

## Drought stricken corn may present problems

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — With a lot of drought-damaged corn going into silos, and pastures suffering from a hot, dry summer, there's a big temptation for dairy and beef cattle farmers to start feeding silage right away.

But beware warn extension animals science specialists at the University

of Maryland. Silage from drought-damage corn may have good feeding value; however, it is apt to contain relatively high nitrate levels, which can result in dangerous silo gas formation.

Be sure to ventilate silos and silo rooms before entering a recently filled silo.

If you see a yellowish gas

on the surface of the silage, get out fast and wait a few days, warns Emory C. Leffel, extension ruminant nutrition specialist and professor of animal science. Leffel recommends waiting for four weeks after a silo is filled before attempting to start using the silage.

Then, it might be a good idea to take a sample from each silo on your farm for nitrate testing by the state chemist's office for the Maryland Department of Agriculture. County Extension agricultural agents throughout the state can provide assistance on this procedure.

If you know, or even suspect, that one or more silos on your farm contain high-nitrate silage, Leffel suggests that you:

Supplement silage with high levels of carbohydrate or energy feeds, such as grain and molasses, and vitamin A.

Feed only limited amounts of high-nitrate silage; supplement with hay.

Alternate or mix feeding of high-nitrate and low-nitrate silage, if such conditions exist on your farm.

Making silage is a good way to utilize drought-stricken corn, Dr. Leffel commented, since the ensiling process lowers dangerous nitrate levels considerably.

"Whatever you do, don't feed drought-stricken corn, Dr. Leffel commented, since the ensiling process lowers dangerous nitrate levels considerably.

"Whatever you do, don't feel drought-stricken corn as green chop feed," he warned.

David Clarke, state chemist for the Maryland State Department of Agriculture adds that making drought-stricken corn into silage may also be a good way to avoid aflatoxin contamination—a concern this year in many areas.

Clarke reports he has never found aflatoxins in corn silage samples tested in his laboratory.

## Patch of sunshine

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Fruitville Pike in Manheim Township. But the 230 Bypass took that land, and the Zeagers moved to the Milton area.

It was from that area that the Hersheys partially got the idea for the sunflowers, too. A friend, Pete Beachel, tried 40 acres there last year.

John Hershey, although coming from a non-agricultural background, has always been interested in farming.

John and Ruth went to the Brecht Elementary School together along the Lititz Pike.

"I remember that John used to stand at the fence at recess and watch a farmer working the adjoining field where the Weis Market now stands," Ruth explains.

"That farmer was my father. Little did John know at the time that he was watching his future father-in-law."

The Hershey children — John, 14; David, 12; Jim, 10; and Anita, 6 — all are in-

terested in farming. They had an acre of strawberries out this year and "sold them faster than they could be picked."

John and Ruth admit their sunflower experiment is touch-and-go this year because of their late start. It's all going to depend on the weather and how long Jack Frost holds off his first real visit to the county.

"But we've raised pumpkins, before," Mrs. Hershey explains.

"We know how it is to plant something and not get anything out of it but something nice to look at."

"Not only us, but a lot of other people have enjoyed the flowers, even if nothing more comes out of it."

With such a healthy, non-selfish attitude toward their agricultural avocation (that really is a first-love vocation), it's quite appropriate that the Hersheys should be the farm family to bring a bit of sunshine to Lancaster County in this year that will be remembered as the Drought of 1980.



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