

# Watch out for moldy grain

COLLEGE - PARK, Md. — Combines are coming out of winter storage as farmers get ready to harvest larger-than-normal barley and wheat crops. Before the action begins, however, it's a good idea to check grain bins and feed-handling systems to make sure they are clean and watertight.

This precaution is important in controlling the spread of molds — especially poisonous mycotoxins such as aflatoxin and ochratoxin.

Both aflatoxin and ochratoxin can be fatal to poultry and most farm animals, notes John A. Doerr, assistant professor of poultry science at the University of Maryland and a research worker with the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station.

Ochratoxin is more dangerous to

animal health than aflatoxin, Doerr commented. But it doesn't stay around in stored grain for long periods of time the way that aflatoxin does.

Both of these molds cause more problems in baby chicks and young animals than in mature animals. They also could be dangerous to human health in cases where contaminated grain is used directly for food. Again, youngsters are more susceptible than adults.

Decontaminating grain with ammonia will probably remove most of the aflatoxin, Doerr said. But this procedure has not received final clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and it is not economically feasible for small

grain. Even with corn, a producer can only hope to break even at best when using an ammonia treatment. On top of that, the process requires high energy use for heating.

Some research has indicated that wild garlic bulbets and other members of the onion family may inhibit the growth of molds in stored grain, Doerr remarked. But this kind of contamination brings big price penalties for growers.

So a rigorous clean-up and conscientious feed sanitation program are the best bets for minimizing risk of mold contamination, the Maryland research worker points out. This includes removing caked and moldy feed or grain from bins, trucks and feed-handling systems.

After scraping storage areas, spray with a disinfectant solution such as household bleach and water in a ratio of 1:4. Allow disinfected areas to dry out completely before putting in fresh grain or feed. Broiler growers should clean out all feed lines after every batch of birds — especially during summer months.

Be sure that hatches on feed and grain storage areas "seat" properly to provide a watertight seal. Caulk the seams to keep our rainwater.

After grain storage areas are filled, inspect them regularly for wet spots, usually — but not always — resulting from leaks. Wet spots are often not apparent from visual inspection alone; you should dig down 4 to 10 inches into the stored grain to find them. These wet spots are havens for the

growth of aflatoxin and other molds. Growth occurs most readily when temperatures are about 70 degrees Fahrenheit and humidity levels are fairly high.

Remember that once grain becomes contaminated with a persistent mold like aflatoxin, it remains contaminated. Grinding of moldy grain does not eliminate

the problem.

The federal Food and Drug Administration has set maximum guidelines for aflatoxins at 20 parts per billion for animal feeds and for grains being used for food.

"This is a mighty small amount; but it points up the need for farmers to be concerned about the problem," Dr. Doerr concluded.

## Berwick Vegetable Co-op elects directors

BERWICK — Berwick Vegetable Cooperative hosted members, guests and friends on the occasion of its 28th Annual Dinner Meeting last Saturday, here at the Maria Assunta Hall.

Edward Hopkins, Falls, president of the Board of Directors, presided over the annual membership meeting, assisted by Raymond Hetherington, Ringtown, secretary of the Board.

The Annual Report of Operations was presented by Frank Gehrig, CPA with Gehrig and Halterman, Bloomsburg. He reported a profit for the fiscal period under review. Both produce marketing and farm supply purchasing services offered by BVC to its patrons in 22 counties in northeastern Pennsylvania and 3 counties of western Pennsylvania contributes to the sound financial position of the

Cooperative.

Earl Miller, vice president of the Board of Directors and chairman of the Nominating Committee presented nominees for election to the Board. The membership present at the Annual Meeting elected the following Board Members for three-year terms: District I, J. Wilfred Richards, Dalton; District II, Foster Hilliard, Sugarloaf; District III, Robert Seesholtz Jr., Bloomsburg; District IV, Dale Whitenight, Danville; and District V, Jack Shafer, Tamaqua.

Angelo Venditti, Sr., manager, made presentations to Johannah Naus, office manager of BVC, Myrtle Hetherington, Zion Grove, and Dale Whitenight, Danville, both members of the Board, for completion of a Penn State course in Cooperative Education.

## Joanne Weidman

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Bev, smiling. "And I loved some of their questions, like 'Are you the tooth fairy?' and 'Aren't you Miss America?'"

She brought a chuckle from the crowd as she remembered one supermarket promotion campaign where the store manager "practically sat her in the dairy case."

"I kept asking 'Are my lips blue yet?'" Bev laughed.

Bev also told the dairy producers when she went out to the state pageant, she realized, after walking into her dormitory room and seeing her roommate's gowns, that she had forgotten her dresses. They were hanging behind the door

in her bedroom. "I had to come all the way back home and get them," she confessed.

As her reign was fast coming to an end, Bev and her promotional mascot, 'Freddie, the milk carton' told the group why milk shouldn't be sitting on the shelf and how it can be made into butter, ice cream, cottage cheese and a sundry of products.

"This year's given me a new insight into the dairy industry. It's taught me about people and how you need to be nice to everyone," Bev concluded. "It's hard to say goodbye, but remember I love you all and milk's the one."—SM

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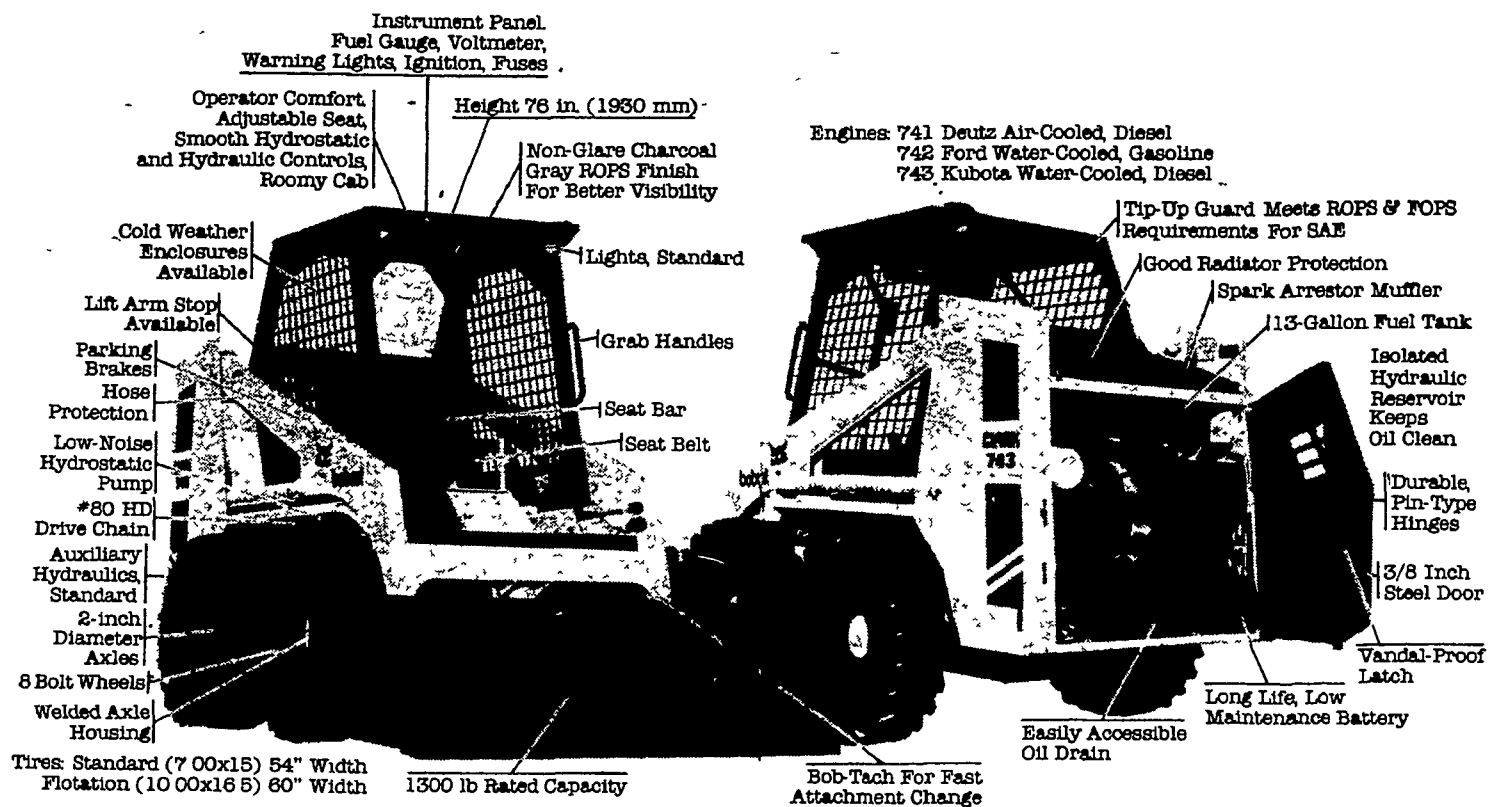
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