

First methane conference to run next month

ITHACA, N.Y. — Methane produced from animal manure is rapidly showing promise as a useful energy alternative.

Research over the past five years has shown simpler ways to economically produce methane on the farm. New construction designs and operational methods are being proven with commercial farm digesters.

Now the first comprehensive conference to summarize this experience is planned. A conference on Methane Technology for Agriculture will be held March 17-20, 1981 at the Sheraton Inn in Ithaca, N.Y.

The conference will particularly benefit builders, designers, consultants, farmers and anyone seriously planning the construction of a methane digester.

Speakers from across the U.S. will tell how to produce and use methane from manure.

Many of these speakers, in fact, have designed and operated successful digesters. Topics will include digester design, construction and operation for dairy, swine and poultry manure, gas utilization, economics, financing, and on-farm experience.

Dr. Jewell, professor in the agricultural engineering department at Cornell University, and several of his staff will describe the design and operation of the low-cost, plug flow reactor.

S. Persson and H. Bartlett, professors at Penn State, will discuss the operation and design of their mixed reactor. Researchers at both these universities have operated full-scale reactors for 50 to 100 cow dairy herds for several years with minimum attention.

Swine and poultry manure digesters will be covered by Dr. J. R. Fischer from the University of Missouri and A. Anthonsen of Environmental Management Associates.

How to store and use methane is a question of increasing concern. Speakers from electrical generator suppliers and several universities will cover this subject in detail. Industry representatives from I. E. Associates in Minneapolis, A. O. Smith, and Agway, Inc. will cover costs and operation.

Richard Waybright from Mason-Dixon Farms, Gettysburg, and Fred Varam with Biogas of Colorado will highlight the conference by telling their on-farm experience. Then to round out the sessions, participants will see operating digesters at Cornell University and Agway's research facilities.

The conference is sponsored by the Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service in cooperation with Cornell and Pennsylvania State Universities. The registration fee of \$45 plus \$5 for tour bus (\$55 at the conference) includes conference proceedings, lunches and breaks. Program and registration information is available from NRAES, Riley-Robb Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

Landowners constructing sod waterways in 1981 with SCS assistance will be informed of the new seeding specifications. "The increased seeding rate will only be a minor additional cost, and will help insure that the whole job is a success, not just money down the drain," Petrus concludes.

SCS recommends new waterway seeding

For further information on tall fescue, grassed waterways, and how they can help, contact the local Soil Conservation Service.

Many landowners have installed grassed swales to replace unsightly and erosive gullies on their land, according to Ed Petrus of the Soil Conservation Service.

Establishing and maintaining the sod has always been the most difficult part of the job, he adds. However, research at Penn State has shown some seeding mixtures work better than others, and the 1981 Agronomy Guide recommendations reflect that research.

Until now, one of the Soil Conservation Service recommendations was a mixture of tall fescue at 35 pounds per acre, plus Redtop at 5 pounds per acre. This was in keeping with Agronomy Guide suggestions.

Landowners who considered these as minimum seeding rates consistently obtained the best grass cover. This prompted a closer look at the seeding rates, says Petrus, resulting in the new seeding rates of tall fescue at 60 pounds per acre, plus Redtop at 3 pounds per acre.

Nutsedge

(Continued from Page C34)

yellow nutsedge is two to three inches tall. A second application or cultivation should be made seven to 14 days later.

Another postemergence option is Basagran. The herbicide is usually applied when actively growing nutsedge is six to eight inches tall. Farmers should consult the product label's guidelines on the use of surfactants, crop oils and concentrates with Basagran.

If necessary, farmers may cultivate or make a second Basagran application seven to 10 days later.

Basagran can also be used as a postemergence treatment on soybeans. Nevertheless, a preplant incorporated treatment will still be needed so the crop can get off to a good start, free of competition from nutsedge and annual grasses.

Weed specialists generally regard Vernam as a favorite for nutsedge control in soybeans. It is

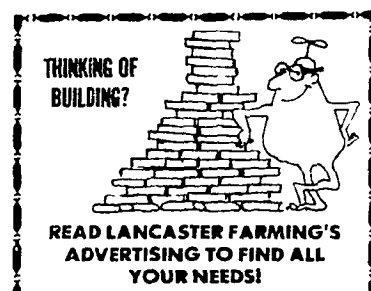
still the only compound available for controlling the yellow and purple varieties.

Dual and Lasso, according to their respective manufacturers, will control the yellow variety when incorporated.

Confused about which herbicide treatment to use? Farmers may want to consult their state extension service for local herbicide field trial reports before making their herbicide decision.

But herbicides alone cannot control nutsedge. Preplant tillage is also an integral part of control.

Several diskings in the spring at one-week intervals - after nutsedge has emerged but before crops are planted - will destroy sprouting nutsedge tubers. Because nutsedge is more competitive in warm soils, it's a good idea to plant nutsedge-infested fields last so more plants will be killed during seedbed preparation.

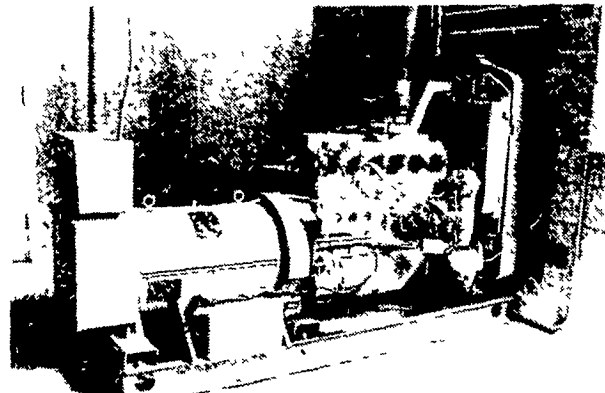


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