

County Agent Urges Farmers to Plant Oats, Alfalfa Early

Farmers were reminded this week that the deadline for planting oats and alfalfa, to achieve best results, is fast approaching.

Max Smith, Lancaster County agricultural agent, said the oats planting should be finished by the first week in April and the alfalfa without a nurse crop by mid-April.

Smith noted that many local farmers, particularly beef producers, use oats for hay and silage, in addition to harvesting for oats and straw. Using oats as a forage crop is probably the

best way to harvest this crop, Smith indicated.

But he advised against using oats as a nurse crop for alfalfa or clover, because the competition for moisture by the two crops probably will stop either from achieving best results.

A straight alfalfa seeding at this time of year with a reasonable growing season, should net the farmer one or two cuttings later this year, Smith said.

The Oats Crop

Smith explained that if farmers can get oats planted during

the last week of March or first week in April while weather is cooler the crop yield will be better.

The county agent said that ground should be prepared in the same manner for any other small grain, and a phosphorus-potash fertilizer should be worked into the soil, such as 0-15-30 or 0-20-20, at a rate of 300-400 pounds per acre.

Smith said that unless the land is poor, nitrogen should not be added to the soil. Nitrogen contributes to a problem with lodging in oats, he said.

Farmers may choose oats varieties such as Russell, Garfield or Clutford, which are well adapted to growth in this area.

Oats should be seeded at a rate of two to two-and-a-half bushels per acre, unless a new stand of clover or alfalfa also is to be sown as a nurse crop. Then the oats rate should be one bushel per acre.

The Alfalfa Crop

For alfalfa the soil should be prepared as a fine, firm seedbed, with lime and fertilizer applied according to test. Seeding rate should be 20 pounds per acre.

A system of planting known as band seeding, by which the seed is deposited on top of a band of fertilizer and then pressed into the ground with a press wheel is best, Smith said.

Fertilizer such as 5-10-10 works well, he stated.

A new alfalfa seeding must be protected by weed control, he added, with Eptam, a highly evaporative fertilizer, spread

one to two days before seeding the job.

The Eptam, he cautioned, must

be worked into the soil within 15 minutes after it is applied, or it will dissipate and not do alfalfa for weed control.

If the farmer prefers, Smith said, he can use 24D-B two to three weeks after seeding the

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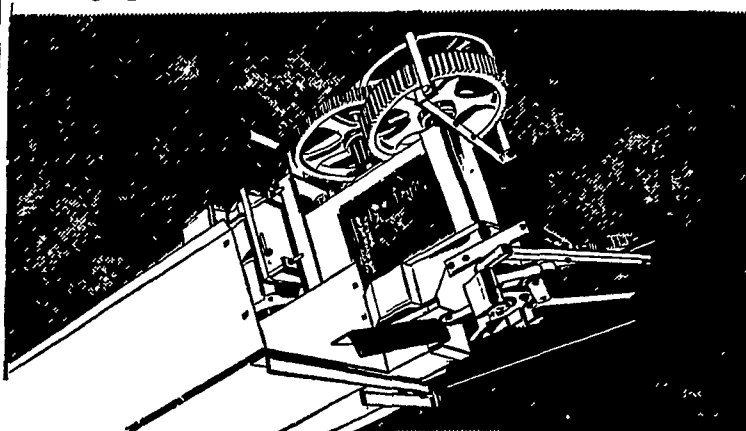
polish Mini' contract.

Evidence of the popularity of pork belly futures is seen in the increasing membership of the Exchange. Since the diversification was first approved by the Board in February, 44 new members have purchased seats, says George Wilkens, Executive Vice President of the Exchange. This includes the first woman member.

The "Minneapolis Mini" pork belly futures contract, singly or in multiples, can be bought or sold on margin for \$400 each. It is an 18,000 pound contract. Previously, the only pork belly futures in the United States were 36,000 pound contracts on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

Minneapolis Futures Commission Merchants and the Secretary's office of the Minneapolis Grain Exchange are available to answer questions regarding the new pork belly futures

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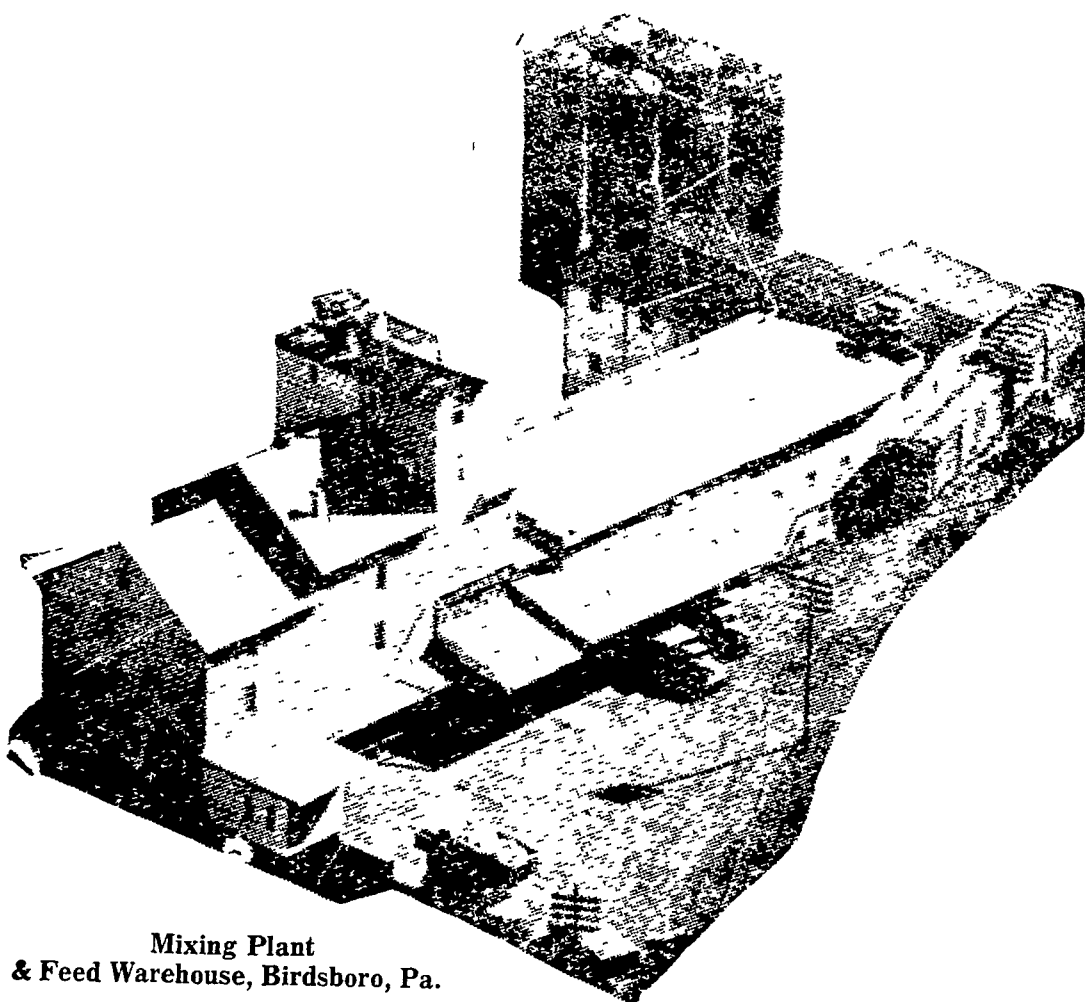
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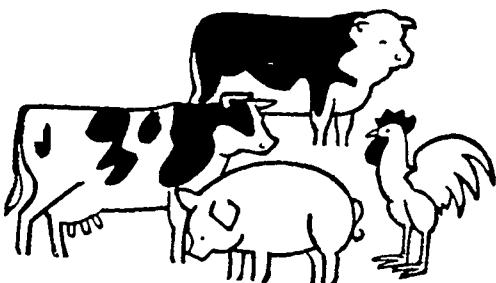


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