

Automatic milling

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milling system.

"A batch system would have required a three-phase setup and with this I was better able to utilize what was already here.

"It may be considerably slower but being automatic it doesn't require any labor."

Wolgemuth prepares three different rations — one for about 500 hogs and two different for the 70,000 birds — in about four hours. The birds in the large house are fed a concentrate rich in alfalfa meal and oil to produce deeper yolks for eggs that go to a noodle manufacturer. Eggs from the smaller house go to a local processor.

The milling system can also be manually operated to prepare additional rations. Wolgemuth will likely use it to make a steer ration, too.

"Another plus for this system was that I could use the storage I already had," he said.

Wolgemuth has 30,000-bushel corn storage, a limestone tank, and the three separate supplement facilities. Since his system can accommodate up to eight ingredients, he could add storage for ear corn or soybean meal, oats or minerals.

"I believe I handle my corn better than the commercial places," he said.

"Although I'm feeding commercial supplements yet, it gives me the extra option of making my own concentrates in the future."

But in going to the automatic milling system that prepares the ration on a weight basis, Wolgemuth is also looking to the future.

"It's going to become more and more critical in the future to be able to fine-tune your feeding management," he said.

"It's going to become essential to provide the birds with the fortifications they need under conditions that exist at any particular time to meet production goals."

With the milling system, Wolgemuth believes he will be able to better provide this needed ration and be able to change it faster and more accurately.

"When I want to hold consumption to 23 pounds, I only prepare 23 pounds per 100 birds. If the birds are not eating 23 pounds due to the weather, I can increase the concentrate."

The time may come, too, when the mix of ingredients will be changed on a more frequent basis to meet changing needs.

In addition to mixing the three different rations, the system is also programmed to move the feed to its proper location — to either of the poultry houses or to truck loadout for the hog ration.

The system has been designed by Ivan Martin, who also is the distributor of mix mills.

"I started work on such a system because many farmers, particularly poultry operators, wanted something that measured the ingredients more accurately," he said.

"That's why we went to the weight basis."

"The weighing is 99.8 percent accurate."

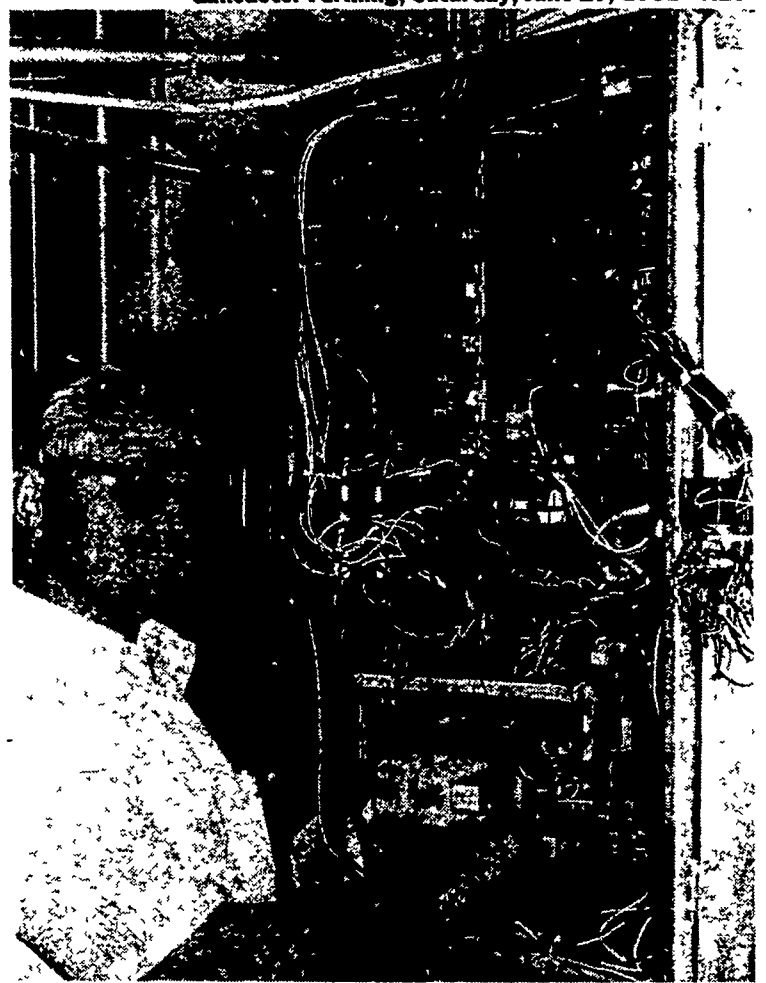
The system prepares feed in one-ton batches. At the Wolgemuth farm, a batch requires about 25 minutes for total preparation.

One of the rations being prepared required 1340 lbs. of corn. The first ingredient is always corn since it comprises the bulk of any ration.

The system weighs the corn for grinding in the hammer mill. As soon as the amount reaches 1340 lbs., a read switch automatically activates the shutoff of the corn and the selection of the concentrate. After 560 lbs. of concentrate is measured into the batch, another read switch shuts it off and the final ingredient of 100 lbs. of limestone is added.

All of the read switches, which cut off one ingredient and start adding another, have automatic backups. If the switch fails, the backup shuts down the entire system and activates an audible alarm.

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Ivan Martin, designer of automatic milling system, of R1, Lebanon, makes final adjustment in control panel for automatic milling system on Wolgemuth farm.

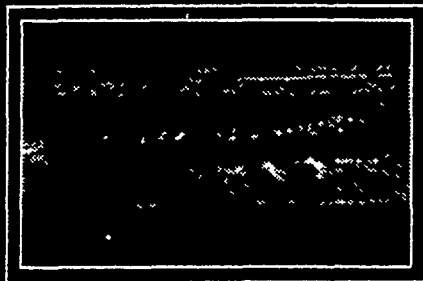
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