



## Farm Talk

By  
Jerry Webb

### Beware of wonder additives

In this day of sophisticated agriculture with vast technological support, you'd think the flimflam farm products that were so common 50 years ago would be off the market. But they aren't.

Maybe there aren't as many as there used to be, but there certainly is a long list of wonder products available to farmers that are supposed to cure a variety of farming ills. And although the rubes and country bumpkins who once bought snake oil have become more wary, they're still buying some products that seem about as useful.

Soil additives are a favorite this time of year — sold in many forms and under many brand names. These miracles, aimed at separating an already troubled farmer from his few remaining dollars, promise a lot and typically deliver little or nothing.

The department of soil science at the University of Wisconsin has gone through a whole list of miracle soil additives testing them where possible and concluding that

"a number of soil additives are currently on the market for which the claims greatly exceed the performance of the product."

A report on the department's evaluation of these products further says that most of them don't contain enough nitrogen, phosphate or potash to be sold as fertilizers. So they're called soil amendments, or conditioners, or some other come-on kind of name. The Wisconsin researchers found several common characteristics:

- Low rates of application compared to fertilizer;
- Can be applied directly to the soil or as a foliar spray;
- Costs between \$3 and \$8 per acre at recommended rates;
- Promotion usually says the product is natural, organic does not cause cancer or does not kill ladybugs and earthworms;
- The reason why the product works is either not known or a trade secret;
- Testimonials are usually based on unreplicated results.

The report says most of these products probably won't do any harm, but on the other hand they probably won't do any good either and they do cost a lot of money.

If you listen to the makers you get the feeling that you just can't farm without their products. The maker of one of these wonder additives says it's a non-toxic, non-poisonous organic jel plasma serum of basic life-promoting and life-sheltering values. In plain terms, it's a seed coating of questionable value.

Another contains microorganisms that secrete vitamins, hormones and growth regulators, according to the maker. But one Wisconsin researcher says there is in fact no well established evidence that adding any vitamin or growth promoting factor to the soil ever improves crop production. He slays he has seen no research evidence to support the company's claim.

Some of the products sound a little exotic like maybe you could eat them and they would improve your health. One is a fermented-product resulting from the blending of whey and an extract of Norwegian kelp. And the maker says it "provides a benefit to the plant that is not yet fully understood."

Another, a combination of fish and liquid seaweed actually includes eight pounds of hydrolyzed fish per gallon and at the suggested rate of application that figures out to be three pounds of fish per acre — hardly up to the recommendation of the Indian who taught the first Pilgrims how to grow corn by placing one fish under each hill.

The Wisconsin report indicates that some of the products sold as

miracle additives are worse than nothing. One of the compounds tested appeared to be ground granite rock with virtually no nutrient value. It would simply dilute the soil and make it less fertile, according to the experts.

The list of wonder additives goes on. Suffice to say that the flimflam artists are out there. Usually they come in the spring with the first warm days touting their miracle products and making great claims that they are unable to substantiate.

If the Department of Agriculture and the agricultural experiment stations in the land-grant colleges around the country have accomplished anything over the last half century, it's been to provide unbiased information on such things. If an experiment station recommends a so-called miracle additive it's because it has performed well in scientifically managed tests.

Most of the miracle manufacturers won't even submit their product for testing, preferring instead to claim wondrous powers that are not fully understood.

Agricultural researchers have a way of analyzing and understanding these products and only those with real merit meet the test. That's why farmers, home gardeners, anyone for that matter who's tempted to spend money on new products sold out of the back of a pickup truck or station wagon should think first about their agricultural experiment station researchers and cooperative extension personnel.

Check with them before parting with any of those hard-to-get dollars. Remember, if it's been tested and has proven its merit, then it's worthwhile. But if the salesman is going strictly on the maker's claim, then chances are pretty good somebody is getting ripped off.

### Wayne County Crops Day slated

HONESDALE — A Wayne County Crops Day will be held Thursday, March 27, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Seelyville Fire Hall. The event is being sponsored by the Agricultural Extension Service and area farm supply dealers.

The program will include educational presentations, commercial displays, corn and alfalfa awards, and pesticide recertification.

Speakers will be Dr. Sidney Bosworth, Dr. Joseph McGahen, and Lynn Hoffman, all Extension agronomists, Penn State University. Presentations will cover crop varieties, insect and weed control, fertilization, no-till

seeding, and new cultural practices.

An added feature of Crops Day will be the presentation of awards and recognition of Wayne County farmers who participated in the Pennsylvania five acre corn program and alfalfa growing program in 1985.

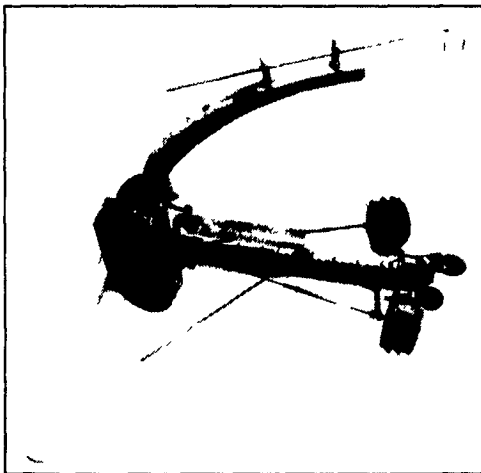
Farm supply dealers who are interested in participating in Crops Day should contact the Wayne County Extension office for information.

All farmers and other interested persons are welcome to attend Crops Day. Reservations are requested by calling 253-5970. Ext. 114.

## PatZ SILO UNLOADERS Rugged And

### SAFETY NOTICE PatZ Silo Unloader

ATTENTION: Owners of PatZ Silo Unloader Models 61, 66 and 98 manufactured from 1960 to 1971 (14 to 25 years old) All models involved were originally green



State of the art guarding at the time of manufacture may not fully cover the area of the gathering chain. Although the unloader should not be operated with persons in the silo, serious injuries caused by the gathering chain while ignoring this safety practice have been reported. To help prevent accidents that may result in injury or death, PatZ offers owners of unloaders involved, three options that provide improved gathering chain guarding.

- Option 1.** For unloaders already converted to the big (30") drive wheels, PatZ will provide improved guarding for the gathering chain at no cost to the user
- Option 2.** For unloaders having original small (18") drive wheels, PatZ will provide improved guarding at no cost, but it *will require* the purchase and installation of the big (30") drive wheel kit, which will improve traction, and flotation. The improved guarding *will not* work with the small (18") drive wheels
- Option 3.** PatZ will pay U.S \$400 directly to the owner who buys a new PatZ Silo Unloader with its new up-to-date features. Owners can keep their present unloader's motor, electrical joint and electric cable. This further reduces the price, making the new PatZ Unloader more affordable. PatZ will send payment when verification of installation is furnished and old unloader is returned to PatZ

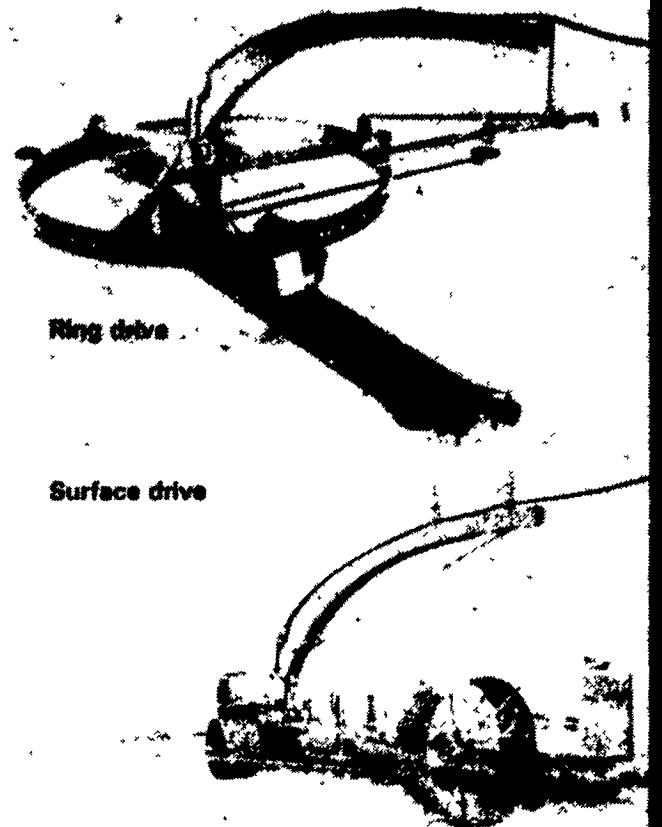
If you presently own a PatZ Unloader Model 61, 66 or 98, manufactured from 1960-1971, for your protection contact us today

**CAUTION:** Silos may contain poisonous gases. Proper precaution should be taken before entering. Entering the silo without locking out the electrical power could result in serious injury or death if power is turned on while anyone is in the silo

### Reliable Feeding

Hard-packed and frozen silage makes feeding more than a routine chore.

PatZ gives you two solutions to the problem — the RD-820 ring-drive silo unloader and the 98B surface-drive silo unloader. Both have a double-hook gathering chain with hardened steel cutters and claws that cut through frozen and packed silage.



Ring drive

Surface drive

- Spring-tensioned powered cutter keeps silo walls free of buildup.
- Preset depth-of-cut control makes feeding truly automatic (98B).
- Powerful blowers with adjustable impeller blades do the job.

We'll show you how to get the most performance for your money.

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