

# Alfalfa seed available, but supply limited

**By KENDACE BERRY LITTTZ** — There is alfalfa seed available today, although how long the supply will last some suppliers aren't too sure. That's the report from area seed companies and individuals involved in the forage crop.

William C. Stringer, assistant professor of forage crop management at Penn State, summed it up, "As I check around, there is seed available. But I advise farmers to get their Fall seed supplies early, to plan ahead, because supplies may be tight by then."

He noted that the price of

the alfalfa seed was up, but he thought that was due to inflation, more than any other reason.

Representing P.L. Rohrer and Bros., Inc., Smoketown, Willis Rohrer reported that the supply of alfalfa seed has been short nationwide, although he noted that he believed that his company had been able to secure enough for their trade. He told that they still have limited supplies of varieties resistant to anthracnose and phytophthora (root-rot), the two main diseases found in alfalfa.

He related that last year before the alfalfa seed was

harvested in September, a good crop had been expected. But wet weather complicated the harvest, and the yield shrank from good to less than half of normal in spots. And he added, that season had been entered into with very little carry-over of the crop from the year before, allowing little back-up for this year's demands.

For all customer demands have been met, and the Spring sales are almost over, he commented.

But come August, when the Fall seeding plans begin, he noted, that's when the supplies will be "hurting".

"Quite a bit of alfalfa is seeded in August," he said. "And there may be little or nothing available by then. My advise to the farmers is to latch onto supplies now. It may not be available then."

Thinking of next year's seed crop, he told that in talking to some of the large producers of alfalfa seed, he learned that their aim is to try and produce more than a normal supply of the seed this year. For the past two years the supply on hand has been used entirely, and they want to have a backlog to back up another year's crop, if necessary.

Most alfalfa seed is har-

vested in the months of September and October and comes from either the state of California or Idaho.

A spokesman from the Stanford Seed Company, Plymouth Meeting, told too that some alfalfa seed is available, but in limited supplies.

"It looks bad, the seed is scarce, and I don't know yet if everybody is going to clean out for Spring," he commented. "We haven't had a crunch yet, the rainy weather has been holding back the planting and plowing, so there still is some alfalfa around, but it won't last long."

Kenneth Beachley, Shiremanstown, speaking for Beachley-Hardy Seed Co., said that the current stock is "fairly good in the resistant varieties. But," he added, "the supplies will

probably be sold out before Fall planting.

He noted, that according to John Baylor, Penn State Extension agronomist, Pennsylvania is expecting a five per cent increase in alfalfa seedings this year. And that means more seed will be used.

And from Mount Joy, Henry Reist representing Reist Seed Co., stated that early in the season there were indications that there were shortages of alfalfa seed supplies. But he thought that there would be enough for Spring plantings.

"We've been told that there will be no new supplies for Fall planting," he remarked. "Things might get tight by Fall. However, right now the newer alfalfa varieties are in more ample supply, and good quality seed still is available."

## Fewer feeder cattle

(Continued from Page 1)

"What we'll see is like numbers to what we're seeing now, or even fewer," he commented. "I think this year we are at the lowest point, (referring to cattle numbers) in the cattle market. We should have more cows on hand as of January 1, 1980, than we did as of January 1, 1979."

Feeder steer prices aren't any higher here in Virginia than anywhere else, he added. The market is high everywhere.

He said that there is an increase in feeder heifers being kept to be turned into beef cows. But, he noted, this hasn't really affected their price. There is still the same spread in steer and heifer prices as usual, the heifer prices aren't being run up.

"I think we are at the top of the price market for feeder steers," he related. "And the prices should hold at this level through mid-summer. Then we should see an adjustment in the price after seeing what the Fall corn prices will be like, and how the fat steer market will decline. But nobody knows what that adjustment will be."

"Prices needed to get higher for cattle," he continued. "It cost more to produce them than farmers were getting. But it reached

its present level so quickly that it really put the pressure on. Everyone had doubts about whether it will stay at this level. I think it will stay in this price neighborhood for the next three years, until the cattle numbers start increasing."

At a special feeder calf and yearling sale held in Orange, Va., on April 3, 510 head were sold. Steers, choice and fancy weighing 300 to 500 pounds, brought 95 cents to \$1.03 per pound; 500 to 700 pounds brought 82.5 to 85.5 cents; 700 to 800 pounds brought 75 to 78.5 cents per pound; Good, 300 to 500 pounds, brought 97 to \$1.08 per pound; 500 to 700 pounds brought 89 to 95 cents per pound; and 700 to 800 pounds brought 70 to 79 cents per pound.

At a special market held April 6, at Winchester, Va., there were 926 head sold. Steers, grading choice and fancy, weighing 300 to 500 pounds brought \$1.02 to \$1.09½ per pound, 500 to 700 pounds brought 85 to 99 cents per pound, and 700 to 800 pounds brought 76 to 88.5 cents per pound. Good steers, weighing 300 to 500 pounds, brought \$1.04½ to \$1.07 per pound; 500 to 700 pounds brought 85 to 99 cents per pound; and 700 to 800

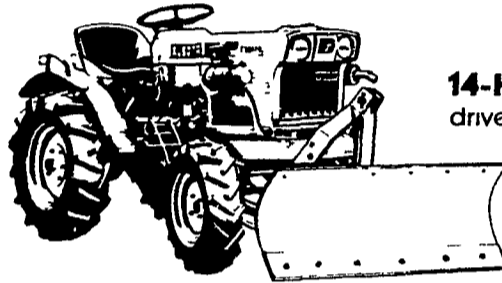
pounds brought 82 to 90 cents per pound.

For a more complete

market picture, see the market pages starting on page two of this paper.

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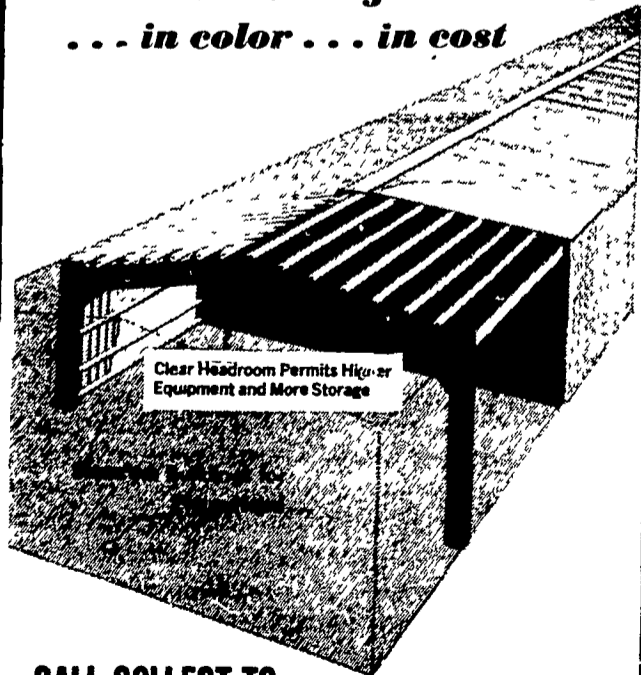
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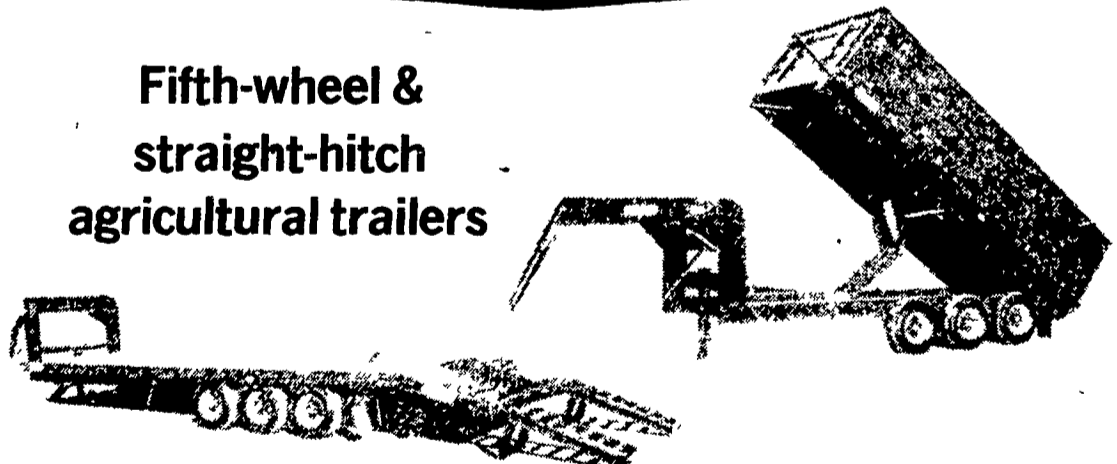
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