

Foraging Around



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Many of you, I'm sure, have read one or more accounts highlighting talks given at the 1990 PFGC/PSU sponsored Forage Conference last month. Nevertheless in this, my final column for 1990, I'd like to add my thoughts to those already expressed.

To begin with, it was a great conference, packed with well presented, down-to-earth, factual information that producers could immediately plug into their forage program. Unfortunately, while overall attendance was good, there weren't enough producers present. It was a golden opportunity passed up.

Here are a few of the things I heard that you ought to know about.

Keynote speaker Richard Klemme, University of Wisconsin Ag. Economist, emphasized both the environmental and profitability advantages of forages in a livestock system. "Studies have shown," he said, "considerable

economic benefits to rotations containing forages". And, Klemme concluded, hay cash markets can be quite profitable if high quality hay can be produced on a consistent basis. He drew this conclusion from extensive experiences with quality hay auctions in his state.

Pastures got plenty of attention from Penn State researchers, Drs. Larry Muller, Dairy Scientist, and Forage Specialist Steve Fales. In his comments Muller stressed that the results of recent research at Penn State and elsewhere definitely indicates intensive grazing systems can make this an alternative for the "smaller" (40 to 60 cows) dairy farms. Muller's statements were echoed by Fales as he described a number of new cooperative pasture research studies with dairy cows now underway at Penn State.

Pasture research also received the attention of Animal Scientist Harold Harpster who reported the results of new studies on beef and

sheep co-grazing, tall fescue in sheep grazing systems and creep grazing for pre-weaned calves - studies to add \$'s in the pockets of livestock producers.

Results of recent Hay Marketing studies were reviewed by Dr. Cathy Hamlett of Penn State's Department of Ag. Economics and Rural Sociology. She explained how horse hay buyers and dealers view hay quality. Horse hay buyers, she found, overwhelmingly prefer alfalfa and timothy hay. And they consider freedom from dust and a good smell most important. On the other hand, given a choice, they prefer not buying hay treated with preservatives and drying agents.

Other Penn State researchers addressed a variety of topics of direct concern to Pennsylvania farmers. For example, Dr. Art Hower, Research Entomologist, focused in on the seriousness of the clover root curculio as a significant pest of alfalfa. While he is still investigating management and control practices, Hower has conclusive evidence that this insect can seriously reduce alfalfa yields and shorten stand life.

Losses in hay making got the attention of Penn State Ag. Engineer Dennis Buckmaster. While there's no way to eliminate many losses, Buckmaster agrees, improvements in harvesting methods, and specifically conditioning treatments, hold potential for increasing profits.

Looking ahead Buckmaster also had positive things to say about maceration and mat drying of alfalfa as a new concept in hay making. It may be several years before maceration and mat harvesting machinery is available in the U.S., Buckmaster con-

cluded, "but" he says, "its economic potential has been proven."

As a proponent of near infrared reflectance spectroscopy (NIRS) I couldn't help getting excited as Penn State's Dr. John Shenk described new applications of this technology now being researched at Penn State- the possible analysis of forage undried and unground, and color measurements combined with NIR analysis to name just two.

These are just a few of the things covered at this year's forage conference. And just a sample

of the good things in store ahead for forage growers.

Our new forage specialist, Dr. Marvin Hall, summed it up this way. "I hope you leave this conference thinking not only about the role of forages in the 90's, but also about the role of forage in your farming system, and changes that will improve your system."

That's a good way to end this column, except to wish each and everyone the best of the Holiday Season and may 1991 be good to all of us.

Farmland Trust Formed

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Farmland Trust's board. Along with Stan Brown and Pat Sueck, Dunn credits a planning forum held last spring at York College as the impetus for organizing a private trust for farmland preservation.

"It was an idea I'd had for a long time, and found through the Forum planning others who shared that same interest," says Dunn. "The aftermath was to come together from the idea stage and develop it into a reality."

"We must look at the overall development of land use, not only farmland but the whole picture," says this planning specialist. After years of working with a scope of planning and zoning programs, Dunn says that he ascribes to the "shotgun approach, whatever works, try it."

Of the 72 separate municipalities in York County, 16 have already instituted some measures for preservation of farmland. In addition, the county government is just beginning a program of

conservation easement purchases in conjunction with the state's farmland preservation legislation.

In a brochure mailed to potential members, these three specific goals of the York County Farmland Trust are outlined:

—"Promote a broader community awareness of the importance of agricultural land to the County through community education and information dissemination;"

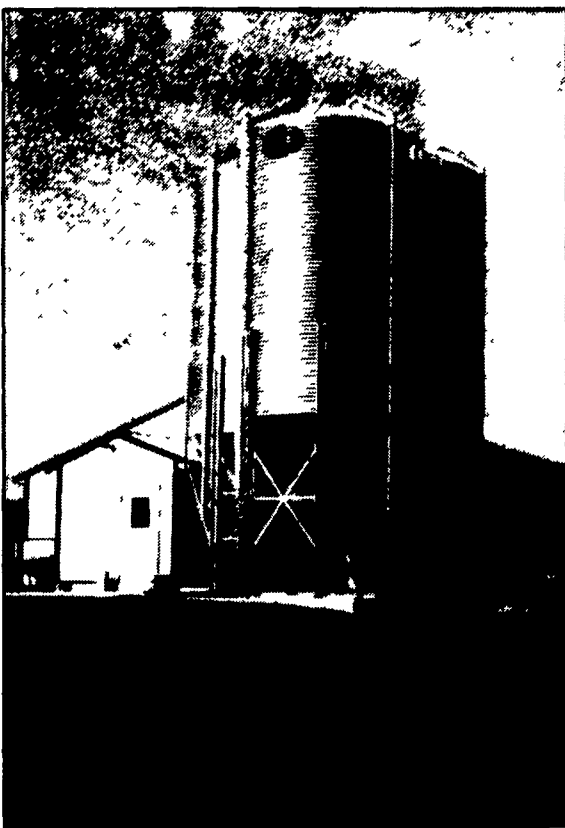
—"Minimize the untimely conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses by encouraging sound land use planning while recognizing the inevitability of continued growth within the County;"

—"Provide landowners with alternatives to conversion of productive farmland to non-agricultural uses."

"I love York County and dearly love the farmland,"

For further information on the Trust, contact York County Farmland Trust, P.O. Box 2026, York, Pennsylvania 17405-2026.

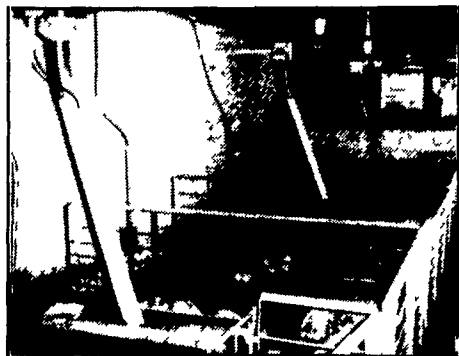
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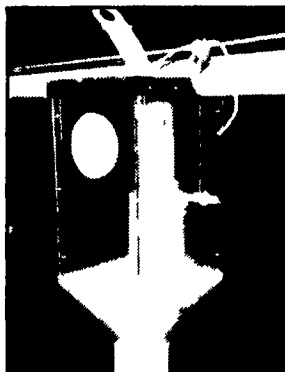
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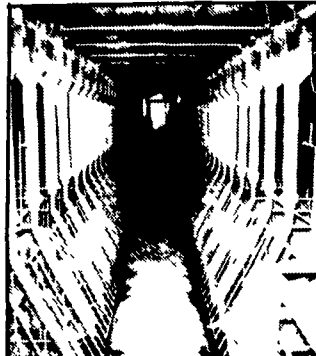
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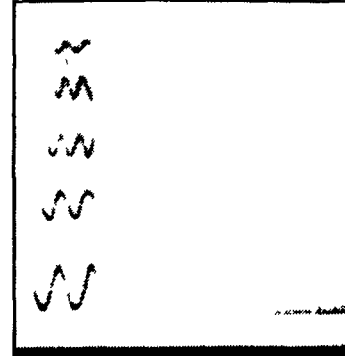
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