

Daland Farms is 1980 Alfalfa Growers champion

HERSHEY — Harold and Norman Davis, R2 Huntingdon, were recognized as the 1980 Alfalfa Growers champions during the 20th Anniversary Conference of the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council, held here on Monday and Tuesday.

The Davis brothers operate as partners on their farms in the western part of the state, going by the name Daland Farms.

This is only the second year they entered the competitive Alfalfa Growing Program, and took the championship with a yield of 8.6 tons hay equivalent for an acre of alfalfa. The crude protein analysis for the stand was 3410, with a Total Digestible Nutrient value of 9765.

According to Harold Davis, the plot entered in the program was a May 1, 1978 seeding of Apollo alfalfa.

"We disked the field to get it ready for planting. The field got too wet after we seeded it, so we got essentially no weed control. As a result, we had volunteer corn in our alfalfa stand.

"That year, we windrowed the first and only cutting and put it in the silo. The stand straightened itself out last year and we got three cuttings off. And this year it did

okay, giving us four cuttings."

Davis pointed out his area of the county was not hurt by lack of rainfall this past summer. His records revealed 5 inches fell in May, 4½ inches fell in June, 2½ inches fell in July, and August had 5 inches of rain. But, he stated, some of that rainfall came during thunderstorms where 1½ inches of rain fell in an hour.

Daland Farms' 125 acres of alfalfa is grown on predominantly Hagerstown or other limestone base soils, Davis said. Their herd of 92 registered Holsteins' DHI record stands at 18,650 pounds milk and 715 pounds fat.

"Along with the alfalfa that Davis explained is wilted down and put up as haylage, they round bale about 20 acres of hay on fields he called "too steep." They also raise 300 acres of corn.

Said Davis, this year's championship can be attributed to paying attention to all the fine details, like soil testing and fertilizing.

The reserve championship in the Alfalfa Growing Program went to the Milton Hershey School Farms, located here. Their acre of alfalfa was on August, 1978 seeding of WL 311. Its 1980 yield was 8.1 tons hay

equivalent, with 3024 crude protein and 9027 TDN.

In their fifth year of competition, this is the second time MHS Farms has taken the reserve championship.

According to Alfred Dugan, the reason the school enters the program is "to see just what we can get off an acre of ground as far as quantity, quality, the cost of production and the net return." He pointed out the TDN information is then used in formulating rations for their 750 grade Holsteins.

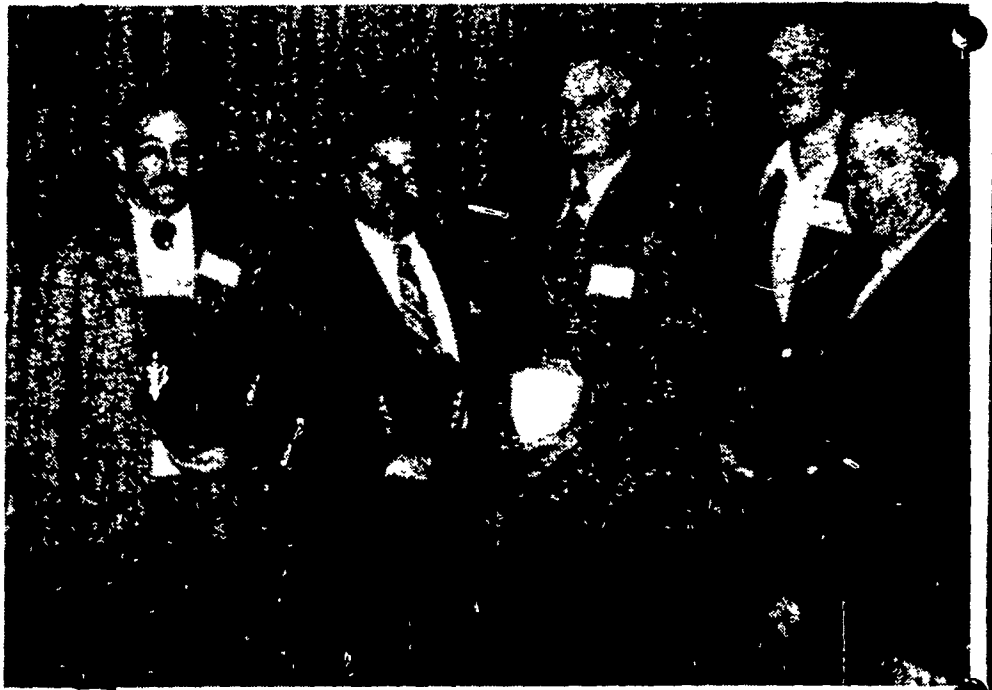
The cost to enter the competition is \$50, Dugan explained. But the expense and the extra time taken to collect six samples at the time of each cutting allows the school to have a scientific yardstick to measure their age production.

Dugan recalled their plot was established in a field consisting of Berks shale soils - not a limestone base soil. "I knew what our limestone soils could produce - I wanted to see just how much our shale could grow."

He noted the stand was cut when the alfalfa was in the full bud stage, with the exception of the fourth cutting which did reach 3/4 to full bloom.

"We cut the hay every 30 days religiously," Dugan remarked. "If we would have had more rain, we would have done better. But, between the first and second cutting, we had only 3.15 inches of rain; between the second and third cutting, we had 3.3 inches; and between the third and fourth cutting, we had 2.55 inches."

Despite the unfavorable weather conditions, MHS Farms was able to tie up the reserve championship in this contest, along with the championship for their



Other forage producers recognized for their outstanding programs are, from left, Alfred Dugan of the Milton Hershey School Farms, Hershey, second place; Paul Dotterer, Mill Hall, third place; Jesse Balmer, Lancaster, fourth place; and Frank Reist, Lebanon, fifth place. Presenting the awards is John Baylor, Penn State Extension Agronomist.

haylage at Ag Progress Days.

In third place in the Alfalfa Growing Program was Paul Dotterer, R2 Mill Hall, Clinton County. From a pure stand of WL 311, Dotterer harvested 8.2 tons hay equivalent with 2854 crude protein and 8694 TDN.

Dotterer explained his is a strictly no-till operation. His test plot was seeded in 1979, and was selected for fourth place in the program last year.

The Clinton County farmer works 950 acres of land with 350 acres of pure stand alfalfa, all of which is put in the silo, he said. Dotterer attributes some of his success in raising alfalfa to following the soil analysis of Brookside Laboratories, Atglen.

"We don't shoot for the

top, just for the most cost effective," he said.

Lancaster County dairyman Jesse Balmer took fourth place in the competition with an alfalfa-orchardgrass mixture.

The plot, seeded in March, 1979 with 18 pounds of Apollo alfalfa and 4 pounds of Pennlate orchardgrass per acre, yielded 7.8 tons hay equivalent this year, with 2593 crude protein and 8643 TDN.

In its establishment, Balmer fell back on an old conventional method of weed control - sowing the forage crop with a companion crop of oats.

Balmer, the father of Lancaster County's 1980 Dairy Princess, Connie Balmer, milks a herd of 80 Guernseys. His feeding program includes haylage,

corn silage and high moisture corn.

Fifth place in the program went to Frank and Carl Reist of Lebanon County. Their partnership, Ferndale Farms, is operated by four brothers, Frank, Carl, Donald and Gary.

Their 1979 seeding of Pioneer 531 yielded 7.4 tons hay equivalent, with 2865 crude protein and 8237 TDN. This year, the stand produced five cutting, said Frank.

The Reists filled their silo and made about 5000 bales on 125 acres of alfalfa. They farm an additional 300 acres in South Lebanon Township.

Their herd of 90 registered Holsteins have an average record of 16,100 pounds milk and 615 pounds fat, black and white evidence to the Reist's forage quality as well as quantity.



Harold Davis, second from left, of Huntingdon, accepts the award for 1980 Alfalfa Grower during ceremonies at the 20th Anniversary Forage Conference on Monday. Also pictured, from left, are David Kauffman, Huntingdon Co. Assistant Extension Agent; Harold Kockhaff, Huntingdon County Agent; and John Baylor, Extension Agronomist.

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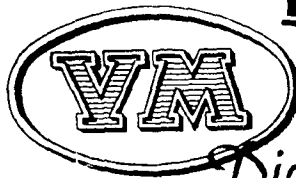
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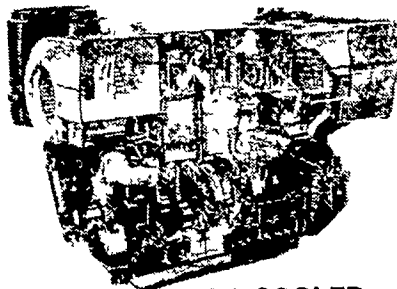
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