

Cattle 'shrink' 4-5 percent on way to market

COLUMBIA, Mo. — "Shrink in slaughter cattle is greater than we suspected," a University of Missouri-Columbia animal scientist reported this week.

"Up to four or five percent of body weight can be lost in the first few hours of transport," Malcolm Asplund said.

Only a small percent of the loss in weight is a loss of the gut contents, he said. Much of the shrink is in the carcass itself.

"Confining the animals and withholding feed and water causes as much shrink as does hauling them," he explained.

"Weight is regained—but slowly—after it has been lost from

stressed and fasted animals."

To reduce shrink, Asplund recommended that cattle be full of feed and water before transportation begins. Then they should be taken to slaughter as quickly as possible.

"If long hauls are necessary, make frequent stops for feed and especially water," he said.

"Feed and water provided after a long period of withdrawal must be given at least 24 hours before slaughter or they won't do much good."

Finally, he said, more thought needs to be given to the fair distribution of the cost of shrink between the feeder and the packer.

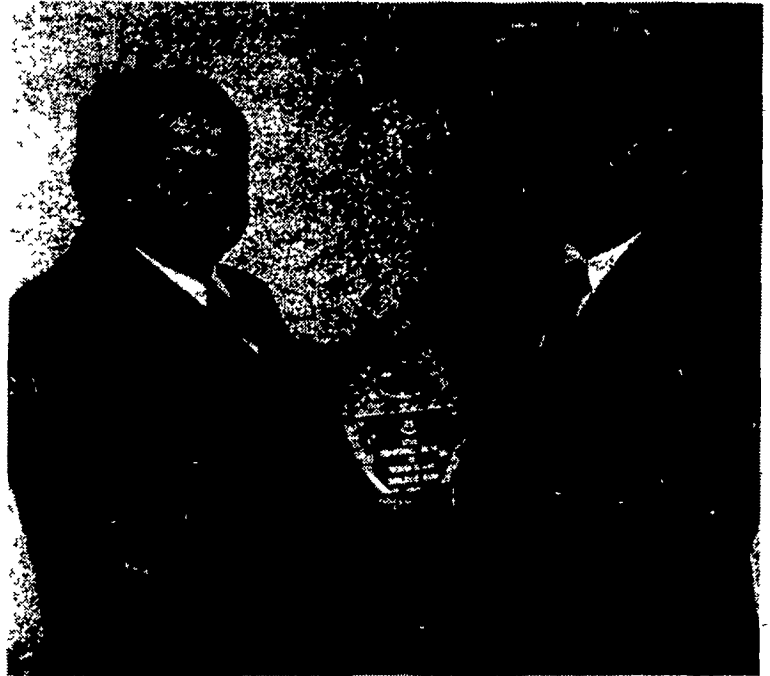
Sumner

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Alternate Delegates; Melvin L. Shertzer — Hauling Committee.

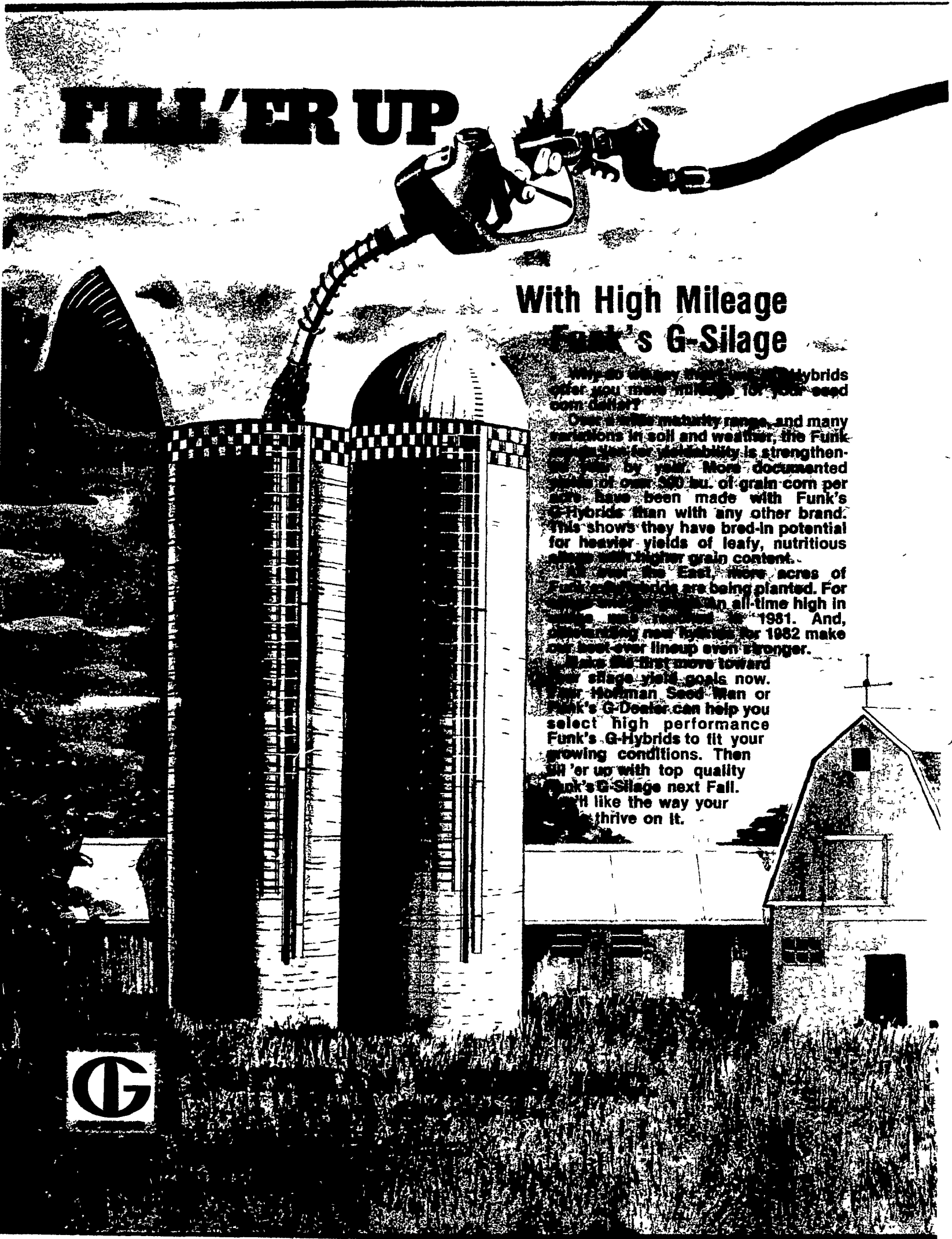
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IMPCO District 5 director Wade Groff, right, presents Mervin Herr of Witmer with a plaque commemorating 25 years of IMPCO membership.

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