

Firm 'casts' concrete in many farm roles

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

BETHEL — What do the concrete medial barriers found on many area highways have in common with modern livestock management practices?

For one thing, both the barriers and products used in the care of livestock are likely to originate with a company located in the southwestern corner of Berks County.

That company is Concrete Safety Systems, of Bethel. Originally concentrating

manufacturing primarily on the highway barriers, the company started adding a growing line of pre-cast concrete products for use on livestock farms beginning last fall.

Like the barriers, which have saved many a life on the highways, the farm products, such as cattle guards, feed bunks and waterers, also offer improved livestock safety among other management advantages.

And, just as the manufacturing specifications used in the making

of the barriers meet the stringent demands of high-speed highway driving, they also can satisfy agriculture's needs for sturdy construction, particularly where livestock are concerned.

"The quality of our concrete is at the basis of our products, both for the highway and the farm," explains Jay Robinson, vice president of sales for Concrete Safety Systems.

"We use high strength 5000 PSI concrete in all of our products. And all of them are reinforced with steel bars."

Robinson goes on to explain that the company maintains a full-time quality control department, which is in addition to the daily state inspection for the highway barriers.

"Also, we use all steel forms in casting the products," Robinson said.

The steel forms provide a better finish and more consistent tolerances in the products, he pointed out, which are both construction features of interest to farmers in the fabricating of waterers or feed bunks.

Probably the most recognized farm product manufactured by Concrete Safety Systems is the Smith Cattleguard, which was first introduced in Virginia some two decades ago and has since expanded to more than 15,000 installations in 33 states.

Licensed to manufacture the Smith Cattleguard in Pennsylvania, Concrete Safety Systems offers the one-piece, precast, steel-reinforced cattleguard installations in 12, 14 and 16-foot widths.

The systems are designed to carry loads that are comparable to the legal limits set for highways.

"Another of our products which has been well received on area farms are the feed bunks, both the centerline and fenceline types," Robinson points out.

"We offer an extra deep trough that measures 15 inches deep," according to Robinson.

"Our bunks also have concrete ends that bolt on, which permit the easy expansion of a system."

"Another feature involves inserts which are cast into the bunks



Jay Robinson, vice president of sales for Concrete Safety Systems, of Bethel, examines tank portion of freeze-proof waterer, which recently was cast in plant. Other farm products include stock tanks, cattleguards and feed bunks.



Smith cattleguards, awaiting installation on area livestock farms, are among the best known of precast products manufactured by Concrete Safety Systems. Concrete is of the same high strength 5000 PSI quality used in making highway medial barriers.

to allow for the bolting of fence to the feed trough."

A unique product now being offered in Pennsylvania by the Bethel firm is an automatic freeze-proof waterer, which can be utilized in both dairy or cattle operations.

"Interest has been growing in this waterer," Robinson said.

"It permits sealing off a farm pond for safety and sanitation reasons and provides a year-round source of water for the livestock."

The waterer can be installed on either a pressure system in bar-

nyards or feed lots or in the bank of a pond.

A combination of circulating water in the concrete tank and earthen covering over part of the system, which acts as insulation, provides year-round watering facilities. In the summer, the insulating qualities also serve to keep the water cooler and promote higher livestock intake.

The freeze-proof waterer was developed in 1978 in Missouri in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service.

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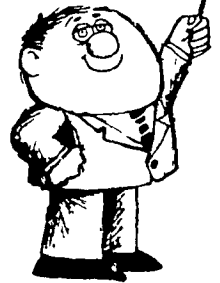
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