

## Think Safety When Harvesting Forage

NEWARK, Del. — The hum of forage harvesters chopping the '86 crop has already begun on Delmarva. "Keeping knives sharp and adjusting the shear bar is the key to harvesting silage efficiently," says University of Delaware extension agricultural engineer Tom Williams. "And keeping hands and feet out of moving machinery is the key to harvesting safely."

Williams recommends sharpening the knives at least once a day — more if the forage is extremely dry. "Every time you sharpen the knives, adjust the shear bar to the minimum recommended clearance," he says. "Doing this can cut fuel costs by up to 30 percent. When the center of the bar wears beyond the clearance limits, reverse it to expose a new edge, or replace it with a new bar. Tungsten-coated ones wear more slowly than other types."

Since the time spent sharpening and adjusting shear bars is made up for in improved cutting and lower fuel consumption, it pays to notice when the load on the engine seems to be increasing. That means it's probably time to resharpen. Hydraulic or electric knife grinders and simplified shear bar adjustments make it easier to keep cutters in top shape.

"When sharpening, it isn't necessary to remove every nick and dent, but it is important to grind the entire length of the knife," Williams says. "Grinders that can't sharpen the ends make minimum clearance adjustments impossible in the center of the knives."

The length of the cut also affects fuel and power requirements. Going from a half-inch cut to a quarter-inch cut will increase power requirements by as much as one-third. "But energy isn't the only factor to consider when choosing cutting length," the

engineer says. "Also consider storage quality in the silo, the limitations of your handling equipment, and the effect on livestock feed intake and production."

Forage containing 65 percent or more moisture can be cut a half-inch long and still store well. Sixty-percent or less moisture in silage needs finer chopping to pack well. Also, silo capacity and handling capacity are reduced when silage is cut longer. Under most conditions, Williams says, quarter- to half-inch cuts produce excellent silage or haylage at a reasonable energy cost, but chopping finer than that is undesirable.

The engineer also stresses the need to take proper safety measures, particularly when sharpening knives. "Wear eye protection — especially if you have to remove any shields. Keep your hands, arms and head away from the opening, and don't let anything fall into the knives," he warns.

Block the cylinder cutterhead when replacing or repairing knives, so the knives can't move unexpectedly. Because the knives are free-wheeling and continue to move after the power is shut off, it may be tempting to stick a broom

handle or stick into the knives to bring them to a quick stop.

"Don't do it," warns Williams. "Your hands can be jerked into the

knives, or chips of wood can be thrown back at you. Always let the knives come to a complete stop on their own.

### Weekly Summary

Harrisburg, PA

Friday, August 15

Report supplied by PDA

15 Livestock Markets

**CATTLE:** 6721. Compared with 6135 head last week, and 5864 head a year ago. Sl. steers mostly steady to 1.00 higher; some spots to 3.00 higher; sl. heifers, cows and bullocks steady to 1.00 higher; bulls mostly steady; High Choice & Prime No. 2-4 sl. steers 62.00-65.00; Choice 58.00-62.50; Good 55.00-59.25 with some down to 50.00; Standard 45.00-49.00; Choice sl. heifers 53.00-58.50; Good 48.00-54.50; Standard 42.00-48.00; Breaking Utility & Commercial sl. cows 36.00-40.00, few to 41.50; Cutter & Boning Utility 34.00-39.50; Canner & Low Cutter 30.00-35.50; shells down to 25.00; Choice sl. bullocks 52.00-54.85; Good 46.00-51.00; YG No. 1,

1000-2300 lb. sl. bulls 44.00-51.75; YG No. 2, 900-1600 lb. 40.00-46.00.

**FEEDER CATTLE:** Med. Frame No. 1, 400-900 lb. feeder steers 45.00-57.00, few to 64.00; Med. Frame No. 1, 300-800 lb. feeder heifers 45.00-55.00; Med. Frame No. 1, 400-800 lb. feeder bulls 46.00-58.00.

**CALVES:** 3968. Compared with 4003 head last week and 4382 head a year ago. Vealers uneven, mostly steady to 2.00 lower; few Prime vealers 76.00-90.00; Choice 65.00-78.00; Good 50.00-65.00; Standard & Good 110-130 lb. 45.00-55.00; 90-110 lb. 40.00-47.50; 65-85 lb. 34.00-43.50; Utility 50-100 lb. 25.00-38.00, few down to 20.00.

**FARM CALVES:** Holstein bulls 90-130 lb. 45.00-91.00, mostly 58.00-85.00; holstein heifers 90-125 lb. 48.00-57.00; few beef cross bulls and heifers 50-110 lb. 45.00-65.00.

**HOGS:** 4511. Compared with 4904

head last week and 5754 head a year ago. Barrows & gilts 1.00-2.00 higher; US No. 1-2, 210-245 lb. 64.00-65.75; No. 1-3, 215-250 lb. 62.00-64.00; No. 2-3, 220-265 lb. 60.00-63.00; No. 2-4, 230-265 lb. 57.00-60.00; No. 1-3, 140-210 lb. 51.00-57.00; sows uneven; No. 1-3, 300-650 lb. 48.00-53.50, few to 55.50; No. 2-3, 300-700 lb. 44.00-51.00; boars 38.00-47.00.

**FEEDER PIGS:** 1194. Compared with 969 head last week and 954 head a year ago. 3.00-5.00 higher; US No. 1-3, 20-35 lb. 31.00-41.00, few down to 20.00; 35-50 lb. 40.00-50.00; 50-75 lb. 50.00-63.00 per head.

**SHEEP:** 1306. Compared with 1407 head last week and 1100 head a year ago. Spring sl. lambs steady to 4.00 higher; High Choice & Prime 50-100 lb. 65.00-88.00; Choice 60-110 lb. 59.00-75.00 with a few to 84.00; Good 50-100 lb. 50.00-66.00; Good & Choice 40-85 lb. feeder lambs 50.00-76.00 with some to 100.00; sl. sheep 15.00-29.00, some to 52.00.

**2 GRADED FEEDER PIG SALES:** 2224. Compared with 2050 head last week and 2776 head a year ago. Feeder pigs highly uneven, instances 12.00 higher to 25.00 lower; US No. 1-2, 20-30 lb. 120.00-147.50; 30-40 lb. 118.00-145.00; 40-50 lb. 107.00-140.00; 50-60 lb. 100.00-114.00; 60-90 lb. 70.00-111.00; No. 2-3, 30-40 lb. 120.00-140.00; 40-50 lb. 74.00-110.00.

## Forage Tent Activities Announced

This year at Ag Progress Days events at the Forage Tent include:

- Pennsylvania Hay Show— up to 30 classes of hay will be judged on Tuesday, August 19. Samples should be brought in before 10:00 a.m. on that day. If you would like to participate, contact your county agent for entry forms, rules and regulations.

- NIR Van — the van will be available to run analysis on any farmers samples that are brought in. Also, we will have the complete program available for balancing rations.

- Living weed and forage plan display — examples of many weeds will be on display. You can also see a living display of common forage plants. Penn State experts will be on hand to answer your questions.

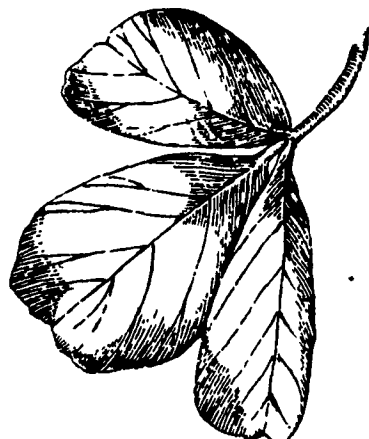
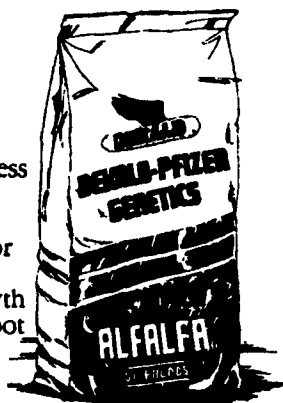
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