



In Stalk of an Earful About Corn MP3

Gary Crawford [00:00:01] It's a little early for this, but you've probably heard what they say about Santa Claus.

Singing Voiceover [00:00:07] He's everywhere, he's everywhere...

Gary Crawford [00:00:09] He's everywhere. But today we talk about something else that's omnipresent.

Singing voiceover 2 [00:00:15] Corn, corn, corn, is everywhere...

Gary Crawford [00:00:15] Oh, yes, and corn is indeed everywhere, even in our gasoline, and it is certainly in this corn-fed edition of Agriculture USA. I'm Gary Crawford. And now, practically, but not quite, live from Washington, D.C. and the Agriculture Department's farmers market VegU-cation tent. Our amazing educational subject for today.

Singing Voiceover 3 [00:00:38] There's nothing like corn, corn, corn....

Gary Crawford [00:00:38] Nothing like it, that's right. All right! Thank you. Sorry for the little outburst there, folks. Today in the VegU-cation tent, we've got guest VegU-cator and Maryland corn farmer Chip Bowling and our resident VegU-cator here, Chantel Oyi. They're out here answering consumer questions about corn or in some cases correcting misconceptions that some of us non-farm people have. First, Chip, we heard you talking with folks here about the two basic types of corn, field or feed corn and sweet corn. But most of us, I think just think corn is corn.

Chip Bowling [00:01:13] Well, it is all corn. It's just a different type of corn. Feed corn, used for animal feed, is that it 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 [00:01:28] And Chantel, you were saying there's a vast difference, it turns out in the amount of land planted to this field corn and was planted a sweet corn, which is what we shoppers buy at the store for corn on the cob. Right?

Chantel Oyi [00:01:40] 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 [00:01:46] So Chip, you grow corn in Maryland. What kind do you grow?

Chip Bowling [00:01:50] 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.

Gary Crawford [00:01:59] Ahh yes, but there are some people who grow corn, not for livestock feed or human food, ethanol production or even for spirits, but only for one purpose. Let's travel up to Stanley, New York, where farmers Dru and Melanie Wickham have their farm. They pick and patch on which they grow corn for Halloween. You know to make a huge corn maze.

Melanie Wickham [00:02:21] We've started being open at night, on Friday and Saturday nights till 10:00. We don't hunt the maize, but it is spooky just by the sheer nature that it's dark out, and it's a corn field.

Gary Crawford [00:02:31] So that's yet another use for corn. But over to you, Chantel. You were telling me earlier of course, only 1 percent of the corn grown in the country, sweet corn, which we eat mostly as corn on the cob last year. Each of us aid an average of six- and three-quarter pounds of fresh sweet corn, or at least we bought that much. Chantel, you say some of that corn may have been thrown out because of mistakes in storing it. So, what's your advice on that?

Chantel Oyi [00:02:55] When you purchase corn, you want to leave on the husk and wrap it in a plastic bag and you can refrigerate it for about three days.

Gary Crawford [00:03:02] I know you say leave the husks on there, but at my grocery store, you know, I see a lot of people shucking that corn right there in the store. And sometimes it's hard to remove those husks. But in Alabama, the husk is looser.

Chantel Oyi [00:03:12] (laughs).

Gary Crawford [00:03:12] Ah you like. Well anyway, what about shucking that corn in the store when you buy it?

Chantel Oyi [00:03:18] That's not ideal.

Gary Crawford [00:03:19] You say the husk really protects the ear, keeps it fresher longer until we're ready to eat it. Now, of course we could freeze that ear of corn, but for that, you've got to remove the husks, I guess. But what else?

Chantel Oyi [00:03:31] What you would do is actually blanch it, which is just placing it in boiling water for about 30 seconds to a minute and then rinsing with cold water stored in an airtight freezer container or bag.

Gary Crawford [00:03:42] And it'll keep most six to nine months. But really, your advice and I know what you're gonna say, right?

Chantel Oyi [00:03:47] It's best to honestly eat the corn as soon as you purchase it.

Gary Crawford [00:03:50] Because it's so good that way.

Chantel Oyi [00:03:52] Exactly.

Gary Crawford [00:03:53] Chantel is giving out some small corn on the cob samples to people.

Chantel Oyi [00:03:57] With a variety of different toppings. So, such as garlic parmesan topping, butter, old bay, as well as chipotle lime topping, just showing people the versatility with flavor of corn.

Gary Crawford [00:04:09] Now, besides being Chief VegU-cator here, Chantel, you have another job title here.

Chantel Oyi [00:04:14] The resident comedian.

Gary Crawford [00:04:15] So, ladies and gentlemen, Chantel Oyi!

Chantel Oyi [00:04:19] Why is Corn such a good listener? Because it's all ears.

Voiceover 4 [00:04:25] Ooooh that's corny.

Chantel Oyi [00:04:26] How much does a pirate pay for corn? A buccaneer.

Voiceover 4 [00:04:31] Ooooh that's corny.

Chantel Oyi [00:04:32] What do you call a mythical Veggie? A unicorn?

Voiceover 4 [00:04:37] Ooooh that's corny.

Gary Crawford [00:04:37] Yeah, worse than corny.

Chantel Oyi [00:04:39] I tried. I tried.

Gary Crawford [00:04:40] You did! Yeah. Just not hard enough, maybe, you know. Okay. That's our agriculture. USA cornucopia information about...

Singing Voiceover 3 [00:04:49] Corn, corn, corn, corn...

Gary Crawford [00:04:50] Yeah, we're getting an earful, all right. Gary Crawford reporting for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington.