Hi-A Corn Breeding/Genetics Field Tour and Research Forum

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On Thursday, July 31, 2025, several HPWD staff members attended the Hi-A Corn Breeding/Genetics Field Tour and Research Forum at the Texas A&M AgriLife Halfway Station. The event spotlighted the groundbreaking work of Dr. Wenwei Xu, a recipient of numerous HPWD Research and Demonstration Grants, who is leading efforts to develop stress-tolerant Hi-A sweet corn for high-value production under limited irrigation.

Dr. Xu and his research team have developed several Hi-A sweet corn hybrids using pedigree breeding techniques. These specialty hybrids are rich in anthocyanins and

antioxidants, making them a nutritious option for fresh produce, grain, and silage. Designed with health and profitability in mind, Hi-A corn offers a promising solution for small—to large-acreage producers navigating water scarcity.

The event featured on-site plot tours, expert insights into breeding advancements, opportunities, and discussions on hybrid performance, with a strong focus on Hi-A and short-season varieties.

HPWD General Manager Jason Coleman, P.E., presented on “High-Value Corn for Water Conservation.” He addressed the ongoing challenges for agricultural producers, where water resources are increasingly limited, and what the potential cost of water can mean to them. Coleman emphasized the importance of Dr. Xu’s research in developing drought-tolerant, short-season hybrids that help conserve water while supporting sustainable agriculture.

Attendees enjoyed a luncheon featuring enchiladas made with tortillas and chips from the TAMZ 102 Hi-A hybrid—generously provided by the local tortilla company, CASA RICA Tortillas- Mr. Joe Longoria, President. Fresh ears of TAMZ 102 corn were also available for sampling, giving guests a taste of the nutrient-rich crop.

Hi-A corn represents a forward-thinking approach to agriculture—combining science, sustainability, and economic viability to meet the needs of both farmers and consumers.