



HERE PART OF THE group that made the trench silo four Tuesday inspects the operation of a poured concrete bunker silo on the farm of Levi Brubaker, Rohrerstown. Forty head of steers are self fed in this operation. The beam across the silo supports an electrified pipe to keep the cattle from wasting the feed. Brubaker said that the

bunker was poured and ready for use in about one week. The entrance of the silo is in the barn lot allowing the steers free access to silage. There has been no trouble with over eating because the steers tend to stay full all the time, Brubaker says. (LF Photo)

Livestock on rain-drenched pastures or fed forage cut soon after heavy rain, may need extra mineral supplement. Several minerals and amino acids can be washed out of plant leaves by rain.

Farmers Visit Brubaker, Fry Farms To View Trench Silo Operations

Fifty-three farmers attended two tours of trench silo operations Tuesday morning and afternoon.

The morning tour was at the farm of Levi H. Brubaker, Rohrerstown, and the afternoon tour at the Miles and Morton Fry farm, R3 Ephrata.

Brubaker has a 18 by 67 foot concrete bunker designed to self feed 40 head of steers. He said that the silo was built in about a week last summer when it was seen that ensiling was going to be the best means of feeding the corn crop.

In listing the advantages of bunker self feeding as opposed to the vertical silo, he said that the

greatest gain is in the saving of labor and time.

Brubaker has a unique method of self feeding. Instead of the usual wooden barrier, he has rigged an electrified pipe across the bunker about three feet from the floor.

He said that the cattle learn quickly to feed without touching the pipe and that they can eat up to an inch from it. The control of stock is good with it, he said.

The disadvantages of the bunker silo, he said, is that there is more waste, both from spoilage and from animals walking on the silage as the face of the silage is cut down. He said that much of the latter waste could be eliminated by the installation of a portable wooden floor for the animals to stand on with their front feet.

The Fry farm is being redesigned for efficient dairy operation. The silo is now in a corner of the barn lot and the silage fed inside the barn by cart.

However, they expect to start construction soon on a new pole type feeding and loafing shed. An overhead cart track will be run down the middle of the shed,

over wooden feed bunks, and end at the silo.

The cart can be filled at the silo with a tractor loader and run into the feed bunks.

John Walker, Penn State agricultural engineer, who assisted County Agent Max M. Smith with the tours, said that this is the usual practice in dairy herds. He said that dairy cattle tend to pick at their feed more than beef cattle and that most dairymen prefer to feed silage from bunks rather than attempt self feeding.

Walker also gave some specifications for trench or bunker silo construction. There must be adequate drainage for the silo, he said. He described adequate as a one foot drop in 50 feet of length for concrete lined silos and three feet in 50 for dirt trenches.

Having the feeding face of the silo facing south will increase spoilage and should be avoided if at all possible, he said.

He also recommends concrete lining of trench silos. The floor should be four inches thick laid over a base of six to eight inches of gravel. The floor need not be reinforced, he said.

The poured walls, however, should be reinforced, he said. They should be four inches thick. Rusted wire mesh available on the farm can be used to reinforce the walls, but galvanized wire should not be used.

The zinc on the wire reacts with

the cement, thus weakening the concrete, he explained.

Proper sealing of the silo after packing the silage well is the secret of proper preservation, Walker said. For this several materials can be used. Fifteen pound felt paper covered with limestone or sawdust probably will do the best job. Tarpaper or limestone alone can also be used, he said.

Walker said that a polyvinyl plastic cover has been developed that should be on the market soon. The plastic cover will probably have a life of about two years.

Construction costs of a trench silo average about \$1 per ton for digging and grading and about \$5 per ton for the cement work. This, Walker says, is about a third of the cost of an upright silo of the same capacity

He added that trench silos can also be constructed of pressure treated wood, cement blocks, blown cement, prefabricated cement slabs and plastered rock. But he pointed out that many of the materials listed increase construction costs without adding any advantage and that usually much of the work must be done by a contractor

Aaron Brubaker manages the Brubaker farm. The Frys operate as a father-son farming team.

Plans and specifications as to size and capacity requirements are available at the County Agent's office in the Lancaster Post Office.

NOT ALWAYS

"I hope, my little man," said the pastor with an indulgent pat, "that you say your prayers every night."

"Not every night," admitted young Peter. "Some nights I don't want anything."



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