (*Helminthosporium turcicum* Pass.) and head Smut (*Sphacelotheca reiliana*) are official restriction for any hybrids to be registered in HLJ. Stalk rot (*Fusarium moniliforme* & *Pythium aphanidermatum*) is another important disease, it causes yield loss greatly in some specific hybrids in most production area.

(*Fusarium moniliforme* & *Pythium aphanidermatum*)

Curvularia (*Curvularia linata* (Wakker.) Boed.)
 (*Cercospora zea-maydis* Tehon &

Curvularia leaf spot (*Curvularia linata* Wakker.) Boed.) and gray leaf spot (*Cercospora zea-maydis* Tehon &

Daniels)

1.4

15

70

5

90%

(Jin et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2016; Wang, 2012).

Daniels) also increasing seriousness in some regions, in where the corn area grows rapidly and without proper crop rotation.

1.4 Yield Growth

In past 70 years, the corn acreage and yield per area increased 15 and almost 5 times respectively. Like other corn production area, the farmers in HLJ saw the big changes in variety types in the past years, from farmer variety to synthetic, double crosses, three-way crosses and single cross hybrids.

Now more than 90% of the varieties used in this region are single cross hybrids and some are three-way crosses, distributed in super early area (Jin et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2016; Wang, 2012).

With the advance in hybrid breeding and cultivation techniques, also the increasing chemical input, corn yield grow up gradually in the past 70 years. The yield increases from less than 1.5 t ha⁻¹ in 1950s' to currently 5 - 6 t ha⁻¹ in 2010s' (Wang, 2012).

The abiotic and biotic stress tolerance for new development varieties make remarkable progress comparatively with the varieties used in decades ago. The average population density increases from 30 thousand plants/ha in 1970s', 40,000 plants ha⁻¹ in 1990s' to currently 60,000 plants ha⁻¹, in some middle to early maturity areas to 75,000 and up to 90,000 plants ha⁻¹.

1950⁻
2010⁻ (Wang, 2012).

70⁻

30 /ha
ha⁻¹

90-
60 000 ha⁻¹,

75 000 90 000 ha⁻¹.

2. BREEDING RESEARCH AND SEED COMPANY

Before the end of 1980s', almost all seed companies were state owned enterprises and all the breeding research carried out by non-profit institutes or universities. The released variety would be transferred from the institute to the company for seed production,

2

80⁻

90⁻

1999 (UPOV) 23

2000

1980 2012

80⁻

90⁻

2000⁻

2014 873 , 118

54

2015 , 12

40 , 2

(Jin et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2016).

3

80⁻

- demonstration and sale to farmer by free. With the increasing financial distress for most companies and below desired service to the farmer, the government pushes the companies turn to private running gradually in early 1990s'.

In the same time some of the breeding programs shift to commercial research, either in the institutes and the seed companies.

- China joined in the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) in April 23rd, 1999 and on the same day China Plant Variety Protection Regulation took effect.

- In 2000, the first Seed Act in China was enacted. Before and after these events, the local seed companies grow rapidly both in number and in scale of operation. In the similar time, most international seed companies flooded into China.

According to statistics for variety registered in HLJ during 1980 to 2012, most varieties were released by institutes in this area and Jilin, the south neighbour province of HLJ in 1980s'. Some varieties from local seed companies occurred in 1990s', hybrids from international company appeared in late 1990s'and burst in 2000s'.

In the 1st year official variety test in HLJ, there are totally 873 varieties in 2014. 118 of them were from public institutes and 755 submitted by seed companies. From 54 varieties, registered in the variety list in 2015, 12 are released by institutes, 40 were from local companies and 2 were developed by international companies (Jin et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2016).

3. GERmplasm AND HETEROsIS

- Since 1980s', the breeders and scientists in China paid attention to germplasm group and heterosis pattern increasingly (Sun et al., 2016). It is

(Sun et al., 2016).
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(
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BSSS (
Reid), (
BSSS, Lancaster
lodent . (Mikel and Dudley, 2006;
Troyer, 1999; Yang et al., 2011).

3.1
5
70
80, Gold Queen,
Huobai, SPT, LRC Lancaster (Wu, 1983).
2
Reid . 80
SPT, LRC, Lancaster
Reid (Zeng, 1990). Wang et al. (1998)
1978 1994 ., 5
(9)
Modified
Reid, Lancaster, LRC, SPT
(Suwan, Synthetics).
Reid
Lancaster
1980
50%
, Reid Lancaster.

believed less hybrid vigour for cross by
lines inside the same groups, whereas
higher heterosis would appear in cross by
inbred from different germplasm families.
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-
U.S. is the first country that use heterosis
in corn breeding, also pioneered and lead
in heterosis groups' research.
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-
U.S. breeders tend to separate their
germplasm resource as female and male
groups in commercial breeding.
-
-
Female group contains BSSS (usually
called Reid in China) primarily and male
counterpart include lines with non BSSS
background, like Lancaster and lodent
etc. (Mikel and Dudley, 2006; Troyer,
1999; Yang et al., 2011).

3.1 Germplasm Utilization in Past

In China, there are 5 major
germplasm groups in late 1970s' to early
1980s', they are Gold Queen, Huobai,
SPT, LRC and Lancaster (Wu, 1983).
After that, the first 2 local groups
decrease gradually and lines from Reid
grew up by years. In late 1980s', most
parent lines for popular hybrids in China
had the background of SPT, LRC,
Lancaster and Reid (Zeng, 1990). Wang
et al. (1998) based on varieties widely
cultivated in 1978 to 1994 claim that 5
major heterosis groups (9 subgroups) can
be divided as Modified Reid, Lancaster,
LRC, SPT and Others (Suwan, lines from
Synthetics etc.). During this period, the
use of Reid increased and Lancaster
reduced gradually.

Before 1980s'in HLJ, inbred lines
derived from local germplasm dominated
in the parent lines of the key hybrids and
took up 50% in that period. Other lines
have blood either from some Russian
materials, Reid or Lancaster. And then the
lines having local background decrease
gradually and not too much left in varieties

2010 Lancaster
 40%
 1990
 20%
 2010 (Jin et al., 2016; Fan, 2017).
 3
 (Fan, 2017; Jiang et al., 2016; Ma, 2018).
 3.2
 50
 Mo17
 70
 (P3147, 3383 . .)
 80
 P78599
 90
 (Li and Wang, 2010; Wang et al., 2016).
 80
 Pioneer 3737
 lodent
 PVP 1980 2004
 Mikel and Dudley (2006)
 Argentine Maize Amargo,

released in 2010s'. Unlike the decrease in other regions of China, Lancaster still takes a very important role constantly over several decades. It reached up to 40% in popular variety crosses in 1990s' and still maintained in a relative high level of more than 20% in 2010s' (Jin et al., 2016; Fan, 2017).

- In recent 3 decades, with the foreign hybrids and inbreds flooding in, derive lines from exotic hybrid directly or improve foreign lines is getting popular.

Except the nearly disappear of local germplasm, lines from original germplasm in late maturity regions drop down gradually as well (Fan, 2017; Jiang et al., 2016; Ma, 2018).

3.2 Germplasm Introduction, Introgression and Heterosis research

Several important germplasm introduction events happened in past 50 years in China. Mo17 started to be planted in some breeder's nurseries in 1970s', some hybrids (P3147, 3383 etc.) from U.S. were introduced in 1980s' and hybrids P78599 entered in China in early 1990s'. These inbreds and hybrids play an important role in the corn breeding research in the following years (Li and Wang, 2010; Wang et al., 2016).

- It was a common way to derive lines directly from commercial hybrids in U.S. in 1980s. Pioneer hybrids 3737 made a greatest contribution for the lodent germplasm introgression to its competitors. Based on the pedigree research for patent and PVP lines from 1980 to 2004 in U.S., Mikel and Dudley (2006) believe the lines derived from commercial hybrids and introgressed by Argentine Maize Amargo backgrounds increase the germplasm diversity successfully.

80 , 78599
Pioneer P78599

(Qi319, X178, P178
P78599 P (

PB) (

(P3147 3383 . .),
5003, 7922 U8112 .

(Zhao et al, 1999; Gao et al. 2004; Meng,
et al., 2006; Li and Wang, 2010; Li, et al.,
2019).

Jing 724 725
X1132X, Zhao et al. (2018b)

X (Wang et al., 2016).
Lu et al. (2009) 282
, Zhao et al. (2018b)

344 SNP . 6
Lu,
SPT, Lancaster, LRC, PA
(Reid), PB (78599)
BSSS. Zhao 8
: LRC, SPT, Iodent, Lancaster, P,
Reid, Reid X (-
X1132X).

Liu et al. (2009) SSR
-
820 , -
5
(Lancaster, LRC, SPT, Reid
P). 5
-
Lancaster LRC, Reid P,
SPT -

Inbred 78599 is a line derived from Pioneer hybrid P78599 in late 1980s', it has tropical background and now has developed to a big family in China. This family has big difference from original germplasm used before. It includes a lot of inbreds (e.g. Qi319, X178, P178 etc.) developed from P78599 and other similar hybrids, and it is named as P (or PB) group by some scientists and breeders. Another new germplasm group (or sub-group by other researchers) is also clustered by lines derived from U.S. hybrids (P3147 and 3383 etc.), including lines 5003, 7922 and U8112 etc. (Zhao et al, 1999; Gao et al. 2004; Meng, et al., 2006; Li and Wang, 2010; Li, et al., 2019). In the new centuries, more lines are derived from exotic hybrids and new introduced germplasm which background is different from the current ones. For example, lines Jing 724 and 725 are from hybrid X1132X, Zhao et al. (2018b) claim they present a new heterosis and named as X (Wang et al., 2016).

Lu et al. (2009) use 282 lines and Zhao et al. (2018b) use 344 lines to investigate the germplasm background by SNP markers. 6 heterosis groups are divided by Lu, which are SPT, Lancaster, LRC, PA (modified Reid), PB (78599 family) and BSSS. Zhao classify 8 groups in the report, which are LRC, SPT, Iodent, Lancaster, P, modified Reid, Reid and X (developed from exotic hybrid X1132X).

Liu et al. (2009) used SSR markers to investigate the germplasm foundation of 820 inbreds in China, they found 5 germplasm families can be divided (Lancaster, LRC, SPT, Reid and P). Among the 5 groups, there is relative higher diversity inside the Lancaster and LRC groups, followed by Reid and P, SPT is lower in the diversity.

It is a foundation to use heterosis efficiently if breeder know the pedigree of

(Teng et al., 2004; Yang et al., 2011; Yong et al., 2013).

Sun et al., 2007; Song et al., 2011, 2013; Wu et al., 2014; He et al., 2015; Li et al., 2013).

Reid/Lancaster, Lancaster/SPT, Reid/SPT.

(Mo17, K10, DG11, HZ4 . .).

(Fan, 2017; Jiang et al., 2016; Qi et al., 2016, Shi et al., 2017).

4.

4.1

2

inbreds well (Teng et al., 2004; Yang et al., 2011; Yong et al., 2013). With the rapid progress in molecular biology techniques, use DNA markers to classify heterosis group of germplasm is getting popular. Most of reports get the similar conclusion based on different materials and methods Sun et al., 2007; Song et al., 2011, 2013; Wu et al., 2014; He et al., 2015; Li et al., 2013).

Recently, the popular heterosis models used for important hybrids in Heilongjiang region are modified Reid/Lancaster, Lancaster/SPT, Reid/SPT. Since Heilongjiang province locates in far north in China, a lot of good germplasm in other areas are difficult to use in this area directly.

Most elite inbred lines for key hybrids can be traced back to a few resources (Mo17, K10, DG11, HZ4 etc.).

The problem for narrowed germplasm base in this area is more serious than other parts of China (Fan, 2017; Jiang et al., 2016; Qi et al., 2016, Shi et al., 2017).

4. BREEDING AND PRODUCTION FORECAST

4.1 New requirements for variety

The farm size in China is usually quite small. With some farmers leave countryside or move to other occupation, the field tend to flow to the skilled farmers and the farms are getting bigger.

The Mechanization rate in corn production increases along with the rapid growth of corn acreage in past 15-20 years in HLJ.

15-20 However, the total output is more benefit from the increasing acreage than unit yield growth.

Though the farmers in HLJ have more choices in varieties than 2 decades ago, they confused on the phenomenon in variety homogeneity. It is difficult to

choose a variety outstanding to others with similarity.

With the increasing in population density and the mass application of mechanization, the new requirements for the future variety are getting clear. A variety adapt to high population with good lodging resistance, fast kernel dry down, high unit kernel weight are necessary, along with the previous requirements in grain yield and diseases resistance.

4.2

RMB	15	,	7.94	
(Sun, 2014)	2004	.	26.9	2013
RMB	2016	.	29.7	
).	2015	.	
4692		,		
356		.	1500	
	50%	-		

4.2 Changes in Seed Company

China is the 2nd largest seed corn market after Unite States. The market size rose quickly in past 15 years, from 7.94 billion RMB in 2004 to 26.9 in 2013 (Sun, 2014) and reach to 29.7 billion RMB in 2016 (web information).

In 2015, there are 4692 seed companies nationwide including 356 companies in HLJ. There are above 1500 seed companies mainly make profit from corn seed and more than 50% of bigger enterprises engage in corn market operation.

	50	,	60%	
2020	.	35.5%	2015	.

Most of the companies, normally small in size, the intense market competition push the enterprise holder focus on distribution channel development. The neglect of breeding leads to less input in the research and lack of middle to long term breeding pipeline. Recently, capital from outside the industry shift to seed territory and lead to the merging and reorganization of seed industry quite often. It is estimated the market share for the top 50 companies would reach to 60% in 2020 from 35.5% in 2015.

The bigger companies can resist market risk well and tend to establish a research system with a long range planning. They also pay much attention to the protection of intellectual property compare to their smaller peers.

The persistent and intensive input in

4.3

Smith (2007) Pioneer, 1980-2004 .
(Li, 2010), 82
23 45
20 (Iodent)
(Li et al., 2019).

research can attract elite staff widely; the operation may more efficient in cooperation with different programs and disciplines.

That will help to shift commercial breeding from the public institutes to the companies and benefit the farmers and society finally.

4.3 Germplasm research and innovation

The narrow in germplasm genetic diversity is a general problem in worldwide and it is more serious in China. Smith (2007) use a set of Pioneer hybrids which are cultivated widely during the period 1980 to 2004 and found their pedigree can be traced back to 82 founders. Another research shows (Li, 2010), there are 23 germplasms out of 45 sources in U.S. never be used in China in the end of 20 century. Some of germplasms (e.g. Iodent) have a much lower rate (Li et al. 2019). Introduce new germplasm, exploit the new potential of current founders and make a reasonable pipeline in germplasm innovation to adapt the requirements of corn production will be meaningful and challenging.

Allow or not, when and how to release GMO is a long-lasting topic both inside industry and whole society in China. The argue is difficult to get an answer with a confirmed schedule. But it is expected GMO will be released in corn production finally with some prerequisite limitations. This event will make big changes in the whole industries related to corn and it will trigger a big chance and challenge both for seed industry and breeding research programs.

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Survey on Seed Production of Medium-early Hybrid Kneja 461

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Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

In Republic of Bulgaria maize grain business develops in a dynamic environment complied with EC requirements and market economy conditions. Exceptionally strong competition is being monitored on the maize market. In the country are imported maize hybrids produced by 13 foreign research institutes and companies.

Maize Research Institute - town of Knezha is the main center for maize selection and seed production in our country. In its 95 years of existence the Institute has got more than 100 certified hybrids in the different maturity groups, and in all basic directions – for seed, for forage, hybrids with special specified qualities, hybrids sustainable to biotic and abiotic stress, diseases and pests.

Hybrid Kneja 461 is certified and approved for enlistment in the A List in the Official Variety List in RB by Order of Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry RD 12-4, dated 13th of June, 2017.

This survey target is to study the agrobiologic and seed production

4/13.06.2017 .

- characteristics of hybrid Kneja 461 parental forms for its seed production needs.

Key words: maize, inbred line, combining ability, inflorescence biology, seed production coefficient

INTRODUCTION

Maize Research Institute - town of Knezha offers an abundant and diverse portfolio comprising maize hybrids from all maturity groups and application directions, sustainable to diseases, pests and unfavourable environmental conditions thus trying to satisfy seed demand on the market. The experience of countries with contemporary, highly developed agriculture shows that one of the most important conditions for successful and timely implementation in production, as well as the total realization of any newly established maize hybrid productive abilities, appears to be their seed production level and the seeding material quality (Akhtyrsev, 2002; Yagdi et al., 2005; Sotchenko et al., 2009 a, b; Gorbacheva et al., 2011; Valkova et al., 2013). This requires clarification of questions connected with genetic equability and parental lines' inflorescence biology, their tolerance to seeding density, scheme and deadline of seeding etc.

The complete agrobiologic characteristic of perspective and quality-proven maize lines is of essential importance for the breeding and seed production process. Awareness of lines' qualities facilitates the component's selection when new and more productive hybrids are created (Lee at al., 2006; Reid at al., 2013, 2014; Yordanov, 2019).

This survey target is to study the agrobiologic and seed production characteristics of hybrid Kneja 461 parental forms for its seed production needs.

(Akhtyrsev, 2002; Yagdi et al., 2005; Sotchenko et al., 2009a, b; Gorbacheva et al., 2011; Valkova et al., 2013).

(Lee at al., 2006; Reid at al., 2013, 2014; Yordanov, 2019).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

2017-2018 .

45 23 46 52.

45 23
„pedigree selection”

SSS (Stiff Stalk Synthetic)

52 Lancaster

(Shanin, 1977),

10 m² (6000
/da 6500 /da).

5 kg

(Dimova and Marinkov, 1999).
(1962). Breshkov et al.

8, 10, 12, 14, 16 h.

(Manbaev, 1962).

- In the period 2017-2018 experimental work was carried out in the trial field of Maize Research Institute – town of Knezha. The inbred lines KC 45 23 and K 46 52 were used as biological material.

- Maternal component – the inbred line KC 45 23 was established applying “pedigree selection” method from an experimental hybrid from medium early maturity group. Genetically it belongs to SSS (Stiff Stalk Synthetic) heterogeneous group.

- Paternal component – K 46 52 line falls into Lancaster genetic group and has a proven high total and specific combinative ability.

- Two randomized field trials, pursuant the block method (Shanin, 1977), were set up under non-irrigation conditions, with three replicas, harvest plot of 10 m² and two plant densities (6000 plants/da and 6500 plants/da). From both variants was harvested an average sample of 5 kg ears in order to determine the grain yield of total maturity phase. Mathematical data processing was done pursuant the method of single factor disperse analysis - ANOVA (Dimova and Marinkov, 1999). Seed production coefficient of lines was determined pursuant Breshkov et al. (1962) method.

- Pollen vitality for the whole day was determined by putting it on three-days stigmas at 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

- In the isolation field were set up two parallel trials: the first one was for determination of complete silk maturity and its consistency within the ear, the second one was to monitor the silk vitality duration (Manbaev, 1962).

- After the harvest during total/full/ maturity phase each ear was individually analyzed for total ear flowers, the inbred flower number and ear kernals weight.

(%) Garbur et al. (1980).

The kernel set level (%) was done pursuant Garbur et al. (1980).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4523
400-499
61-65
6-8
13 h,
5 6
50° ()
160-175 cm.
12.
75-90 cm.
13-16 cm.
14-16 (1).
75-80%
o.

4523 belongs to the medium early maize group 400-499 pursuant FAO. It is with good agrobiologic characteristics. It passed successfully the official test for discernibility, homogeneity and stability of State Varietal Testing in R. Bulgaria. When cultivated in natural conditions it is resistant to serious diseases with economical impact and to pests on maize.

Reproductive organs' flowering is from protandric type, the period from germination to tassel inflorescence is 60-65 days, and from germination to silk formation the period is 63-68 days. The tassel florescence continues 5-7 days, and the silk florescence – 6-8 days. Generally the pollen vitality is the highest up to 1:00 p.m., and then it gradually declines due to the increased temperature and the decreased average air humidity.

Tassel is upright with 5-6 pcs. of primary branching and yellow stakes. The angle between tassels' main ax and lateral branching is about 40-50° (slightly curved). The ear silk has slightly anthocyanin colouring.

The total height line is 160-175 cm. The stalk is lodging resistant. The leaves' number varies from 10 to 12. The height of main ear location is 75-90 cm. During years with more favorable conditions the line has two ears characteristic. Ear length is 13-16 cm and its rows' number – 14-16 (Figure 1). Kernel is yellow, semi hard and makes 75-80% of the ear weight. Maize cob is red. This line has high yield potential.



Fig. 1. Line KS 4523

45 23
 (65,5%).
 9-
 (71,3%),
 3,5% 11-
 (1).

- The ways of kernel formation and development differ for each individual genotype and from the time of pollination, as well.
- In KC 45 23 inbred line irrespectively of pollination day and its duration, the ear flowers along the whole length are fertilized. Considerable percentage of silk fertilization is recorded as early as the third day (65.5%).
- Till the ninth day the receptivity is retained (71.3%) and then on the eleventh day it sharply declines to 3.5%. After the pollination of 13-days old silks no kernel formation was recorded (Table 1).

1.

(%)

Table 1. Receptivity of the silk to pollen, depending on the date of silking (% kernel in the ear)

Genotypes	/ Number days since the silk exertion											
	3-		5-		7-		9-		11-		13-	
	% kernels in the ear	grain weight from the cob, (g)	% kernels in the ear	grain weight from the cob, (g)	% kernels in the ear	grain weight from the cob, (g)	% kernels in the ear	grain weight from the cob, (g)	% kernels in the ear	grain weight from the cob, (g)	% kernels in the ear	grain weight from the cob, (g)
45 23	65.5	85.8	79.3	100.0	86.7	91.0	71.3	83.2	3.5	5.0	0.0	0.0
46 52	75.4	94.0	80.9	98.0	80.8	97.0	75.9	95.0	5.3	7.0	0.0	0.0

(2)

(=0,1%). -
6500 /da.

45 23

The presented disperse analysis of KC 45 23 line grain yield (Table 1) shows that there is a reliable difference in the harvested yield from both densities (P=0.1%). Yield is higher with density 6500 plants/da.

2.

4523

Table 2. ANOVA results for grain yield of inbred line KC 4523

ANOVA					
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	F crit
/ Repetitions	237.42	2			
/ Plant density	49340.80	1	49340.80	108.52	98.49
Within	909.33	2	454.66		
Total	50487.55	5			

45 23

194,9-308,8.

400-500

46 52

The economic seed production efficiency in hybrids depends to a greater extend on productive abilities and seed production coefficient of maternal form. Depending on the growing conditions, the propagation coefficient of KC 45 23 line varies from 194.9 to 308,8.

Paternal form, i.e. K 46 52 also belongs to group 400-500 pursuant to FAO. This line has proven high total and

46 52
 - 317, 435
 461.
 62-64 ,
 - 63-65.
 5-7
 16-20 h
 6-7 , 7-9
 195 cm 235 cm.
 (11-13 .)
 6-7 85-
 115 cm.
 17-19 cm.
 12-14 23-27
 80-82%
 o (2).
 46 52 ,
 - ,
 - ,
 -
 9- (75,9%),
 5,3% 11- (1).
 46 52. ANOVA
 (=5%)
 (3).

specific combinative ability. Besides as a tester of the newly stabilized maize lines it is used also as a component in the hybrid breeding. K 46 52 is the paternal form of three commercial hybrids of Maize Research Institute - town of Knezha, namely – neja 317, neja 435 and neja 461. Inflorescence of the reproductive organs is almost simultaneous. The period from tassel germination to its inflorescence is 62-64 days, while the period from germination to silk exsertion is 63-65.

The tassel is upright. The number of primary branching is 5-7 with yellow stakes. The pollen retains its vitality 16-20 hours after it separates from the tassel. Tassel inflorescence continues 6-7 days, the silk inflorescence is 7-9 days. The ear silk has slightly anthocyanin colouring.

Depending on the growing conditions, the total height line varies from 195 cm to 235 cm. The stalk has numerous leaves (11-13 pcs.) and is lodging resistant. Ear is located on 6-7 knee at height of 85-115 cm. When high agricultural equipment is applied or under good weather conditions the line develops two ears. The ear shape is like a cylinder with length of 17-19 cm. There are 12-14 rows in the ear, and 23-27 pcs. of kernels in each row. Kernel is yellow coloured and semi-hard. Its yield is 80-82% of the ear's weight. The maize cob is red (Figure 2).

Characteristic feature of the female reproductive organ inflorescence in K 46 52 line is that its silk formation is more dynamic, while the silk passing-out is longer than the hybrid maternal form. Fertilization of ear flowers starts from the base to the top. The stigma vitality is preserved till the ninth day (75.9%), then it declines to 5.3% on the eleventh day (Table 1).

Plant density has a reliable impact on the characteristic variation with K 46 52 line. ANOVA shows reliable variance (P=5%) of the density factor (Table 3).

6500 /da.

300,

165,9

- The line has tolerance to the
- growing seeding density and gives the
- highest yield with the higher density –
- 6500 plants/da. This line seed production
- coefficient varies from 165.9 to 300
- depending on the plant density and the
- growing year.



2. 4652
 Fig. 2. Line K 4652

3.

4652

Table 3. ANOVA results for grain yield of inbred line 4652

ANOVA					
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	F crit
Within	2549.41	2			
Total	59064.53	5	1274.70		

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the estimation of these lines done in this study and in connection with their use in the breeding and seed production process, the following conclusions are made:

-	6500	Both lines give the highest grain yield at plant density 6500 plants/da.
/da.	-	
-	45 23	During years with more favorable weather conditions, the stigmas' vitality of 45 23 line stays up to 6-8 th day after their appearance, while with 46 52 line this index is 7-9 th day.
6-8	7-9	
46 52	461	As the reproduction forms of both parental lines have synergy in flowering, the seeding in seed production plots of hybrid Kneja 461 should be done at the same time.

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, 5835 ,

Highly Harvested Kneja 561 Maize Hybrid - a New Selection of Bulgarian Maize

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Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

The article presents a scientific report and description of the newly created and officially recognized Bulgarian, high-yielding, medium-late Kneja 561 maize hybrid, established at the Knezha Maize Institute. As a result of many years of breeding and genetic work, a new, high-yielding, medium-late Kneja 561 hybrid maize has been created and recognized. The Kneja 561 hybrid is competitive with proven high yield capability, officially confirmed by trials in both Bulgaria and Serbia and Romania. Under non-irrigation conditions, at individual points, up to 12000 kg/ha of standard grain was actually obtained from it, and under irrigation conditions up to 14000 kg/ha of standard grain.

Key words: maize (*Zea mays* L.), a new mid-late Kneja 561 hybrid.

INTRODUCTION

Creating new higher yielding and competitive maize hybrids is the ultimate goal of research. And the most extensive

561, - .
561.
561
12000 kg/ha
14000 kg/ha
:
mays L.),
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(Yugenheimer, 1979; Russel, 1986; Hallauer, 1988; Reid et al., 2013, 2014).

- plant research, the use of various new scientific methods and techniques would not be of much importance if they did not lead to the creation of new, high yielding, better quality and more resistant varieties than the existing ones, if they do not lead to real breeding progress (Yugenheimer, 1979; Russel, 1986; Hallauer, 1988; Reid et al., 2013, 2014).

In order to evaluate the real qualities of each new variety, it must be tested under the most varied ecological geographic conditions, and its productive or other qualities compared with the best standard varieties used in those regions.

- Failure to comply with these basic rules is misleading in the assessment of the true qualities of the variety.

Sooner or later, such a variety will be rejected by the farmers, who are the most accurate and objective criterion for the quality of the new variety.

The purpose of this publication is to present to the scientific community and farmers the new high-yielding medium-late Bulgarian hybrid corn Kneja 561, as a result of the new Bulgarian selection of maize, detailing it and evaluating its objectively productive qualities for the production of feed grain.

561,

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Kneja 561 Hybrid is a medium late grain corn hybrid, FAO 500 group. Has Patent Certificate Registration No. 11132 P2 dated 12/12/2017. It was created at the Maize Research Institute - Knezha by Assoc. Prof. Georgi Yordanov. The method of two-line hybridization between genetically distant selection materials was used to achieve the highest possible heterosis effect.

- The selection process for the

500

12.12.2017 .

561

11132 2

2013 .	2003-2012 .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creation and initial testing of the hybrid covers the period 2003-2012. In 2013, the hybrid was submitted for testing for Biological and Economic Properties /BEP/ and Diversity, Homogeneity and Stability /DHS/ at the State Agency of Bulgaria - IACAS.
561	2015 .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2015, the Kneja 561 hybrid maize was tested under irrigation conditions, in randomized block trials in three replicates in the Republic of Serbia and in the Republic of Romania and compared to their high-yielding maize standards.
561.	Shanin (1977).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The indices of standard grain yield per hectare, grain moisture during harvesting and performance index - Pi were investigated as the ratio of grain yield to grain moisture during harvesting. - The statistical processing of the data was performed according to Shanin (1977). At the same time, the hybrid test was continued at both IACAS and the Maize Institute in Kneja.
561.	1 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In this way an ecological remote testing of four geographically remote points was carried out in order to ensure maximum objective assessment of the productive qualities
- 90%	561.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Figure 1 and Figure 2 show visually the habitat of plants, cobs in standard technological maturity, a cross-section of cobs and cob grains from the new high-yielding Bulgarian corn Kneja 561. - As can be seen from the figure, the cobs are well shaped, gnarled to the top thin turbot and high grain yield - up to 90% of cob weight.



. 1.

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Fig. 1. Plants of medium late hybrid Kneja 561 hybrid with optimal total leaf area of the plants



Fig. 2. Medium late corn hybrid Kneja 561 (Patent Certificate Reg. 11132 P2 from 12.12.2017)

500
1-1,2
110-120 cm (1).

The more important characteristics of the Kneja 561 hybrid corn are the following:

- **Maturity Group** - Medium late hybrid corn for grain, FAO 500 group. From germination to full maturity reaches about 120-125 days.
- **Plants** - The height of the plants reaches about 260-280 cm, strong, stable, with good habit and large leaves. Normally feed on 1- 1.2 large cobs, set at a height of 110-120 cm (Figure 1).
- **Cobs** - The cobs are large, 25-29

29 cm
 400 g
 561
 12000 kg/ha
 14000 kg/ha
 15-16%

25- cm long, well shaped with regular rows and flush to the top, with a high grain yield. The stem of the cob is thin with pink colour (Figure 2).

Grain - The grain is a bright yellow, horse-tooth type, weighing 1000 grains over 400 g. The grain yield is high - about and over 88% of the weight of the cob. Quickly releases moisture to normal harvest time.

Productivity - Hybrid Kneja 561 has proven capabilities for very high grain yields at close to standard humidity, officially confirmed by tests in both Bulgaria and Serbia and Romania in 2015. Under non-irrigation conditions, at individual points, it is actually obtained up to 12000 kg/ha standard grain, and under irrigation conditions - up to 14000 kg/ha standard grain with moisture at harvest about 15-16%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Kneja Corn Institute has a long tradition of creating new, competitive and high-yielding hybrids of maize from different maturity groups and with different uses - for feed grain, for improved grain quality, for preservation and human nutrition - for sugar corn and popcorn maize (Tomov, 1997; Hristov and Hristova, 1999 Vulchinkov et al., 2003; Genov and Genova, 2005; Yordanov, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2014; Glogova, 2010; Valkova and Petrovska, 2018, etc.).

As a result of testing the productive capabilities of Kneja 561 hybrid maize in the Preliminary and Competitive Variety Trials, it was found that the hybrid yielded high and sustainable grain yields in excess of most of the standard maize hybrids used (Table 1).

(Tomov, 1997; Hristov and Hristova, 1999 Vulchinkov et al.,2003 ; Genov and Genova, 2005; Yordanov, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2014; Glogova, 2010; Valkova and Petrovska, 2018).

561

(1).

1.

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2015 . /

Table 1. Results of a comparative test between the Bulgarian Kneja 561 maize hybrid and other highly productive hybrids at the Maize Institute - Kneja, Republic of Bulgaria in 2015 /without irrigation/.

Name of Test hybrids	Kg/ha 14% Grain yield kg/ha 14% moisture	% % The yields to the standard	% Grain moisture at harvest %	+ - % + - to the humidity of the standard %	Pi Performance index Pi
561Kneja 561	12300.0	107.6	14.0	-1.0	8.8
435	10710.0	93.6	12.5	-2.5	8.6
509	10200.0	89.2	14.3	-0.7	7.1
625	10500.0	91.2	18.3	+3.3	5.7
P9494	11560.0	101.0	14.8	-0.2	7.8
PR35F38 – Standard	11440.0	100.0	15.0	0.0	7.6

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2

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2015 . /

9422,0

kg/ha

124,8%,

This has given us reason to continue further testing the hybrid at subsequent, higher and environmentally distant test levels.

To this end, hybrid seeds of Kneja 561 were sent hybrid seeds for testing in the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Romania, and for comparison with their high-yielding maize standards. The experiments were performed under irrigation conditions using the adopted maize cultivation technology in these countries, in randomized block trials in three replicates.

Table 2 presents the results of a comparative test between the Bulgarian Kneja 561 maize hybrid and the highly productive Romanian hybrids under the conditions of Fundulia, Romania in 2015 /without irrigation/. As can be seen from the table, the Bulgarian Kneja 561 maize hybrid performed very well compared to the other Romanian hybrids used in the experiment. With an average yield of standard grain of 9422.0 kg/ha, it far exceeded the Romanian standard corn by 124.8%, as well as other hybrids used in the experiment with different but also higher percentages of them.

The high yield of the standard grain obtained from the hybrid was combined

561 - 16.1% ,
 2% -
 " - Pi",
 561
 2.
 561

with the low grain moisture of the harvest - 16.1%, which is close to the standard moisture of the grain for maize and it was 2% lower than that of the Romanian hybrid standard. This combination of high grain yield with low grain moisture is characteristic of the Bulgarian Kneja 561 hybrid corn and is especially appreciated by farmers. This dependence is best expressed by the so-called "performance index - Pi", which is presented in the last column of the table. As can be seen from this index, our hybrid has the highest score compared to other hybrids in the experiment.

As a result of testing the productive capabilities of Kneja 561 hybrid maize in Romania, we can scientifically conclude that it is a competitive and high-yielding maize hybrid suitable for exporting seeds to this country.

Table 2. Results of a comparative test between the Bulgarian Kneza 561 maize hybrid and highly productive Romanian hybrids under the conditions of Fundulia, Romania in 2015 /without irrigation/

Name of Test hybrids	kg/ha 14% Grain yield kg/ha 14% moisture	% The yields to the standard	% Grain moisture at harvest %	+ - % + - to the humidity of the standard %	Pi Performance index Pi
561	9422.0	124.8	16.1	-2.0	5.8
EX 563	9009.0	119.3	15.8	-2.3	5.7
NP 14-64	8528.0	113.0	16.2	-1.9	5.3
XML 14	7306.0	96.8	19.1	+1.0	3.8
EC 501	6649.0	88.0	17.6	-0.5	3.7
Olt – /standard	7549.0	100.0	18.1	0.0	4.2

3
 561
 2015 . /
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Table 3 presents the results of a comparative test between the Bulgarian Kneja 561 maize hybrid and the highly productive Serbian hybrids in Zemun Polje - Belgrade, Serbia in 2015 /without irrigation/. As can be seen from the table, the Bulgarian Kneja 561 maize hybrid performed very well compared to other Serbian hybrids used in the experiment.

11392.0 kg/ha

ZP 666 107.7%,

15.9% ,

2,8 % -

561

- Pi",

561

3.

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2015 ./ /

Table3. Results of a comparative test between the Bulgarian Kneza 561 maize hybrid and highly productive Serbian hybrids in the conditions of Zemun Pole - Belgrade, R. Serbia in 2015 /without irrigation/

Name of Test hybrids	kg/ha 14% Grain yield kg/ha 14% moisture	% % The yields to the standard	% Grain moisture at harvest %	+ - % + - to the humidity of the standard %	Pi, % Performance index Pi, % to standard
561	11392.0	107.7	15.9	-2,8	126.9
NS 6030	9602.0	90.8	18.9	+0,2	89.8
B-15	9812.0	92.8	17.1	-1,6	101.3
NP 14-70	9703.0	91.7	16.9	-1,8	101.7
NP 14-64	9632.0	91.1	15.7	-3,0	108.6
ZP 666 – standard	10577.0	100,0	18.7	0,0	100.0

2013 ., 2014 . 2015
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4.

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Table 4. Official results of the testing of the productive capabilities of the new Bulgarian High-Performance Medium-Late Corn Forage Corn Kneja 561 in the State Variety Test of Bulgaria and Zemun Polje, Serbia (Highest Results)

Tested hybrid	Year on the exam	Place On testing	Conditions on testing	Yield Standard Grain kg/ha	Moisture on the grain %	Performance index Pi
561 Kneja 561	2014	Samovodene Bulgaria	Irrigation	13500.0	16.4	8.2
561 Kneja 561	2014	G.Toshevo, Bulgaria	not irrigated	10750.0	16.1	6.7
561 Kneja 561	2015	Zemun Polje, Serbia	not irrigated	11390.0	15.9	7.2

11132 2 12.12.2017 .

In 2013, 2014 and 2015 Kneja 561 maize hybrid was submitted for official testing at IACAS for Diversity, Homogeneity and Stability and for testing the Biological and Economic Properties of the hybrid. As a result of the test, IASAS confirmed that the Kneja 561 maize hybrid is distinguishable, homogeneous and stable, and the biological and economic qualities of the hybrid exceed those of the standard used and the hybrid can be recognized and listed in List A of the national variety list of Bulgaria.

Table 4 presents the highest official results of the hybrid performance test,

After the trial of the hybrid in IACAS, it was presented for copyright protection in the Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria. As a result of the hybrid originality study, he received an official Patent Certificate of Registration No. 11132 P2 dated 12/12/2017. This ended the research work on the creation of the hybrid.

561.	2018 .	
7 da	.	,
	2019 .	-
	561	-
-	30 da.	-
1.	-	,
		,
		561.
2.		561
		,
		,
	12000 kg/ha	.
		-
14000 kg/ha		
	15 – 16%.	
3.		
561		

The next stage was the beginning of the process of implementation of the practical maize production of Kneja 561 hybrid maize. In 2018, about 0.7 ha of acreage was sown for seed production.

High yields were obtained from the seed crop, and all seeds from it were successfully sold. In 2019 of Kneja 561 hybrid maize was again planted with a large seed area of about 30 da. The crop is in good condition and is to be harvested.

CONCLUSIONS

1. As a result of many years of breeding and genetic work, a new, high-yielding, competitively-grown, medium-late Kneja 561 maize hybrid was created and recognized.

2. Kneja 561 maize hybrid has scientifically proven capabilities for very high yields, officially confirmed by tests in both Bulgaria and Serbia and Romania. Under non-irrigation conditions, up to 12,000 kg/ha of standard grain were actually obtained from the hybrid, and under irrigation conditions, up to 14000 kg/ha of standard grain with moisture at harvest was around 15-16%.

3. Medium-late Kneja 561 maize hybrid is suitable for efficient cultivation of feed grain in both Bulgaria and Romania and Serbia.

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Study on Inheritance and Dependence with Grain Yield on the Size and Tassel Branch Numbers in High Yielding Corn Hybrids

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Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

- The article presents a study on the
- inheritance and dependence of grain yield
- on the length of the broom and the
- number of branches of the broom in highly
- productive maize hybrids. As a result of
the study, the following conclusions are
reached: The number of branches of the
butterfly in the maize hybrids studied is
not a major limiting factor on grain yield.

There may be high-yielding or low-yielding
hybrids, both with a small number of
branches and a large number of
branches. Although the number of
branches of the broom in the studied
hybrids of maize is not the main limiting
factor on grain yield, the highest yielded
hybrids studied have a smaller number of
branches of the brooms - from 6 to 9,
which is indicative and should be
considered in the selection of maize.

The length of the broom in the maize
hybrids studied is inherited under positive

mays L.),

(*Zea*

- over-dominance but with a slight manifestation of heterosis in the hybrid generation. Regarding the number of branches of the broom in the maize hybrids tested, no manifestations of actual heterosis were reported.
- The trait is inherited interm. Although there is no heterosis in the conventional sense, its absence can be considered as positive for the breeding process when aiming at creating hybrids with fewer branches of the tassel.

Key words: corn (*Zea mays* L.), length and number of branches of a broom, grain yield

INTRODUCTION

- Male inflorescences in maize or tassels, as they may be called, are significantly larger and occupy a larger percentage of the total plant biomass than many other plants. In order to develop, they take a significant part of the plastic produced by plants.
- As an anemophilous plant Male inflorescences in maize emit copious amounts of pollen, which are carried away by the wind. In fact, butterflies emit millions of pollen to pollinate no more than 600-800 female inflorescences.

Thus, a corn plant produces thousands of times more male pollen than necessary to fertilize its cobs.

- The production of such large quantities of pollen many times the optimal results in the loss of many plastics that can be directed from the plant to the production of more grain than 1 plant.

Therefore, if a maize plant can form smaller tassels, smaller-than-lateral branchlets, there would be more plastic to develop the cobs, with the potential for successful pollination preserved (Vulchinkov and Vulchinkova, 2011; Brewbaker, 2015)

(Vulchinkov and Vulchinkova, 2011; Brewbaker, 2015).

()

2017-2018

(1)

(2)

- 468
(F1)

561,

564

52000 /ha.

(1).

55

(3).

(Shanin, 1977).

and others).

The purpose of the study was to investigate the inheritance and dependence of grain yield on the size (length) of the broom and the number of branches of the broom on some high-yielding hybrids of maize to aid the breeding process in the creation of new high-performance maize hybrids.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the selection and experimental field of the Corn Institute in Knezha during the period 2017-2018. Initially, maternal (P1) and paternal (P2) forms of three highly productive maize hybrids - Kneja 561, Kneja 564 and Kneja 468, were propagated under isolation and their first (F1) hybrid generation was obtained. The Generations of maize hybrids thus obtained were sown and tested in randomized field trials, in three replicates according to the agrotechnical institute adopted for the region, under irrigation conditions and sowing density of 52,000 pl/ha. Typical plants with good habit were selected in each repetition, immediately after flowering of the petiole, and measurements of the length of the petioles and the number of branches of the petioles were made (Figure 1).

In parallel with these hybrids, the length of the butterflies and the number of branches of the butterflies of the other 55 experimental maize hybrids included in other randomized field trials were evaluated to evaluate their productive qualities. After technological maturity, the hybrids were harvested and their grain yield and grain moisture were measured. The hybrids tested were grouped by the grain yield size into four groups and by the number of branches of the brooms in three groups (Table 3). Statistical processing of the data was performed according to (Shanin, 1977).



. 1.

Fig. 1. Plants of maize hybrids with different numbers of branches of the tassels

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

More effective selection of maize hybrids requires a more thorough and comprehensive study of the inheritance and dependencies of corn yield indicators (Russel, 1986; Hallauer et al., 1988; Hristov and Hristova, 1995; Yordanov, 2006, 2010, 2014; Ivanov, 2013, etc.).

(Russel, 1986; Hallauer et al., 1988; Hristov and Hristova, 1995; Yordanov, 2006, 2010, 2014; Ivanov, 2013).

In this regard, studies on the inheritance and dependencies of the broom indicators on grain yield in high-yielding maize hybrids are also relevant (Vulchinkov and Vulchinkova, 2011; Brewbaker, 2015, etc.), which in order to be as reliable as possible be verified by more independent authors.

(Vulchinkov and Vulchinkova, 2011; Brewbaker, 2015).

Table 1 presents the results of a study of heterosis in F1 hybrid generation and inheritance of the length of the plant blade in 3 high yielding corn maize hybrids, Kneja 561, Kneja 564 and Kneja 468. As can be seen from the data presented, all three hybrids distinguished by relatively long brooms.

With the longest broom - an average of 48 cm is a hybrid Kneja 468.

With regard to the length of the plant panicle, the three maize hybrids tested showed slight heterosis compared to the mean of the two parental forms - hypothetical heterosis, ranging from 13.5% to 19.4%. The measured actual heterosis, compared to the better parental form, is even smaller - from 5.0% to 13.5%.

The dominance values in F1, which are positive and above one, indicate that positive over-dominance of genes is important in the inheritance of a trait.

Parental Form	F1	Dominance Value
561	564	13.5%
561	468	19.4%
564	468	5.0%

Table 1. Manifestations of heterosis and inheritance of the length of the tassels, cm in some maize hybrids

Hybrid	Length of the tassels, cm			Measured heterosis, %		F1 Domination in F1	Type Allelic interaction
	Hybrid generation	Average value X aver.	variation coeff. VC, %	Hypothetical	Really		
561 Kneja 561		40.1	8.8	19.4	7.0	1.7	Positive over- domination
	Female line P1						
	Hybrid cross F1	43.0	10.4				
	Male line 2	32.0	6.8				
564 Kneja 564		40.1	8.8	13.5	5.0	1.7	Positive over- domination
	Female line 1						
	Hybrid cross F1	42.0	4.9				
	Male line 2	34.0	10.1				
468 Kneja 468		42.4	10.0	15.7	13.2	7.2	Positive over- domination
	Female line 1						
	Hybrid cross F1	48.0	5.7				
	Male line 2	41.0	2.7				

2,
F1

F1

Regarding the inheritance of the number of branches of the broom, Table 2, the data show that this indicator does not show heterosis in F1 hybrid generation. The results are unidirectional for all three hybrids tested, with the measured values for true heterosis being negative.

Given the controversy over whether measured heterosis should only be positive in F1 relative to parental forms, which is supported by some researchers. Or it can be negative when we aim for a selection of an indicator that is economically more valuable when it is lower than that of the parent forms.

With regard to the number of branches of the broom, although there is no heterosis in the conventional sense, its absence

F1

- can be regarded as positive.
-

In fact, the results obtained for the values of dominance in F1 show that the number of branches of the broom is inherited interim. These results should be taken into account in the breeding process when aiming to create hybrids with fewer branches of the broom.

2.

Table 2. Manifestations of heterosis and inheritance Number of branches of the tassels in some hybrids of maize

Hybrid	Number of branches of the tassels			% Measured heterosis,%		F1 Domination in F1	Type Allelic interaction
	Hybrid generation	Average value X aver.	variation coeff. VC,%	Hypothetical	Really		
561 Kneja 561	Female line P1	8.8	9.5	3.8	-11.3	0.2	Intermediate
	Hybrid cross F1	11.0	9.1				
	Male line 2	12.4	4.4				
564 Kneja 564	Female line 1	8.8	9.5	1.0	-2.2	0.3	Intermediate
	Hybrid cross F1	8.6	13.2				
	Male line 2	8.2	10.2				
468 Kneja 468	Female line 1	21.4	11.2	-35.6	-57.0	-0.7	Negative Intermediate
	Hybrid cross F1	9.2	9.0				
	Male line 2	5.4	21.1				

55

3

4

- To more realistically determine the relationship between grain yield on the one hand and the number of branches of the butterfly plants on the other, we examined a total of 55 new corn hybrids with different productivity and different number of branches of their butterflies.
-

- Table 3 presents the results of the studies performed. The hybrids are grouped into 4 groups according to the grain yield, with each group having three
-

sections grouped according to the number of butterflies per plant. In each group and section, the number of hybrids with the respective indicators is indicated and what is their percentage of the total number of hybrids in the respective group.

3.

55

Table 3. Dependencies between grain yield and number of branches of the tassels in 55 maize hybrids tested

Groups of grain yield hybrids kg/ha	6-9 Number of hybrids with 6-19 branches of the tassels	% % of the total in the group	10-13 Number of hybrids with 10-13 branches of the tassels	% % of the total in the group	14-18 Number of hybrids with 14-18 branches of the tassels	% % of the total in the group	Total number of hybrids per group
1 / group 13000-14000 kg	3	50.0%	2	33.3%	1	16.6%	6
2 / group 11000-13000 kg	3	27.3%	6	54.5%	2	18.2%	11
3 / group 9000-11000 kg	6	27.3%	14	63.4%	2	9.1%	22
4 / group 5000-9000 kg	4	25.0%	11	68.8%	1	6.2%	16
Total number Hybrids	16		33		6		55

As can be seen from the table, the dependence of the number of branches of the broom on grain yield is quite complex and not unambiguous. In each studied group of hybrids of yield we have hybrids with both small number of brooms and large. This shows that the productivity of hybrids depends primarily on their genetically engineered photosynthetic productivity in the first place, and the number of branches of butterflies is not a limiting factor.

There may be high-yielding or low-yielding hybrids, both with a small number of branches and a large number of branches. However, despite this basic conclusion, analyzing the results from the group of the highest yielding hybrids from the first group, it can be seen that 50% of them are with a small number of branches of the broom - from 6 to 9, which is

50%

6 9

indicative and should be for breeding corn.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The number of branches of the broom in the maize hybrids studied is not a major limiting factor on grain yield.

There may be high-yielding or low-yielding hybrids, both with a small number of branches and a large number of branches. Although the number of branches of the broom in the studied hybrids of maize is not the main limiting factor on grain yield, the highest yielded hybrids studied have a smaller number of branches of the brooms - from 6 to 9, which is indicative and should be considered in the selection of maize.

2. The length of the broom in the maize hybrids studied is inherited under positive over-dominance but with a slight manifestation of heterosis in the hybrid generation.

3. Regarding the number of branches of the broom in the maize hybrids under study, no actual heterosis was reported. The trait is inherited interm.

Although there is no heterosis in the conventional sense, its absence can be considered as positive for the breeding process when aiming at creating hybrids with fewer branches of the broom.

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Combining Ability of Medium Early Mutant Maize Lines for Grain Yield and Length of the Ear

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Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

Savchenko (1973).

(26-4-2-3-1-1)
(45-8-1*-1-1-1, 26-3-1-2-1-1),

: 44-1-3-1-1-1,
26-4-2-3-1-1 26-3-1-2-1-1,
28-6-1-2*-1-1 45-8-1*-1-1-1.

- It is evaluated the general and the specific combining ability of medium early mutant maize lines for grain yield and length of ear by using mathematical method of Savchenko (1973). The lines are tested in top-cross scheme by three testers. Their hybrid combinations are examined at field experiments using accepted for the region agro technique.
- As a result of the study are ascertained the lines with a high general combining ability for grain yield (26-4-2-3-1-1) and length of ear (45-8-1*-1-1-1, 26-3-1-2-1-1), which can be used as components of new synthetic populations for their respective characteristics. Having the highest specific combining ability for grain yield are the lines 44-1-3-1-1-1, 26-4-2-3-1-1 and 26-3-1-2-1-1 for length the ear – 28-6-1-2*-1-1 45-8-1*-1-1-1.
- They are appropriate for being included in combinations for receipt of high yielding hybrids and long-ear hybrids. The lines with high general and specific combining

- ability for both traits can be successfully used in both breeding directions.

Key words: general combining ability, specific combining ability, medium early mutant maize lines, grain yield, length of the ear

INTRODUCTION

Selection of new hybrids with higher yields, improved quality of the maize grain and increased resistance to abiotic and biotic environmental factors is of vital importance for the development of modern agriculture.

Experimental mutagenesis and subsequent mutant selection are one of the possibilities for enriching and obtaining new genetically diverse selection material. Mutagens treatment causes mutation of individual genes or a group of genes carrying valuable economic traits, whereby obtaining of sorts and lines with new qualities and traits is possible (Blyandur, 1974; Genov, 1988; Hristova, 1988; Hristova and Hristov, 1990; Hristov and Hristova, 1995; Valkova, 2013; Ilchovska, 2013 etc.).

An important trait determining the use of mutant lines in the heterosis selection is their combining ability. Its evaluation enables their including in well-grounded selection programs (Petrovska and Valkova, 2018; Valkova et al., 2019 etc.).

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the combining ability for the traits grain yield and length of the ear of medium early mutant maize lines with good productive capabilities with a view to their more rational including in appropriate breeding programs.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study is conducted in 2017 in the field of the Maize Institute, Knezha.

(Blyandur, 1974; Genov, 1988; Hristova, 1988; Hristova and Hristov, 1990; Hristov and Hristova, 1995; Valkova, 2013; Ilchovska, 2013).

(Petrovska and Valkova, 2018; Valkova et al., 2019).

2017 .

6
 26-3-1-2-1-1,
 26-4-2-3-1-1, 26-6-1-1-1-1, 28-6-1-2*-1-1,
 44-1-3-1-1-1 45-8-1*-1-1-1,
 92471, 4418
 4390.
 10m²,
 (1977).
 Savchenko (1973).

- For the purpose of the study are used 6 medium early mutant maize lines 26-3-1-2-1-1, 26-4-2-3-1-1, 26-6-1-1-1-1, 28-6-1-2*-1-1, 44-1-3-1-1-1 and 45-8-1*-1-1-1, obtained by chemical mutagenesis and its subsequent mutant selection. The stabilized mutant lines are tested by three testers 92471, 4418 and 4390. Their hybrid combinations are tested in experimental fields using the method of the Latin Rectangle, in three repetitions with size of the plot of 10m², without irrigation, by an agro technique adopted for the region.

The statistical processing of the raw data is performed by using the method of the variance analysis of Shanin (1977). The mathematical model of Savchenko (1973) is applied for evaluation of the general and specific combining ability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1
 2.
 752,0 kg/da 1012,6 kg/da.

The results of the study on the yield and the length of the ear of the obtained top-cross hybrid combinations are presented in Table 1 and 2. Conducted variance analysis of the raw data from the field experiment shows significant differences between them. The average yield varies between 752.0 kg/ha and 1012.6 kg/ha.

1. (kg/da) 14%

, 2017 .

Table 1. Grain yield (kg/ha) at 14% moisture of the hybrid combinations with the participation of the medium early mutant maize lines, 2017

/Tester lines /Mutant lines	92471	4418	4390	Mean for the lines
26-3-1-2-1-1	951.7	808.8	797.1	852.5
26-4-2-3-1-1	1012.6	812.4	849.6	891.5
26-6-1-1-1-1	854.1	823.0	835.2	837.4
28-6-1-2*-1-1	943.4	758.7	845.6	849.2
44-1-3-1-1-1	820.6	800.9	947.2	856.2
45-8-1*-1-1-1	858.1	752.0	915.5	841.9
/Mean for the testers	906.7	792.6	865.0	854.8
LSD _{5%} -24.1 LSD _{1%} -32.4 LSD _{0.1%} -42.7				

2.

, 2017 .

Table 2. Length of the ear of hybrid combinations with participation of medium early mutant maize lines, 2017

/Tester lines /Mutant lines	92471	4418	4390	Mean for the lines
26-3-1-2-1-1	21.6	19.6	21.6	20.9
26-4-2-3-1-1	19.8	19.1	20.1	19.7
26-6-1-1-1-1	18.8	17.0	20.5	18.8
28-6-1-2*-1-1	20.4	19.7	19.6	19.9
44-1-3-1-1-1	20.0	18.2	20.9	19.7
45-8-1*-1-1-1	20.1	20.0	22.8	21.0
/Mean for the testers	20.1	18.9	20.9	20.0
LSD _{5%} -0.6				
LSD _{1%} -0.7				
LSD _{0.1%} -1.1				

The tables illustrate that the crosses with the line 92471 are higher in yield compared to the ones with the other two testers. The highest yield shows the variants 26-4-2-3-1-1 92471 and 26-3-1-2-1-1 92471 whose values are as follows: 1012.6 kg/ha and 951.7 kg/ha. In regard to the length of the ear, relatively high values demonstrate the top-crosses with the testers 4390 and 92471. The longest ears have the variants 45-8-1*-1-1-1 4390, 26-3-1-2-1-1 92471 26-3-1-2-1-1 4390. All of them as well as the other hybrid combinations with higher values for the traits grain yield and length of the ear are of interest for the selection and their testing continues by including them in competitive and ecological variety trials.

By means of the variance analysis of the combining ability of the grain yield and the length of the ear are found significant differences between the lines participating in the crosses ($F > F_{crit}$), which allows continuing the analysis of their evaluation by combining ability. The parameters g_i , g_j for GCA and 2s_i , 2s_j for SCA are used as criteria for this evaluation (Table 3).

A comparison of the effects of the GCA and the variances of the effects of the SCA allows judging of the relative

The tables illustrate that the crosses with the line 92471 are higher in yield compared to the ones with the other two testers. The highest yield shows the variants 26-4-2-3-1-1 92471 and 26-3-1-2-1-1 92471 whose values are as follows: 1012.6 kg/ha and 951.7 kg/ha. In regard to the length of the ear, relatively high values demonstrate the top-crosses with the testers 4390 and 92471. The longest ears have the variants 45-8-1*-1-1-1 4390, 26-3-1-2-1-1 92471 26-3-1-2-1-1 4390. All of them as well as the other hybrid combinations with higher values for the traits grain yield and length of the ear are of interest for the selection and their testing continues by including them in competitive and ecological variety trials.

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A comparison of the effects of the GCA and the variances of the effects of the SCA allows judging of the relative

(Turbin et al., 1974).

- importance of the genes' action. The combining ability is genetically determined, provided that GCA is determined by additive acting genes and SCA – by genes with dominant and epistatic effect (Turbin et al., 1974). The analysis of the effects of the GCA and the variances of the effects of the SCA of the lines makes possible to draw certain conclusions regarding their selection value and directions of use.

3. (gi, gj) (²si, ²sj)

, 2017 .

Table 3. Effects of the GCA (gi, gj) and variances of the effects of SCA (²si, ²sj) for traits grain yield and length of ear of medium early mutant maize lines, 2017

Mutant lines	/Grain yield		/Length of ear	
	(gi, gj) GCA effects (gi, gj)	(²si, ²sj) Variances of SCA effects (²si, ²sj)	(gi, gj) GCA effects (gi, gj)	(²si, ²sj) Variances of SCA effects (²si, ²sj)
26-3-1-2-1-1	-2.259	3439.664	0.948	0.224
26-4-2-3-1-1	36.719	3894.512	-0.307	0.242
26-6-1-1-1-1	-17.381	1841.050	-1.230	0.579
28-6-1-2*-1-1	-5.593	1389.211	-0.096	1.216
44-1-3-1-1-1	1.430	7116.395	-0.296	0.135
45-8-1*-1-1-1	-12.915	3030.978	0.981	0.911
Standard error	(gi-gj)±3.4		(gi-gj)±3.4	
Tester lines				
92471	51.941	3796.11	0.131	0.29
4418	-62.181	905.61	-1.057	0.36
4390	10.241	3583.01	0.926	0.68
Standard error	(gi-gj)±0.09		(gi-gj)±0.08	

: -17,38 36,72
-1,23 0,98
26-4-2-3-1-1,
45-8-1*-1-1-1 26-3-1-2-1-1.

For the studied period the effects of the GCA of the lines vary as follows: from -17.38 to 36.72 for the trait grain yield and from -1.23 to 0.98 – for length of the ear.

The line 26-4-2-3-1-1 has the highest GCA for the grain yield trait and for length of the ear are the lines 45-8-1*-1-1-1 and 26-3-1-2-1-1. In these mutant lines the dominating gene effects are of additive type and this implies successful selection work with them upon creating high-yield synthetic populations and synthetics with long ear. They can also be used as

44-1-3-1-1-1, 26-4-2-3-1-1 26-3-1-2-1-1
 1 45-8-1*-1-1-1
 28-6-1-2*-1-

26-4-2-3-1-1 45-8-1*-1-1-1
 3

(45-8-1*-1-1-1, 26-3-1-2-1-1),

44-1-3-1-1-1, 26-4-2-3-1-1
 26-3-1-2-1-1,
 28-6-1-2*-1-1 45-8-1*-1-1-1.

testers for the analyzed crosses in determining the GCA at earlier stages of the selection process for the respective traits.

After the variance analysis of the effects of the SCA are obtained the lines 44-1-3-1-1-1, 26-4-2-3-1-1 and 26-3-1-2-1-1 for the trait grain yield and 28-6-1-2*-1-1 and 45-8-1*-1-1-1 for the trait length of the ear, which are appropriate for direct heterosis selection and production of hybrids of high yield and long ear. In crosses with other lines they demonstrate primarily dominant and epistatic gene effects.

Table 3 shows that the lines 26-4-2-3-1-1 and 45-8-1*-1-1-1 have a high general and specific combining ability which make them equally valuable for being included in different directions of the selection as components for medium early synthetics; as testers of the GCA at an early stage of selection and as parental forms of medium early high-yield hybrids and hybrids with long ear.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis and evaluation of the mutant lines, the following important conclusions for their application are made:

From a top-cross scheme with participation of medium early mutant lines with a high GCA are obtained (): one line for the trait grain yield (26-4-2-3-1-1) and two – for the train length of the ear (45-8-1*-1-1-1, 26-3-1-2-1-1), being appropriate for the production of synthetics with high yield and long ear. They can also be used as testers upon conducting of analysis of the general combining ability at earlier stages of the selection process.

High SCA for the trait grain yield have the lines 44-1-3-1-1-1 26-4-2-3-1-1, and 26-3-1-2-1-1 and for the length of the ear – 28-6-1-2*-1-1 and 45-8-1*-1-1-1. The aforementioned lines are appropriate raw material for obtaining high-yield

(26-4-2-3-1-1 45-8-1*-1-1-1)

hybrids and hybrids with long ear.

Two of the spectrum of the mutant line have relatively high GCA and SCA (26-4-2-3-1-1 45-8-1*-1-1-1) and they can be used in different directions of the selection.

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