

How Carl Kreider reached his 10-ton alfalfa yields

QUARRYVILLE — Reliable seed, a well-drained field, timely rains and a skilled crop manager named Carl Kreider were just the right ingredients to produce the best stand of alfalfa in Pennsylvania last year.

Kreider, a young dairyman from Quarryville, Lancaster County, harvested 10.48 tons of alfalfa from each acre of a five-acre field he enrolled in the state's highly regarded Alfalfa Growers Program, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council.

He and 15 other top growers in the program were recently recognized for their achievements at an awards luncheon in State College.

While there were many factors that allowed the winners in four regions to achieve their outstanding yields, it was evident from the results that many considered W-L seed varieties to be among the most important ingredients.

Six of the 16 winners, including the grand champion, used W-L seed, distributed exclusively in the area by Beachley-Hardy Seed Co. of Shiremanstown.

"It's definitely a high quality seed," said Kreider, who planted W-L 313. "The varieties are dependable, and the crop is more persistent and I think the hay quality is better."

Kreider, who grows 80 acres of alfalfa, direct seeded his grand champion field in March 1984 at a rate of 16 pounds to the acre. After establishment, he applied two tons of lime per acre, plus 25 pounds of nitrogen and 150 pounds of phosphate.

Proper management is important, he said, but his field has proven to be perfect for alfalfa. It is composed of Chester soil and lies atop a broad ridge.

"It gives you the drainage you need, but still holds more moisture than a field on a hill would. I think it's an ideal field for hay," said Kreider.

Last year, he took four cuttings, the first of which came off in mid May and was made into haylage. The other three came off as hay. He made his cuttings at intervals of 43, 40 and 37 days.

Kreider said he was impressed with all four cuttings. "The fourth cutting looked just like the first,"

he said. "It was so fresh."

A first-time participant in the Alfalfa Growers Program, Kreider said he knew he was getting better-than-average yields, but he never realized how much better

When his results came back showing a 10.48-ton yield with 4,320 pounds of crude protein and 12,264 pounds of total digestible nutrients (TDN), even he was surprised.

"I guess I really failed to realize how much we might lose to field losses," he said. "I thought my best fields were getting 8 tons. I was really surprised when those results showed over 10 tons."

Just how impressive his yield was can be seen when comparing it to those of the other 93 participants in the nine-year-old growers program. The average yield for the year was 6.57 tons per acre for the year, while all growers across the state typically average just over three tons.

Growers program officials explained that yield is not the only consideration when picking a grand champion. They also take into account crude protein and TDN, both of which Kreider's crop excelled in.

Kreider said he feeds much of his alfalfa to his herd of 55 cows, but has enough left over to sell as a cash crop at local auctions.

While Kreider was busy last summer winning top honors in the southeastern part of the state, Region 1, John Tautin of Crawford County was producing a fine pure alfalfa stand of his own in Region 4, which stretches across the state's northern tier.

With a 7.81-ton-per-acre yield in some of the state's most difficult growing soil, Tautin captured the Region 4 championship. His crop, harvested from a 12-acre field, came in with 3,608 pounds of crude protein and 9,770 pounds TDN.

Tautin, from 11 miles north of Meadville, admitted that he doesn't fare in an area known for its high alfalfa yields. "In our area, it's really tough to grow alfalfa," he said.

In addition to milking a herd of 40 cows, Tautin grows about 42 acres of alfalfa in his Chenango gravelly loam soil. "It's not the best, but I've got a couple of fields that really produce."

While his yields have been remarkably high, the age of his championship stand is even more

remarkable. Tautin direct seeded his field with W-L 316 at a rate of 18 pounds to the acre back in the spring of 1982, and the stand has produced higher yields in each of its four years.

"It has improved with age," said the dairyman. "It just keeps getting better every year."

Tautin said he has been planting W-L for nine years and hasn't found a better variety. "It's excellent," he said. "In fact, I recommend it to my neighbors and now they're getting excellent crops."

Tautin made four cuttings on his 1985 crop at intervals of 38, 39 and 45 days, with the first coming in late May and the last in early September. All four were used for low-moisture haylage.

Other top producers in the Alfalfa Growers Program who used W-L seed varieties were:

* Robert P. Glenn, Lawrence County. Glenn earned second place in the mixed alfalfa-grass category in Region 4 with a 6.97-ton-per-acre yield, using a mix of W-L 316 and rye grass.

His crude protein count was 2,783 pounds per acre and his TDN tested at 8,136 pounds.

* Frank and Tom Telesz, Warren County. The Telesz brothers produced a pure alfalfa stand that yielded 7.29 tons to win second place in Region 4.

The W-L 315 crop produced 3,366 pounds of crude protein and 8,900 pounds TDN.

* Ronald M. Meyer, Clinton County. Meyer's 7.12-ton crop was good for second place in pure stand competition in Region 2.

Planted with W-L 316, it produced 3,194 pounds of crude protein and 8,408 pounds TDN.

* Stephen Mellott, Franklin



Champion alfalfa grower Carl Kreider, seated left, is congratulated by Hugh MacWilliam, Beachley-Hardy Seed Co., standing left; Extension Agent Arnold Lueck, standing right; and John Dantine, of Lancaster Bone Fertilizer, Quarryville, seated right.

County. Mellott placed second in Region 1 with his alfalfa-grass mix that yielded 8.08 tons.

Using M-L 316, he produced a crop with 3,614 pounds of crude protein and 9,765 pounds TDN.

Crawford Co. names top corn, alfalfa producers

MEADVILLE — The Eighteenth Annual Crawford County Corn & Forage Day was held on Feb. 12 at the Meadville Quality Inn. This educational program is sponsored by the Crawford County office of the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with 28 seed, feed, fertilizer, chemical

and farm equipment dealers.

One of the highlights of this year's program was the recognition of six local farmers for their achievement in corn and alfalfa production. Robert Campbell, R.D. 2, Saegertown; George and Timothy Greig, R.D. 2, Linesville; Timothy Proper, R.D. 1, Townville; and Thomas Rogers, R.D. 1, Springboro, were recognized for their corn production in The Pennsylvania Five Acre Corn Club. Robert Baughman, R.D. 1, Townville; George and Timothy Greig, and John Tautin, Sr., R.D. 3, Conneautville, received awards in The Pennsylvania Alfalfa Growers' program.

Campbell grew 143 bushels of ear corn per acre of Funks 4211 Variety, with a three-year average of 142 bushels of corn. Rogers' yield was 123.9 bushels of shelled corn per acre growing the variety of Voris 284. Proper's yield check was 98.7 bushels of ear corn per acre of Funks 664 Variety. Greig's corn yield of Schlessmans SX405 variety was 129.9 bushel per acre. In addition Greig had 5.65 tons per acre from three cuttings of an alfalfa-clover-timothy mixed hay. Baughman's pure alfalfa stand with three cuttings yielded 4.86 tons per acre. Tautin also had a pure stand of alfalfa which yielded 7.81 tons per acre in four cuttings. This was the third year in a row for measuring yields in this field and each year the tonnage increased. Tautin was also honored on January 24, 1986, in State College for having the highest alfalfa yield in the Western Region of Pennsylvania.

The second highlight was having Myron Wehr speak on "Grain Marketing, How I Do It". Wehr is a grain and hay farmer from New Waterford, Ohio. He raises about

1,000 acres of corn, 200 acres each of oats, wheat and alfalfa hay and uses hay drying aids for curing his hay. He was raised on a small dairy farm, is an agriculture graduate of Ohio State University is married and has two daughters. Wehr markets grain and hay and sells hogs and beef cattle.

The secret of his success is keeping detailed records on his operation, knowing his cost of productions, when to market grain or put it through an animal to market. His pre-budgeting is a big part of his marketing program.

Other speakers on the program included Lynn Hoffman, Penn State agronomist and manager of the Agronomy Research Farm at Rock Springs, speaking on "The Value of Crop Rotation".

Douglas Beegle, Penn State Extension Agronomist, discussed the new Penn State soil testing report and how to interpret the results. Beegle stressed laboratory values are important but the interpretation of the results as applied to Pennsylvania soils is the key to growing our agronomic crops. He also discussed the nitrogen application to our corn crop stressing the best time to apply nitrogen is about three weeks to a month after the corn is planted using side dressing equipment.

Dennis Calvin gave a presentation on corn & forage insects and their control. Calvin spoke on both chemical and biological insect control and various ways to control insects by cultural methods.

Caroline Lundell, manager of the Crawford County Agriculture Stabilization & Conservation Service of the USDA, spoke briefly on the new corn program being offered under the 1985 Farm Bill in 1986.



Brubaker Ag Service honors top growers

Winners of the top awards this year at Brubaker Agronomic Consulting Service were honored at a banquet last week at the Leola Family Restaurant. Shown above are, from left, Clyde Hershey and Glenn Rohrer of Millersville; Michael W. Brubaker, agronomist and proprietor of Brubaker Ag Service, State Rep. Art Hershey of Cochransville and Bob and Albert Mellinger of Strasburg. Kreider and Rohrer were first with a yield of 214.5 bushels per acre, using Pioneer 3389, while the Mellingers placed second with 214 bushels per acre, using Doebler 70. Hershey, who used Pioneer 3184, finished third with 212 bushels per acre.