

Cornell researchers develop disease-resistant alfalfa

ITHACA, NY — Help is on the way for farmers facing an uphill battle against two major alfalfa diseases — anthracnose and bacterial wilt.

A new alfalfa variety capable of thriving under the attack of these

two destructive alfalfa maladies has been perfected by a team of Cornell University scientists.

Named "Mohawk," the new alfalfa made its commercial debut earlier this year in New York State with a limited supply of seed. It

will be available widely in time for next year's planting season with adequate amounts of seed to go around.

A product of 12 years of work by Royse P. Murphy and two other plant breeders — Carl C. Lowe

and Donald R. Viands — all in the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell, Mohawk has a high degree of built-in resistance to both diseases.

Anthracnose, a fungal disease, is

serious in the mid-Atlantic states as far south as South Carolina, and in other parts of the country as far west as Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

This ailment poses no immediate threat to New York State except for occasional flare-ups in the lower Hudson Valley area, but it's a perennial menace in portions of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and other parts of the south.

"Anthracnose is caused when the weather turns warm and humid in summer," Murphy explains. "In serious cases, it can wipe out the whole crop."

More widespread than anthracnose is bacterial wilt, which attacks almost all alfalfa-growing areas of the nation. A staple for farm animals, especially dairy cows, alfalfa is grown from coast to coast, all the way from Maine to California.

"Mohawk is more resistant to this bacterial disease than any other varieties we have developed at Cornell thus far," Murphy notes.

One of the foremost breeders of alfalfa and other hay crop varieties in the nation, Murphy is credited with developing a series of top alfalfa varieties that have been used widely throughout the Northeast over the past 25 years.

In addition to Mohawk, alfalfa varieties developed under Murphy's leadership are Cayuga (1960), Saranac (1963), Mark II (1965), Iroquois (1967), Oneida (1970), Saranac AR (1974), and Honeoye (1974). More recently, Murphy cooperated closely in a project that has resulted in a variety called "Oneida VR," which has strong resistance to yet another alfalfa killer known as "Verticillium wilt." Oneida VR moved into commercial production in New York State on a limited basis this past spring.

Some of these Cornell varieties have become obsolete as new, superior ones became available, but Oneida, Iroquois, Saranac AR, and Honeoye together still dominate alfalfa production in the northeastern part of the United States, including New York.

Mohawk actually is an improved version of the highly popular Iroquois alfalfa, with more resistance to anthracnose than Saranac AR, the first anthracnose-resistant Cornell variety introduced in 1974.

"Mohawk will replace Iroquois eventually," Murphy predicts. "In the absence of anthracnose, Mohawk is similar to Iroquois in yield, among other traits. For one thing, it recovers quickly after the crop is cut."

Alfalfa is harvested three times a year in the Northeast, but in California the crop is cut as many as 10 times. Hence, vigorous plant recovery after cutting is an important feature in alfalfa.

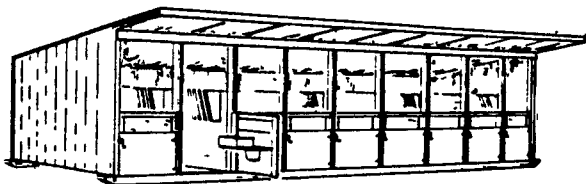
"Even when anthracnose is serious, Mohawk can provide a respectable yield," Murphy assures.

Like Iroquois, Mohawk performs well in well- and moderately-drained fields. It has high seedling vigor, matures 2 to 4 days later than Saranac AR, and is winter hardy in the northern climate.

"It should do well in areas where Iroquois is now grown," Murphy says. "In areas where anthracnose or bacterial wilt is a problem, Mohawk should be the choice."

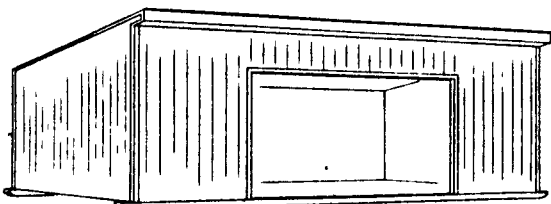


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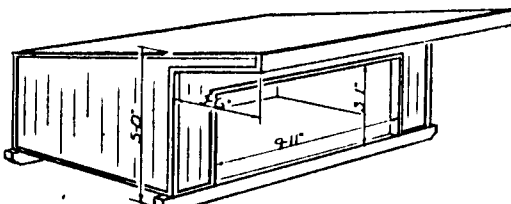
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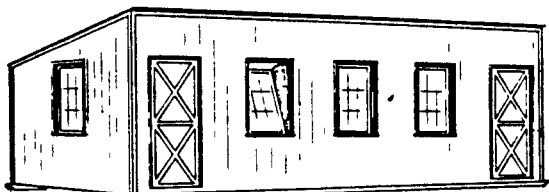
CATTLE SHELTER

Constructed of exterior rough sawn siding on treated skids. Shelter is painted and includes galvanized steel roofing and spouting.



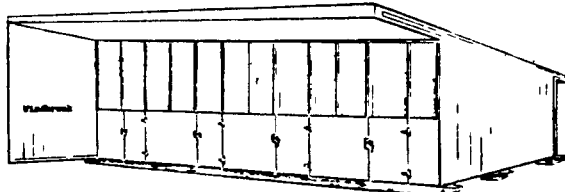
SHEEP SHELTER

Constructed of exterior rough sawn siding on treated skids. Shelter is painted and includes galvanized steel roofing.



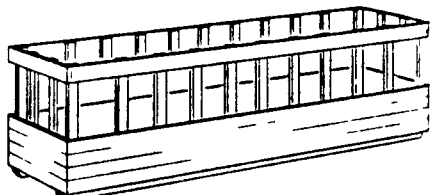
POULTRY HOUSE

Constructed of exterior rough sawn siding on treated skids. Galvanized steel roofing. Floor system - 2x6 floor joists & 3/4" T&G plywood.



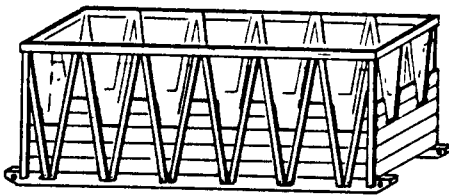
FARROWING HOUSE

Treated skids. 1-3/8" Oak floor. Removable partitions. 4 stalls. Feed panels from rear.



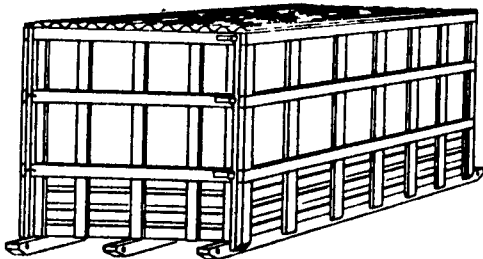
TREATED "SQUARE-NECK" FEEDER

Completely constructed of treated yellow pine lumber. Available in 10'-20' lengths. On skids for easy movability.



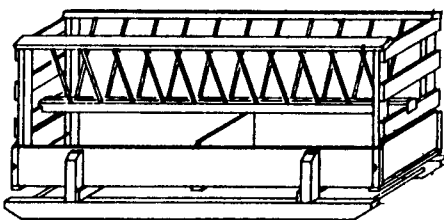
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ROUND BALE FEEDER

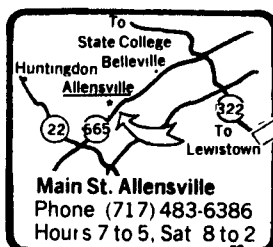
Holds two round bales. Hinged door on both ends. Constructed completely with treated yellow pine. Galvanized steel roofing.



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