

Oats can provide green chop feed

LANCASTER — August planted spring oats provide succulent green chop after the summer and fall crops are gone. In Pennsylvania cows can be kept on oats green feed to the end of November and into December.

Many dairymen gave up green chop when herd expansion led to large silo capacity and automatic feeders. But there's still a place for fresh green feed, some say. It's a practical way to get more milk from expensive land when you get extra late fall feed from land that otherwise just sits there waiting till next year.

The green oats support high pro-

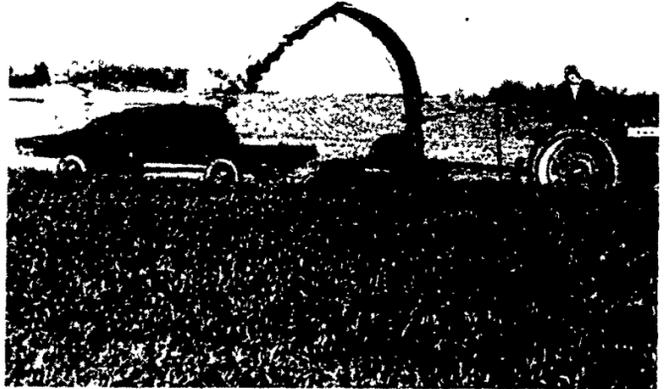
duction, too. One Pennsylvania dairyman reports his 26-cow herd increased milk output by 200 lbs. a day when he moved his crop chopper from fourth cutting alfalfa to the green oats in October. The oats were seeded at 3-4 bushels an acre in early August. A rain several weeks later germinated the oats and got the crop growing. But because of the dry weather, the crop was shorter than in the summer before when the oats grew nearly two feet tall and blossomed by October.

Late fall and early winter green feed chopping isn't quite the same

as July green feed. In July, you try to feed within an hour or two after chopping to avoid the spontaneous heating you get in hot weather.

In November and December, the green chop stays cooler and there's more chance the weather may interfere with daily chopping. Wind can be a problem, too. So it's a good idea to keep a load or two ahead if snow is forecast. You try to chop during a calm period to minimize wind loss in blustery November and December weather.

Dairymen who do it say it's worthwhile. By stretching out the green feed season right into winter they save their hay for later and avoid the need for an extra silo.



Summer seeded oats can be chopped right up until the snow starts flying.

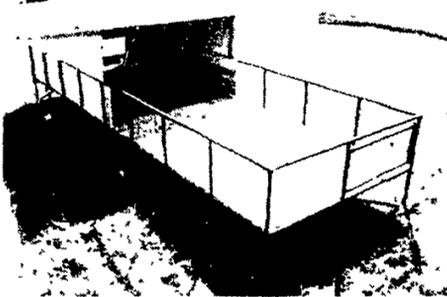
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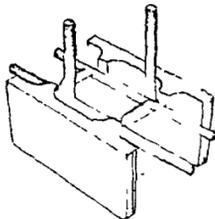
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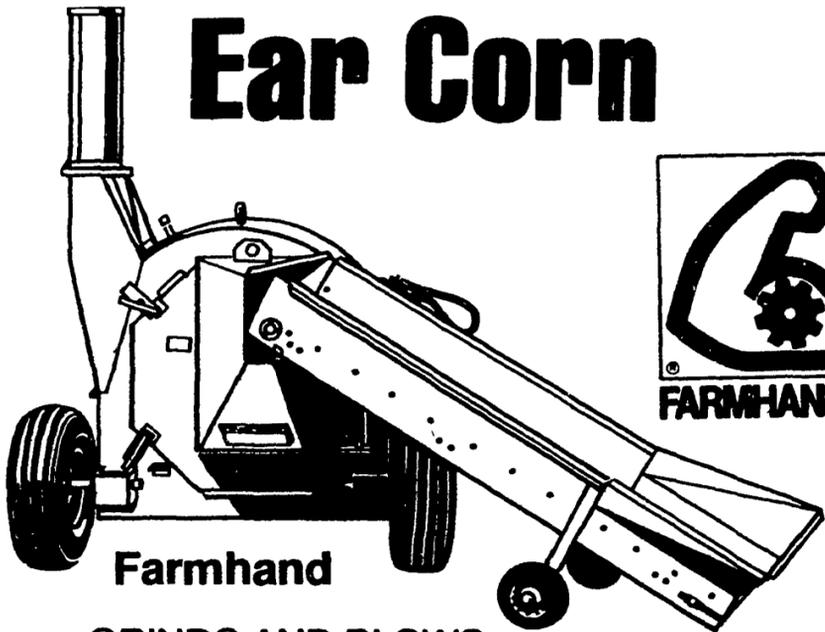
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