Forage conference

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Bollinger's efforts produced 10.2 tons per acre. However, overall score, which includes crude protein and TDN, was i·st points below Baker's score.

The Lebanon Count dairyman ended with 3,456 pour.is of crude protein per acre and 1 ,081 pounds of TDN per acre from his Duffield soil.

Bollinger direct seeded variety DK 130, at a rate of 15 pounds per acre and applied Tolban and Furadan. He also followed after second and third cutting with Cygon. Bollinger alternated cuttings with hay and haylage.

Third place honors went to Blair County dairyman William England. England's Hublersburg soil, seeded with WL 318 produced 8.9 tons of hay equivalent per acre. In all, England reported four cuttings, all of alfalfa haylage.

Ronald Kopp of Dauphin County finished fourth with 8.7 tons per acre. Kopp seeded DK 120 into his Hagerstown soil and followed with Tolban. His four cuttings were divided into three cuts of haylage and one of hay.

With a yield of 8.7 tons per acre, Nelson H. Wenger of Lancaster County cornered the fifth spot in the contest.

Wenger's Berks Silt Loam was seeded with RA2 and produced four cuttings — three of haylage and one of hay.

Four out of the five top producers worked with spring 1981 seedings, while one producer seeded in spring 1980.

The sixth annual Alfalfa Grower Contest was joined by a first year competition during the conference. — the Outstanding Forage Spokesman.

The new competition, explained Extension agronomist John Baylor, "will recognize producers who can stand up and tell others about the importance of forages and grassland agriculture to our economy."

During the conference's second day activities, contestants gave a brief talk and fielded response from a four-man Extension panel which included: economist F.A. Hughes; forages, W.C. Templeton, Jr.; dairy, D.L. Ace; livestock, L.L. Wilson.

Centre County dairyman Joe Hartle earned this year's Champion Spokesman title. Ross Orner, Jr. of Clearfield County notched the Reserve Champion spot.

Other top finalists included: Bill England; Hershey Bare, Lebanon Co.; Richard Burd, Fayette Co.; Jim Hostetter, Mifflin Co.

During the two day proceedings John Baylor, conference organizer, was honored with a standing ovation following the announcement of his pending retirement, effective next year.

A variety of specialists were on hand to update conference participants on the state's forage and seed outlook.

USDA plant pathologist Ken Leath reported that 10 northern Pennsylvania counties have been confirmed with alfalfa disease Verticillium wilt.

The disease has been identified in Centre, Mifflin, Indiana, Bradford, Clinton, Crawford, Northumberland, Columbia, Erie and Venango Counties.

Leath, however, expressed confidence that summer temperatures in south and southeastern regions of Pennsylvania, are high enough to be unfavorable for extensive disease development.

"Pennsylvania growers are really fortunate because before major stand losses have occurred, resistant varieties are available. In a few years, all varieties grown at least in the northern half of the state will have resistance to Verticillium wilt," Leath said.

"I expect that in five to ten years the Verticillium-wilt scare will be behind us — in much the same way as bacterial wilt — and host-plant resistance will be in control," he added.

However, with $8.7 million in losses, the potato leafhopper continues to be the major alfalfa pest in the state, reported entomologist Arthur Hower.

Alfalfa height, dry weight yield, percent crude protein and nonstructure carbohydrate root reserves are reduced by this insect. Leafhopper damage can reduce protein by as much as 30 percent and yield by 50 percent, Hower reported.

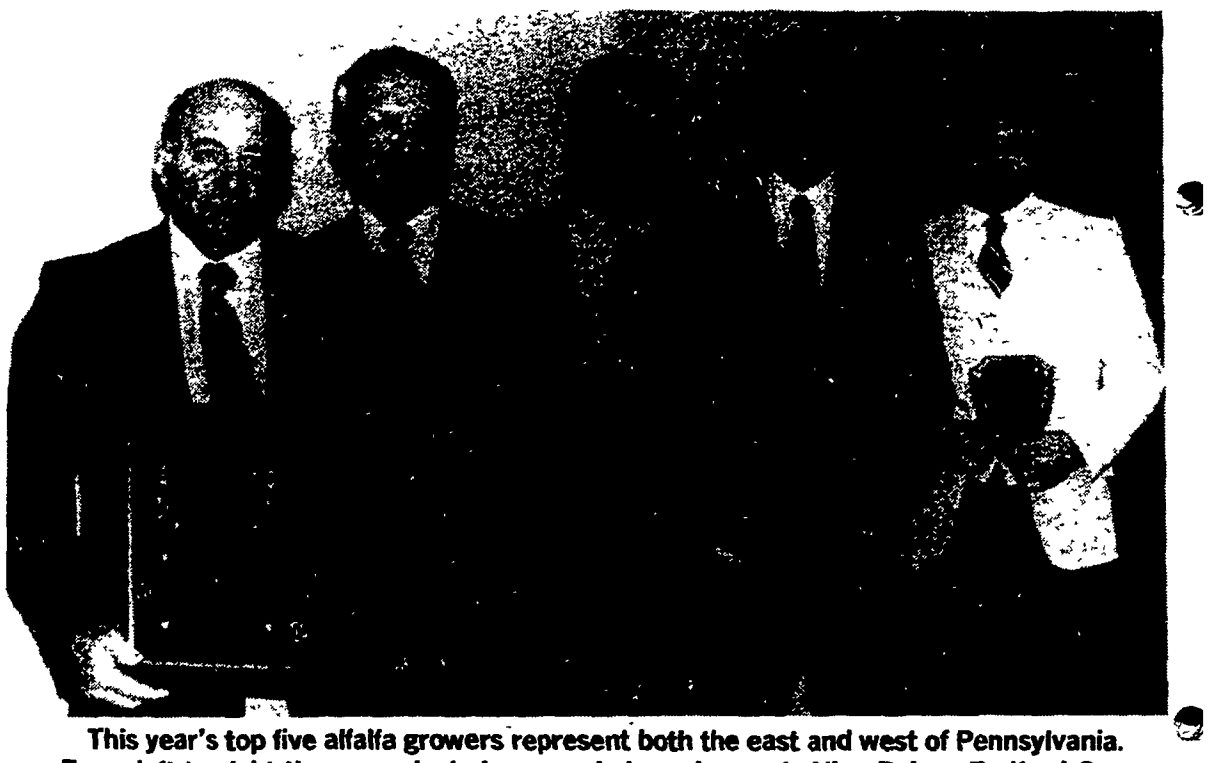
"The insect generally arrives during mid-May, therefore, the first major problem occurs in the second crop of alfalfa.

"The population builds continuously through mid-August so the third crop, in a four-crop system, is the most seriously affected," he added.

Since damage by this pest is irreversible, early detection is important.

"Sweep net sampling procedures set forth in the Pennsylvania Alfalfa Pest Management Program will give a grower adequate warning as to the presence and severity of the leafhopper problem," he continued. "When alfalfa is two to six inches tall, the decision to spray should be made from representative sweep net samples."

But it wasn't wilt and it wasn't insects that severely affected a number of farmers in northwestern Pennsylvania. Mother nature dealt a debilitative blow in August with an early frost and talk focused on the feeding value of corn silage under those stresses.



This year's top five alfalfa growers represent both the east and west of Pennsylvania. From left to right the group includes: grand champion — J. Allen Baker, Bedford Co.; reserve champion — Harold Bollinger, Lebanon Co.; third — William England, Blair Co.; fourth — Ron Kopp, Dauphin Co.; fifth — Nelson Wenger, Lancaster Co.

The Forage and Seed Conference recognized, for the first time, the Outstanding Forage Spokesman. The top six spokesmen are, from l to r: champion — Joseph Hartle, Centre Co.; reserve champion — Ross Orner, Jr., Clearfield Co.; Jim Hostetter, Mifflin Co.; Hershey Bare, Lebanon Co.; Richard Burd, Fayette Co.; William England, Blair Co.

Since the energy content of whole-plant corn varies only from 60 to 70 percent on a dry matter basis according to maturity and even grain content, most weather-affected silage should be of reasonably good feeding quality, reported dairy Extension specialist Dick Adams.

"More problems from moldy feed may be expected," Adams said. "Some ears and forage portions were moldy when ensiled. Moldy feed often is higher in estrogen content and lower in feeding value than ususal. In rare cases, molds produce mycotoxins that can be very toxic at levels over .2 to 1 part per million in the total ration dry matter."

Mycotoxins, which can be produced before or after ensiling, can cause loss of appetite, production decline, black or bloody diarrhea and even abortion.

Adams emphasized that corn grain in dry or high-moisture form is more susceptible to mycotoxin problems than whole-plant silage. Mycotoxin screening tests are available for suspected feeds, he added.

"When silage pH does not fall below 4.8 to 5, botulism, entertoxemia, listerellosis or mycotoxins may be encountered. Nitrate poisoning seldom occurs but is more prevalent in drought-stricken corn silage. Reproduction may suffer when nitrate levels reach two percent in the total ration dry matter," reported Adams.

For those producers leaning away from ensilage, Jud Heinrichs, Extension dairy specialist presented some alternatives in pasture management.

"In many areas of Europe, New Zealand and Australia, pastures are routinely used for dairy operations with great success," explained Heinrichs.

Due to the large amount of protein in high quality forage, less grain is normally required to get maximum production. A sound basis for optimum supplementation would be to add only enough grain to bring the total ration digestibility to 67 percent, the point where digestibility no longer limits intake, he reported.

"In terms of productivity, the rotational grazing or paddock system appears to work the best. This provides a continuous supply of high protein and immature pasture for grazing throughout the summer.

"Graze the stands from two to seven days, allowing the pasture to remain in the growing stage for an extended period of time which helps keep forage digestibility at its peak," Heinrichs suggested.

Before the conference ended, participants recognized the death of Extension agronomist Willis L. McClellan, with a proposed memorial scholarship. Known as the Willis L. McClellan Memorial Scholarship, the gift would be awarded on an annual basis to a qualifying student in Agronomy. Special consideration will be given to deserving students with a specific interest in conservation tillage.

For more information or donations to the memorial scholarship, contact Penn State, office of gifts and endowments, 23 Willard Buiding, University Park, 16802.

John Rodgers of Belleville was honored as the 1982 Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council's Special Award.

The Mifflin County dairyman, a former PFGC president, helped establish the Pa. Alfalfa Growers program sponsored by PFGC and the Cooperative Extension Service.

The 1983 PFGC executive slate includes: president, William Stringer, assistant professor of crop science at Penn State; vice president, Hershey Bare, Lebanon County dairy farmer; secretary-treasurer, Richard Hann, Milton Hershey School agribusiness director; executive vice president, John Baylor.

For their top alfalfa production of 10.2 tons per acre, the Harold Bollingers of Lebanon County accept Reserve Grand Champion accolades from Extension agronomist John Baylor, who will be retiring next year. The group includes from l to r: Newton Bair, Lebanon County Extension agent; Amy and Harold Bollinger; and Baylor.

Don't load firearms before shooting time

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Game Commission urges hunters going afield before daylight not to load their guns prior to the legal shooting hour.

During deer seasons, hunters often head out well before daylight so they reach their favorite hunting spots before dawn. Some load their firearms before starting.

Hunters usually trip on branches, roots, rocks, etc. when traveling in the darkness, particularly through the woods. Sometimes, a gun accidentally discharges when the hunter trips or falls, and a serious accident can result.