

Instant Death

(Continued from page 1) In dry weather this conversion is interrupted. Instead of producing protein the nitrogen fertilizers that are universally used on forage crops. Under normal conditions the nitrogen is converted by the plants into protein. In the silo the nitrogen builds up nitrates in plants. In the silo the nit-

rates release various gases, including the dangerous silo gas.

Secretary Bull's warning, issued jointly with farm scientists at the Pennsylvania State University, described silo gas as having "an irritating odor, similar to laundry bleach."

"In quantity it may appear as a yellowish brown cloud. It is heavier than air and settles over the surface of the silage or down the silage chute. A few whiffs may result in instant death."

They urged all persons even slightly exposed to the deadly fumes to consult a physician immediately.

Dr. Richard S. Adams, extension dairy specialist at the University, said animals affected by silo gas "exhibit coughing, difficult breathing, and paralysis." Nitrate poisoning, he said, generally is less acute although symptoms may be similar to those for silo gas. He advised veterinary treatment of affected animals.

Since drought-stricken plants may absorb nitrate nitrogen rapidly after a recovery rain, Adams advised farmers to "avoid feeding or ensiling forage for 3 to 5 days. Ventilate the whole silo area, and run the blower for 10 to 15 minutes before entering a

silos during filling and for one week after it is completed. Corn, small grain, sudangrass and sorghum forages bear watching."

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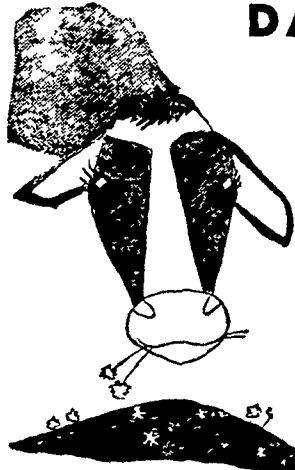
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