

Soil Bank Regulations Modified

Modification of 1958 Soil Bank Acreage Regulations to remove the provision for a civil penalty against participating farmers who exceed the "permitted acreage" for harvest of Soil Bank base crops on their farms was announced Thursday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Under the 1958 Acreage Reserve program, a farm Soil Bank "base" will be established for participating farms. In general, this base is the average number of acres harvested in 1956 and 1957, as determined by the farmer's county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committee. In an Acreage Reserve agreement, a farmer agrees not to harvest more acres than this "base", less any acreage placed in the Soil Bank. This is his "permitted acreage" for harvest.

The 1958 Acreage Reserve regulations as originally announced provided that the harvest of more than this "permitted acreage" would subject the farmer to both a civil penalty of 50 per cent of the payment which would have been made for full compliance with the Acreage Reserve agreement, and also the loss of the payment itself. Under the modification announced today, farmers who do not comply with the "permitted acreage" provision will still forfeit the entire payment, but no civil penalty will apply.

Department of Agriculture officials emphasize that the "Soil Bank base" provision continues in full effect, as a limitation upon total production except for the withdrawal of the "double penalty" provision.

Both a civil penalty and loss of payment will continue to apply for any farmer who harvests a crop or permits livestock to graze on land designated for the Acreage Reserve, or who harvests more of the Acreage Reserve crop than his farm acreage allotment less the acreage in the Reserve.

Egg Quality Color Chart Revised by USDA

A revision of the color chart, "United States Standards for Quality of Individual Shell Egg," designed primarily as a teaching aid and for use of egg graders, has been published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The revision includes four new illustrations to show the degree of shell cleanliness required in A, AA, B, and C qualities. It brings up to date descriptions of shell and air cell condition.

The 15½ by 29½ inch chart includes 36 color illustrations, depicting, in addition to shell cleanliness requirements, the candled appearance of white and brown eggs for each of the four qualities, the broken-out appearance of each quality, and hard-cooked egg halves showing maximum depth of air cell and position of yolk in each quality. Also illustrated are normal and abnormal shells and various types of loss eggs.

Single copies of the chart may be obtained free from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

State Warned Alfalfa Aphid May Be Here

HARRISBURG—The State Department of Agriculture today said all technical plant specialists in the field have been alerted to watch for the highly destructive spotted alfalfa aphid.

In a precautionary move, Dr. Department of Agriculture experts in Pennsylvania are keeping a special watch for the pest in Lancaster, Lebanon, Greene, York, Franklin, Adams, Dauphin and Cumberland Counties.

Silage Quality Determined in Hours After Ensiling, USDA Reports

Getting good, high-protein silage depends largely upon the quality and kind of forage used, but also important is the way it is handled, the U. S. Department of Agriculture reports. The quality of silage may be determined within a few hours after ensiling.

Proper fermentation makes good silage, and it is the type and quantities of fermentation acids produced by the forage plants that affect silage quality. Under the best conditions, lactic-acid bacteria on the plants convert the sugars present into such effective preservatives as lactic, acetic and succinic acid.

On the other hand, when certain spore-forming bacteria have a chance to develop rapidly, they

convert the lactic acid into undesirable butyric acid and the plant proteins into ammonia, hydrogen sulfide and other compounds associated with spoilage.

Scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service set out to learn what conditions encourage the lactic-acid forming bacteria at the expense of the sporeformer. One answer, the researchers found, is in the way the forage is handled. Forage tramped, weighted and immediately sealed made high quality silage. It heated only moderately - a good index of fermentation - as enzymes in the plant tissue and oxygen-loving bacteria on the plants consumed the available oxygen in the first five hours. Soon, the lactic-acid bacteria became predominant. The tests show

ed, therefore, that the critical part of the preservation process took place earlier than it had been generally thought.

In contrast, it was found that forage spoiled when left loose and unsealed for two days, especially if air had been forced through it. The carelessly handled silage heated abnormally for a few days and ultimately lost nutrients and much valuable lactic acid.

The kind of plant stored also affected silage quality. It came as a surprise to the researchers that alfalfa consistently made better silage in the tests than orchard grass which ordinarily has a higher sugar content. Alfalfa seemed to withstand higher temperatures with less loss of nutrients than orchard grass and showed lower

spore counts. The significance of these findings is not fully understood but their importance is obvious in view of the current emphasis upon protein-rich forages.

The research is continuing. It is hoped that a detailed comparison of bacteria (the scientists isolated 40,000 strains) may lead to a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms that govern silage quality.

Dairy cattle may need additional energy feeds to balance the nitrate in excess of one per cent in the total ration and to maintain profitable production, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association.

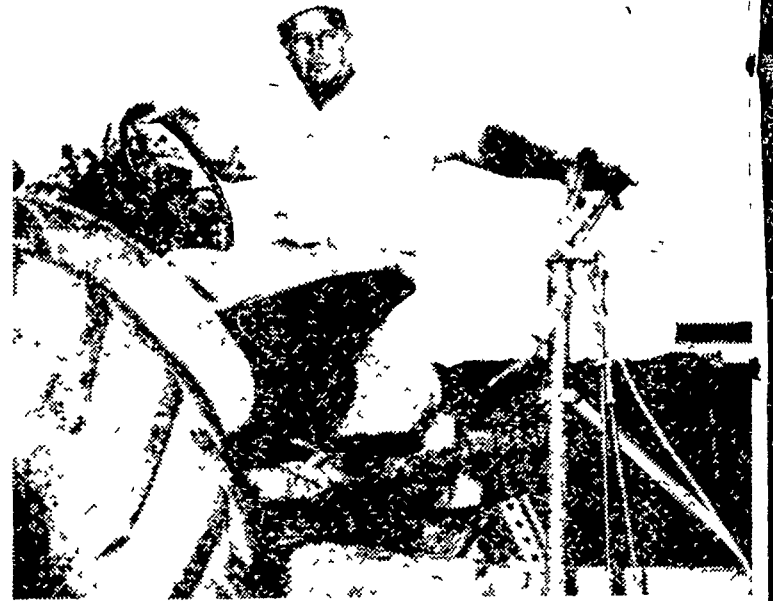
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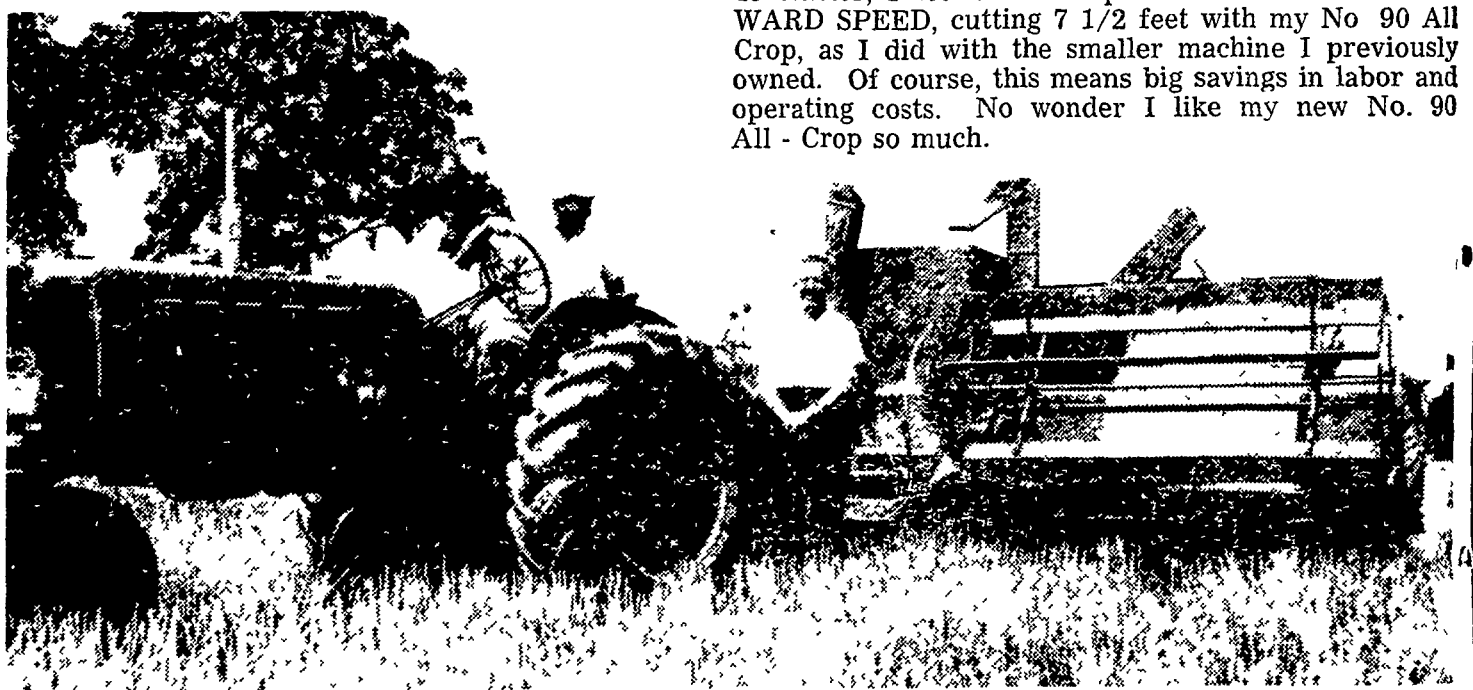
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Pictured above are Willis Esbenshade and Ed Stambaugh, Allis Chalmers blockman, checking the New No. 90 All-Crop on Willis' farm

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