

The Dairy Business

By
Newton Bair

This discussion may be a little late for the present season. Probably most of the manure is already hauled and spread on the handiest corn fields. You know, the ones that always get preferential treatment because they are close by. Let's start to consider the longer haul, -both in time and distance.

An all too common concept among dairymen is that manure is a commodity to be disposed of as quickly and easily as possible. It's high time that we begin to think of manure as a truly valuable asset. One to be used to the greatest advantage for fertilizing crops, as well as to prevent adverse saturation of the environment.

Is there a field or two several miles down the road that never gets any manure? Why do we so often neglect those fields? Why do we supersaturate the fields nearest the barn? How far can you afford to haul the stuff? Can the hauling costs be justified in terms of time, as well as mileage, wear and tear on equipment, and fertilizer savings?

Those are questions for thought, with no direct answers for any specific case. Until all of the math has been juggled, and the pros and cons of your particular cir-

cumstances are penciled out, you can only guess at the answers. But every farmer should consider these important facts.

Fact Number one: If all of the manure produced in Lancaster County was distributed equitably on all of the crop acres in the county, and incorporated promptly, no other fertilizer nutrients would be needed, except some starter for corn and grain. Also true for some other nearby counties. (The fertilizer dealers are going to hate me for that!)

Fact number two: There are fields that get too much manure year after year. (Maybe it is not evident in crop growth, because it is applied too carelessly on frozen ground and washes down the creek!) This supersaturation often does show up in soil tests that will have the line of X's running off the page for Phosphorus and Potash. What happened to the Nitrogen is anybody's guess, but it is probably in your drinking water.

Fact number three: There are many fields producing crops that never get any manure, simply because they are thought to be too far from the barn at hauling time. Or they may be rented acres that are neglected in favor of home owned land.

These facts are intended to point out that manure is a commodity that deserves serious consideration. Compared to chemical fertilizer, manure is bulky, harder to manage, messy, smelly, and harder to calibrate and measure. A ton is not always a ton, or, who takes the time and trouble to calculate the value of a spreader loaded with solid stable manure, versus a tankful of liquid stuff? The pit is full, and must be emptied today, or it overfloweth.

Now before you dismiss the dirty subject, consider this. Cow manure loses nearly 60 percent of its nitrogen the first year, unless it is incorporated in the soil within seven days after spreading. Poultry manure loses nearly 80 percent. These figures are based on actual research availability factors, reported in the Penn State Agronomy guide.

The liquid portion of manure carries half the nitrogen and three-fourths of the potash. Every effort should be made to conserve the liquid by bedding absorption and good storage.

The closer to crop planting time that manure can be applied, the better. Nitrogen is so mobile that severe loss can occur, unless the plants are in the ground and growing while it is available.

Plan to spend a little more time and effort in hauling, incorporating, and applying it uniformly to all land. Before the next pit emptying time, get a complete analysis of the manure, and do some careful figuring on where it will do the most good for you.

Distributed more equitably, your manure supply might be one of the best assets on your farm. Your reduced fertilizer bill may well more than pay for the extra time and effort to haul it farther and incorporate it before you lose it.

Area 6 Milk Prices Increases

SOUTHAMPTON - Dairy farmers in the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board Area 6 will see a 20-cent increase in their Class I milk price effective May 1, 1986.

The increase brings the Class I fluid milk differential up from \$2.10 to \$2.30 per hundredweight. The adjustment, according to John Pierce, PMMB executive secretary, coincides with increases in Class I prices in Federal Orders 4, 2 and 36, as required by in the 1985 Farm Bill. The adjustment, Pierce said, is the "best pricing order based on testimony presented during the hearing."

The increase was prompted by a request from Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative. In January 1986, Inter-State proposed the increase to bring the Area 6 price into line with the federal

order increases.

In testimony presented to the Milk Marketing Board, Inter-State Economist James Fraher said the increase was necessary to maintain competitive producer price alignment between Federal Orders 4, 2 and 36 and Area 6.

During the hearing held on Feb. 19, Fraher and Joe Amick, president of the Inter-State's Altoona-Huntingdon-State College Secondary Milk Market, said an increase in Area 6 would also reflect changes in milk production costs relative to prices.

The 20-cent increase is good news for Area 6 dairy farmers, Fraher said. The higher price will help to offset other cost increases, such as the 52-cent assessment mandated by the whole herd buy-out program and federal budget cuts, he said.

Managing Meetings

Workshop Scheduled

"Managing Meetings" is the subject of a workshop scheduled by Hunterdon County, New Jersey, Cooperative Extension on Tuesday, May 27, 7:30 p.m., in Hunterdon's Extension Center.

"If you are timid with the gavel...or unfamiliar with Roberts' Rules of Order, this workshop can be helpful to you," says Calvin Wettstein, Hunterdon County Extension Agent. "It will restore your confidence and bolster your skills."

Designed for members, chairmen, officers of clubs, organizations, or boards, there will be opportunities to: review parliamentary procedure, role play common situations, discuss

leadership/membership qualities, and practice goal-setting and decision-making.

The "Managing Meetings" workshop is a sequel to a 7-session leadership program, "Be A Better Leader," conducted by Cooperative Extension. You need not have been part of that series to attend and benefit from this program, says Wettstein.

Call the Cooperative Extension office, 201, 788-1339, for a program description and registration form. Fee is \$3 to cover refreshments and hand-out material.

All Cooperative Extension programs are offered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap.



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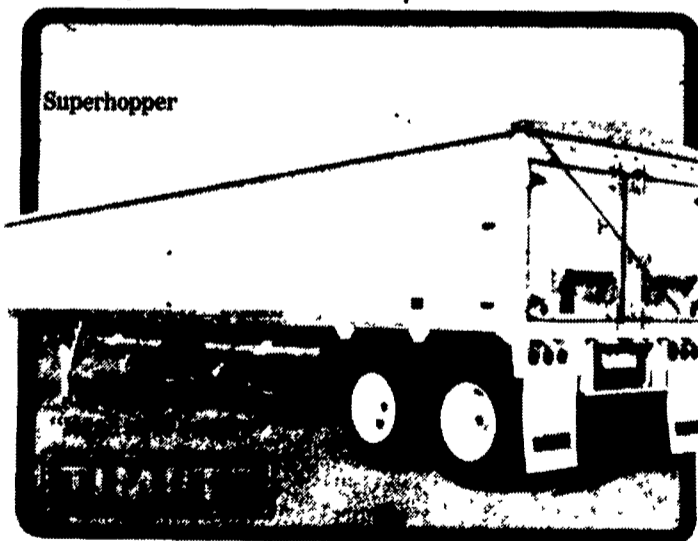
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