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BEEF SALES

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Veal Calves - 4:30 Thurs.

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Daily Market Report - Phone: 717-354-7288
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On-farm analysis

(Continued from Page D2)
auction for five weeks this spring.

"We used these five weeks as a test period to actually set up how the equipment can be used in a hay marketing situation," Shenk explained.

Mostly mixed hay is sold at the Belleville auction, according to Shenk. There was a mixed reaction among sellers concerning the testing of loads brought to the auction, he said. Primarily, the sellers of higher quality hay were more interested in the analysis than those bringing lesser quality loads.

"It took a couple of weeks for farmers to get over their curiosity concerning the

testing procedure," Shenk said.

"But as we got to the third and fourth weeks, we had a number of farmers wanting us to come back to continue the analysis."

For those sellers wishing to have their hay analyzed at the auction, the testing required only two minutes. Then, the load could be posted with a set of figures showing the percentage of protein and total digestible nutrients, along with a grade of one to five based on standards put forth by the National Hay Marketing Task Force.

"Prospective buyers must be able to understand these figures in order to get the maximum benefit from use

of the equipment," Shenk explained.

"This is one of our greatest needs now. We must get more first-hand exposure of the mobile unit among farmers so they can become more familiar with it and how it can benefit them in their feeding programs."

In the spring of 1979 the Shenk research team spent six weeks at the New Holland hay auction to get samples of hay brought to market and observe just how the auction operates.

"Actually, the samples from the New Holland auction were used to calibrate the equipment for the van," Shenk said.

The equipment was demonstrated at a meeting of the Kutztown Young Farmers.

"They were just amazed that we could analyze 35 samples of hay in one evening," Shenk said.

"But we need more of such efforts to get out and show what it can do. It's new and farmers are skeptical of it. They need to be shown more just how it can help them."

In another experiment this spring, the equipment was pulled right into fields where within 10 minutes it showed that what still in the vegetative stage tested at 14 percent protein, orchard grass showed 18 percent and alfalfa was 28 percent.

The mobile van is equipped with a microwave oven for the testing of grasses and other high moisture materials. Such

tests require about 10 minutes, including the drying time. In grasses, the amount of protein and fiber composition can be shown.

"This makes the van a totally analytical unit for not only dry feeds but high moisture materials, as well," Shenk said.

The van was also tested at the hay market at New Wilmington, Pa., Shenk said, and considerable interest was shown there, too.

The infrared scanning could predict weight gains and milk production directly from forage samples. Also, it could be utilized to update the nutritional value of feed and forage fed to cows in the DHIA program.

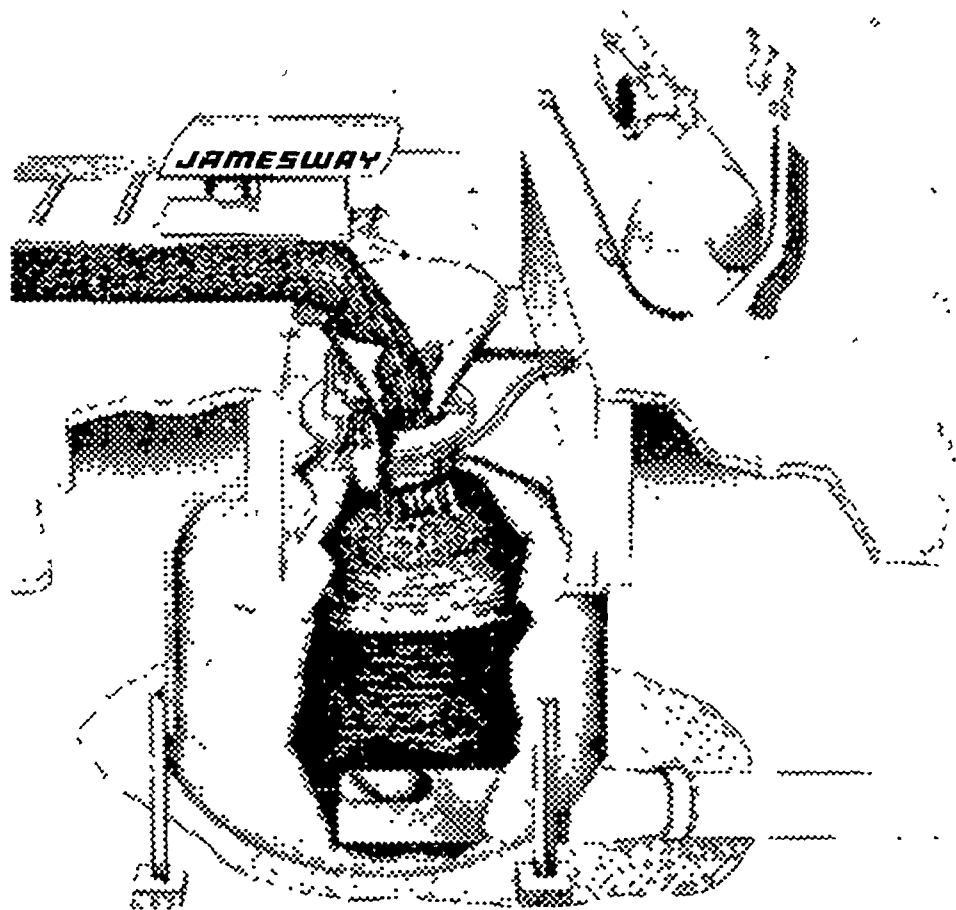
This summer, the research van is scheduled to be demonstrated at Ag Progress Days at Penn State, as well as similar events in Michigan and Wisconsin. Its package of instrumentation costs about \$50,000. Future work on it will include providing a power source off the van's engine and including air conditioning so that the testing equipment can be operated in all locations and under all types of conditions.

The original van is slated for continuing research purposes.

"I know there is a need in Pennsylvania for this equipment," Shenk said.

"And presently, there is just as great a need to show how the analysis works and how it can help farmers."

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