

Pa. artichoke growers review crop data

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
LANCASTER — The Pa. Artichoke Growers Association gave a crop status report at a meeting Tuesday night at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center, including production cost data and their experiences with fresh marketing of tubers and feeding choke silage to dairy and beef cattle.

Norman Kurtz, Lebanon County grower, traced the history of involvement with the crop since its introduction approximately a year ago. He explained that he has found the Jerusalem artichokes are fairly easy to grow and the tops have been excellent feed for his dairy and beef cattle.

In several feed analysis reports on the tops, Richard Croyle, of Biometrics, Quarryville, termed them "a good source of protein and a fair source of energy for dairy and beef cows."

He said the artichoke silage has the potential for a dairy and beef livestock feed.

In a report on one crop of full-growth artichoke silage, he listed

comparative analysis figures for protein and TDN in the direct-cut choklage blown into the silo as compared to corn silage.

The analysis showed 19.4 percent crude protein and 14.6 percent digestible protein for the artichoke silage as compared to 9.9 percent crude protein and 5.8 percent digestible protein for the corn silage. TDN comparisons were 56.2 percent for the choklage and 69.2 percent for the corn silage. Comparisons were on a dry matter basis.

He noted in mineral content there is a wide ratio of calcium to phosphorus in the artichoke silage.

The above crop was harvested at full bloom and Croyle said there is a significant drop in the protein and TDN levels of the artichoke tops when harvested after the first frost. So, there is a difference in feed value according to time of harvest.

In a feed test in beef cows, Croyle said that twice as much protein is available per acre of artichoke silage than with corn

silage. In a specific test, beef cattle showed average gains of 1.75 lbs. per day on a ration of 15 lbs. of half corn silage and half choklage, 12 lbs. of ear corn and 5 lbs. of mixed grass hay.

Croyle also reported on a feed test involving dairy cows.

Concerning soil fertility, Croyle said that yields of 18 tons of artichoke silage an acre requires about 200 units of Nitrogen and there is also a dramatic response to liming.

Don Robinson, of the Eastern Lancaster County Adult Farmer staff, reported on a study of comparative production costs for corn silage and alfalfa as compared to artichoke silage and with choke tubers compared to potatoes.

The comparisons cover all production costs, except land and equipment ownership values.

The study showed per-acre returns of some \$568 for the artichoke silage as compared to \$323 for corn silage and \$269 for the alfalfa.

For the artichoke tubers, the return was \$546 an acre as compared to \$277 for potatoes.

But, he pointed out, the potential as a cash crop depends on having sufficient markets to handle the amount of crop produced.

Also speaking was Gail Pippin, of Windy Hollow Farm, near Honey Brook, a produce broker who specializes in the marketing of specialty produce items.

Starting with alfalfa sprouts six years ago they now handle a number of specialty produce items and market them in the

Philadelphia, Scranton and New York City areas.

Some artichokes were marketed through the company during the past year and Pippin explained that it involves a process of educating both the consumers and market managers.

She said her company is looking to expand their marketable produce to include such items as horseradish, leeks, pearl onions, hot peppers, odd-sized sweet peppers, shallots, unusual squash, rhubarb chard and mini carrots.

Order 2 dairy farms get letters

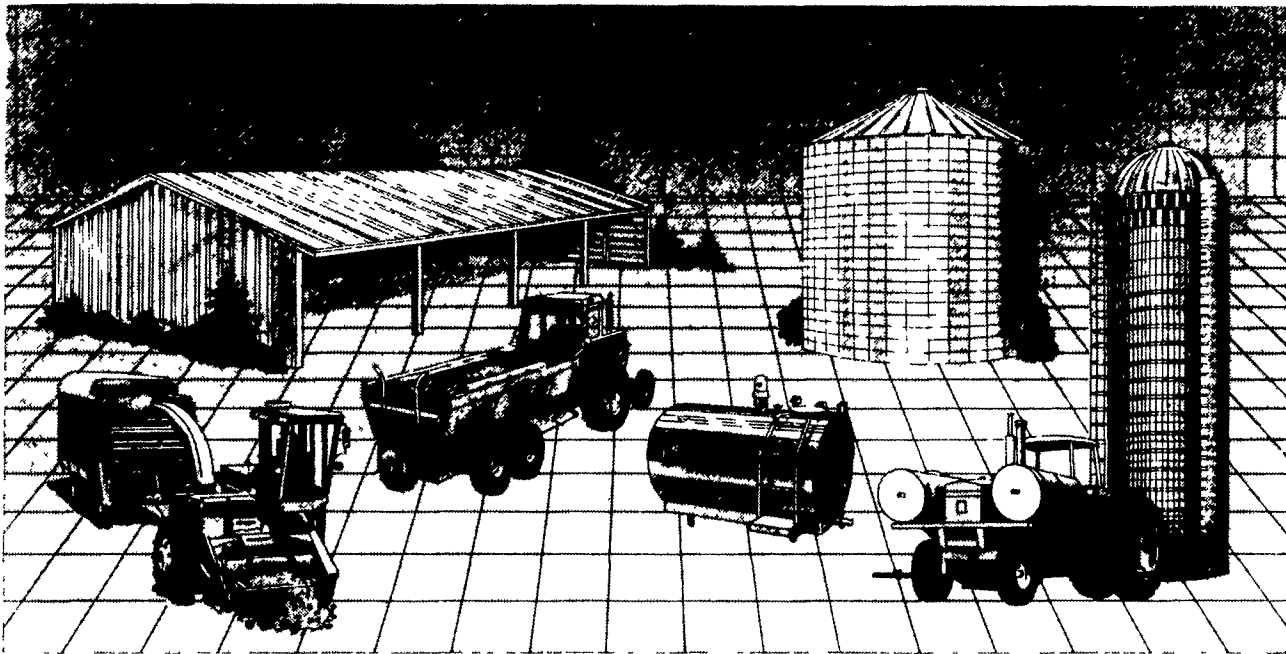
SYRACUSE, N.Y. — As a result of the Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983, dairy farmers nationwide will contribute 15 cents per hundredweight towards milk promotion programs starting May 1. The Act allows for dairy farmers to direct up to 10 cents of this amount for local qualified promotion programs. The

remaining 5 cents will be put towards a national promotion fund.

Pennsylvania dairy farmers in the Federal Order 2 area have the option of reserving 10 cents of this money for programs serving their own area, through the support of ADA/DC's positive letter. This letter is sent annually to encourage dairy farmer support for their milk promotion program. Support for the letter will keep the majority of dairy farmer promotion funds local, where their milk is marketed.

There are three Federal Orders covering the Pennsylvania area, #2, #4, and #36. Each has their own operating milk promotion program. Pennsylvania dairy farmers shipping to Federal Order 2 are serviced by the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council. ADA/DC conducts advertising and promotion programs in order to increase the consumption of milk and milk products.

The positive letter will be distributed during the month of April with a decision for support due by May 1. Deduction from the program will continue through June 30, 1985. ADA/DC encourages producer support for local milk promotion.



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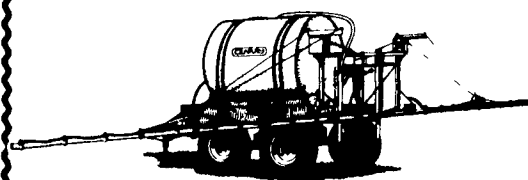
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