

Common Meadow Mouse Aids Nutrition Research

The common meadow mouse used in feeding experiments at The Pennsylvania State University, is helping scientists develop more nutritious feed for livestock.

This meadow mouse or vole, found throughout fields and pastures, is perhaps the best little animal available for evaluating both the nutritional quality of small amounts of plant forage and cereal grains, says Dr. John S. Shenk, assistant professor of plant breeding at Penn State.

Normally, large quantities of food are needed for feeding trials with livestock. However, experimental plants may produce less than a pound of forage or grain for nutritional evaluation. That's enough to feed five or six voles for a week, the period of greatest rate of gain. Voles are about 4 inches long and are dark gray or brown colored. They have small ears and short tails, in contrast to house mice.

If a young meadow mouse is fed a nutritionally adequate diet of grain, forage, or both, it will gain nearly 1 gram of weight per day, rapid for its size. In addition, it will eat about 4 or 5 grams daily and digest

about 65 per cent of its feed. Analyzing for improved protein quality in breeding

for new cereal grains is one of the most promising areas

of research with voles. For example, both voles and rats respond best when fed inbred corn lines containing genes high in lysine, an amino acid form of protein. Voles are superior to rats in such experiments, since voles require less feed than rats in the early stages of breeding programs where not enough grain is available to feed rats.

The meadow mouse is capable of digesting greater quantities of plant fiber than most other rodents. It has an enlarged caecum—the first part of the large intestine—which promotes microbial digestion of food. Thus, the vole is able to utilize fibrous diets in a manner similar to the horse. Growth of the young meadow mouse has been found to be limited primarily by energy available from the forage.

A few forages contain undesirable substances. Young voles are sensitive to these anti-quality compounds. Voles have not responded favorably, for example, when fed crown-vetch forage that is dried artificially. The voles ate less feed than normal, lost

weight, and often died. These results have been verified with day-old chicks and pigs. Chemists at the Regional Pasture Research

Laboratory of the U.S.D.A. at Penn State have identified the substance responsible for adverse effects on voles, baby chicks, and pigs.

Increase In Cheese Import "Pricebreak"

The Department of Agriculture today announced an impending change in the "pricebreak" which controls the quota status of imports of Emmentaler cheese, Gruyere-process cheese, and the miscellaneous tariff category of "Other" cheese. The pricebreak will increase from 72 cents to 78 cents per pound f.o.b. country of origin.

The change results from an increase in the Commodity Credit Corporation's purchase price for Cheddar cheese to 70.75 cents per pound, effective April 1, 1974. The increase in the "pricebreak" is also effective on that date.

Under the provisions of Presidential Proclamation 4138 of June 3, 1972, which established additional import quotas for the above-mentioned cheeses, imports priced below the pricebreak are subject to quota while

those priced at or above the pricebreak are not. The Proclamation specifies that the pricebreak shall be 7 cents above the CCC price, rounded to the nearest whole cent, and shall change whenever the CCC purchase price changes.

A formal announcement effecting the change will be published in the Federal Register within the next few days.

Shipments now in transit will not be affected. Proclamation 4138 provides that merchandise exported to the United States on a through bill of lading or placed in bonded warehouse on or before the date of publication of the Federal Register notice will not be restricted because of the increase in the pricebreak.

Kreider Herd Production

Milk and butterfat production levels established by Registered Holstein cows in this area have been reported by Holstein-Friesian Association of America. All cows are from the herd of John E. Kreider, 523 Willow Road, Lancaster, and are enrolled in the Dairy Herd Improvement Registry (DHIR) official testing program.

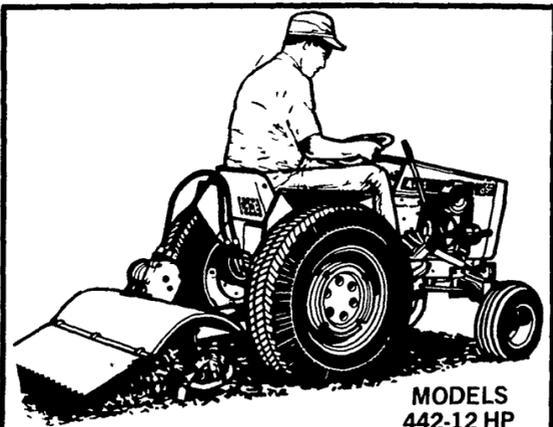
Cows recognized for their exceptional food producing ability are:

Trout Spring Budd El Jo, age 6-11, 17,430 pounds milk, 772 pounds fat, 4.4 percent test in 348 days milked.

Trout Spring Kingpin La Gerry, 6-3, 19,600 milk, 746 fat, 3.8 percent test in 305 days.

Trout Spring Star Frances, 7-5, 16,110 milk, 645 fat, 4.0 percent test in 319 days.

Trout Spring X Beets Josie, 5-1, 15,810 milk, 600 fat, 3.8 percent test in 290 days milked.



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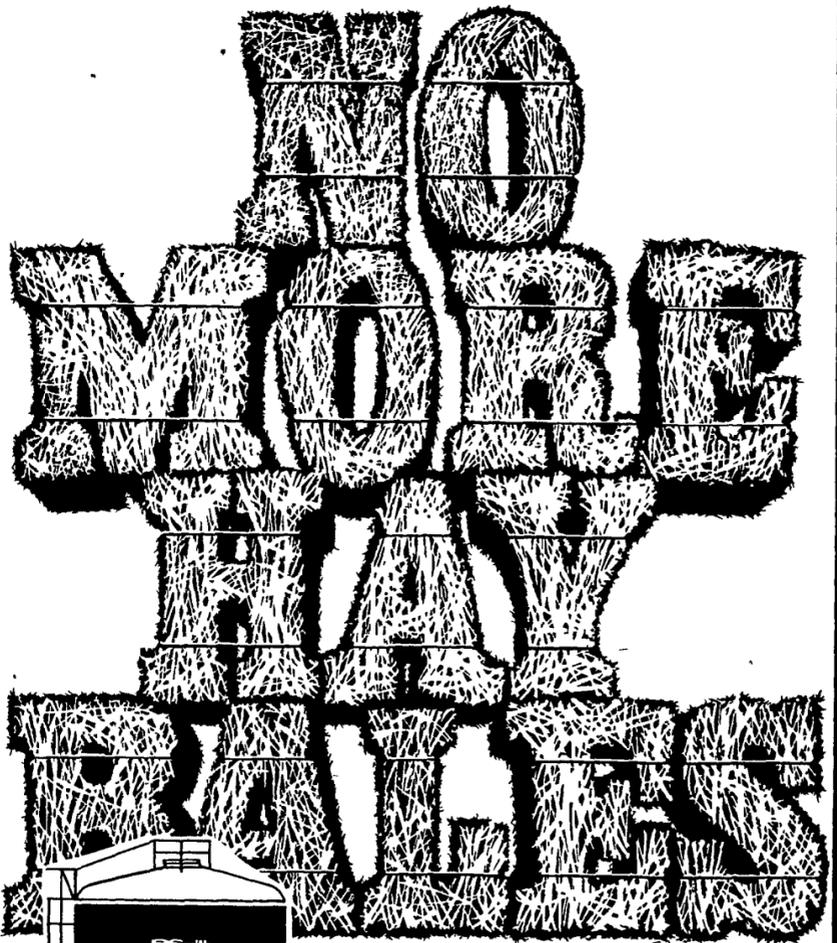
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