

How to

(Continued from Page C19)

The Furadan application gives protection up to about 60 days, usually until the first cutting on new stands. Penn State is also studying the treatment for fall seeding, and some growers have already tried that practice.

"Leafhoppers are our worst enemy in this area," points out Ross Orner, Jr., Rockton, Clearfield County. He and his family operate Summit Farms here. He says he feels the fall application paid off

"We got a beautiful stand, even though the seeding rate was cut to just 7.5 pounds, half of what we would normally use for straight alfalfa."

The insecticide treatment is cleared only for use on pure alfalfa stands.

Orner estimates his alfalfa yields average about five tons per acre over a season. But he follows an intensive management program.

"We run 35 to 40 soil tests per year, which is a very valuable tool," he points out

Sharply sloping soils in this area mean about 20

different soil types are included in Summit Farms, he adds.

"We seem to have ideal growing conditions for alfalfa here, though. It's a little pocket that is a little bit cooler than some areas and often a little short and cool for corn, but the alfalfa stands up well."

To make sure new seedlings are well established, the Orners won't cut until the crop is in bloom.

"That helps the root system get well established. And getting the new seeding established is the most important step," Orner adds.

"Even if leafhopper doesn't kill out a stand, it can reduce the alfalfa population to the point where weeds come in and take over," points out Stan Gesell.

Spring alfalfa seedings are the hardest hit by leafhopper, though, Gesell says.

Eugene Moser, Oley, Berks County, seeds most of his alfalfa in the spring.

"We've had trouble getting stands started when insects hit," he says.

Last season he applied two quarts per acre of liquid Furadan 4F along with his herbicide, Tolban, on new

seedings. Measured yields on test plots showed a yield difference of 0.76 tons per acre—5.93 tons per acre on two cuttings in the treated area, 5.17 tons per acre in the untreated area.

"I'm planning to use the same treatment this season although I'll put it on with liquid fertilizer," Moser says.

"We use our alfalfa very hard," Moser points out. "We'll start cutting at the bud stage and cut about every 30 days. That means we'll often get five cuttings per season."

But Moser smiles as he adds, "Last season the weather was hard on us, and we only got four."

Recommended application procedures for the planting-time treatment call for broadcasting 10 to 20 pounds of Furadan 10G or one to two quarts of Furadan 4F per acre. Either insecticide should be incorporated just prior to seeding.

At the two quart rate, the 4F formulation will run \$16 to \$18 per acre. The granules are somewhat cheaper, at about \$14 cost for materials.

Wendler says farmers can get by with about half the normal label rate if all goes well, but that they may sacrifice some residual control.

At standard rates, the material gives about 60 days protection, or one cutting.

There must be a delay of 60 days between application of material and feeding of cut alfalfa. This period would be about the normal interval between planting and first cutting.

Should cows break into a new stand of alfalfa before the withdrawal time of 60 days, FMC recommends dumping the milk for 96 hours, or eight milkings from cows which ate treated alfalfa.

Other leafhopper control methods on new stands call for spraying after the crop is up, or of course, no treatment at all. But the latter method runs the risk of losing the stand entirely or sharp reductions in the protein value of the crop, points out Gesell.

"Leafhopper feeding is responsible for a sharp reduction in protein content that adversely affects the feeding value of the forage," he adds.

Not only do leafhoppers actually feed and suck juices out of the plants, but they inject a toxin that results in the plugging of vessels which carry nutrients.

Damaged stands will be stunted and yellowish. The

crop has reduced vigor and lowered yields, as well as lower protein content, Gesell adds.

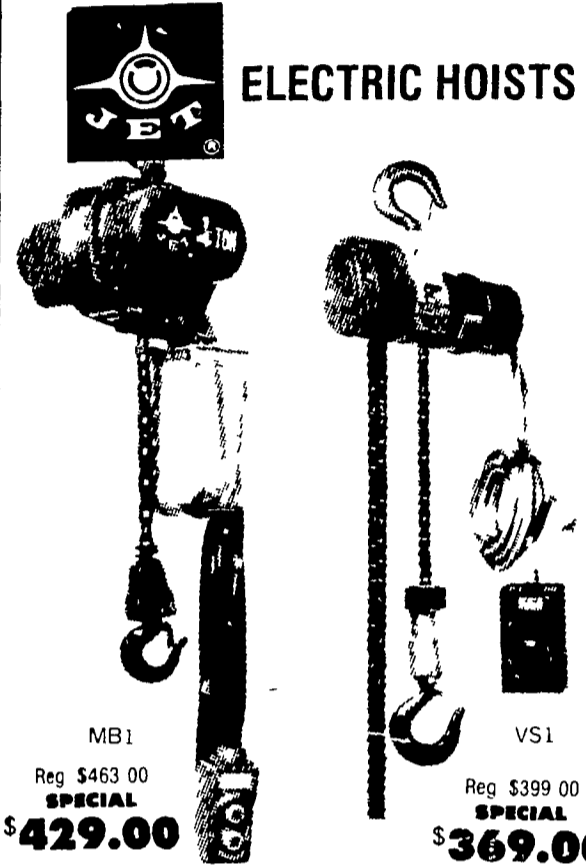
The leafhoppers are actually killed off each year when freezing weather arrives. But the migratory pest heads north from warmer climates and arrives in time to sap the life out of the crop ahead of the first cutting, arriving in late

May and early June. Numbers may vary, but susceptible areas usually have at least some problem fields.



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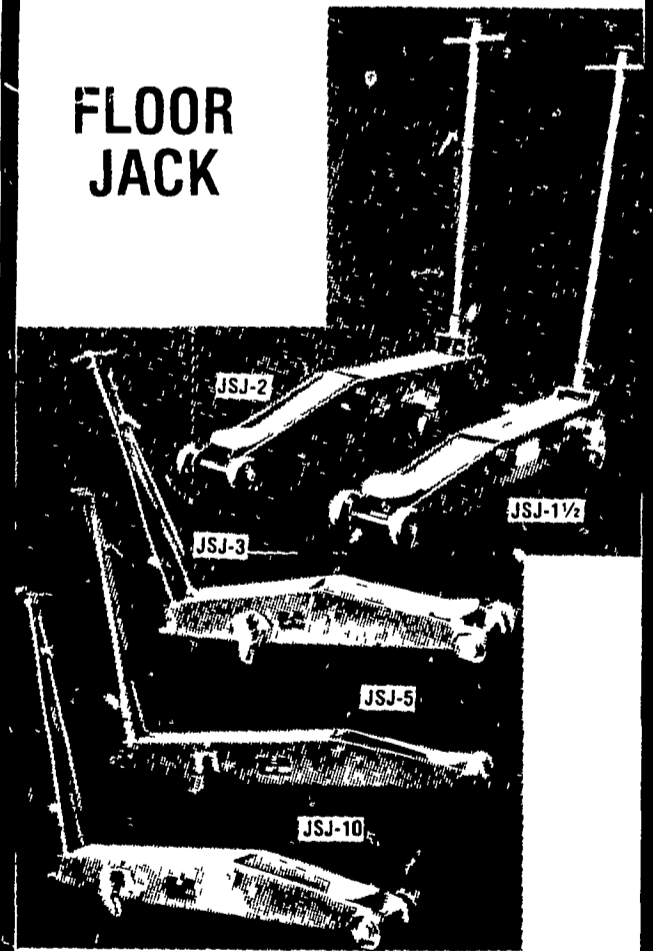
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