A-Maze-ing Demonstration of GPS Technologies. (A04nielsen093406-Poster)

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Abstract:

The Purdue Boiler Mazer, a 5-acre corn maze, was designed for the 2001 Farm Progress Show (FPS) in Indiana. The maze promoted Purdue Agriculture and exposed maze trekkers to uses of Global Positioning System (GPS) technologies in today's agriculture. A group of dedicated maze-ologists met regularly in late winter and early spring to brainstorm maze ideas and a design. Developed with graphics software, the design layout was georeferenced to the field boundary using GIS software. The design was marked on the soil surface with road-marking paint at the V1 corn growth stage, guided by GPS-enabled handheld computers and field-mapping software. Painted trails were mowed with heavy-duty mowers to create the maze design at the V6 growth stage. Nearly 10,000 visitors explored the complex trail system during the three-day FPS and viewed educational exhibits and crop trivia challenges located throughout the maze. Attendees were allowed to navigate the maze using GPS satellite receivers, handheld computers and navigation software. Two educational sessions were conducted in the maze to instruct elementary students in the use of GPS technologies for navigation and area measurements.

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