



WARREN (Warren Co.) — Two Warren County 4-H families hosted Japanese visitors this past month. Shown, from the left, is Wendy Gilkinson who hosted and Rie Kato of Kyoto-fu Japan, and Jamle Salapek who hosted Hiroko Yamanashi of Kanagawa-ken, Japan. The visitors are shown donning Japanese traditional dress at an exhibition at the 4-H Center in Pittsfield.



Making Fitness Fun.

Troy Onink, an exercise physiologist from Sugar Grove, is shown giving instruction to several 4-H'ers at this year's 4-H Summer Camp.

According to Sanford Smith, Warren County extension agent and 4-H camp director, each summer, two one-week 4-H Camps are conducted for 4-H club members from from a 10-county area in northwestern Pennsylvania.

In line with this year's camp theme of "The Summer Olympics," Onink gave a presentation to the 4-H'ers on the importance of maintaining good physical condition throughout life. This year, nearly 400 4-H'ers attended camp. Warren County 4-H programs are open to Warren County residents ages 8-19 years of age. For more information, contact the County Extension Office at (814)723-6003.

Moisture Content Crucial In Silage

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — A few weeks before harvesting corn that will be used for silage, growers should start monitoring its moisture content, recommends a Penn State corn management specialist.

"Moisture content at harvest time is one of the most important factors influencing corn silage quality," said Dr. Greg Roth, assistant professor of corn management in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

When corn silage is too dry, it creates excessive air space in silos and encourages mold to grow. When it's too wet, it leaches nutrients, sours, and becomes unpalatable for livestock.

"As harvest time nears, corn plants begin losing moisture by adult one-half of one percent each day," said Roth. "By checking the moisture content every few days, you can estimate the ideal time to harvest."

Growers can check moisture content by chopping up a sample corn plant and drying it in a forage moisture tester or microwave oven. Information about obtaining and using a forage moisture tester is available at Penn State Cooperative Extension offices.

When using a microwave oven to check moisture, weigh a portion of the chopped plant, then place it in the microwave with a glass of water. Heat the corn at the high setting for two-minute intervals until the corn feels completely dry. "By weighing the dried sample, you can tell how much of it was water," said Roth.

The difference between the two weights can be converted into a percentage. "Recommended percentages vary depending on the type of storage," said Roth. "For upright silos, 63 to 68 percent is recommended. For horizontal silos, 65 to 70 percent is recommended, and 55 to 60 percent is recommended for limited-oxygen silos."

Moisture content also can be estimated by examining corn kernels. Kernels have a milk line, a separation between the hardened starch at the crown and the milky portion near the base. As corn matures, more of the kernel hardens, and the milk line descends toward the base.

"For bunker or upright silos, corn should be harvested when the milk line is about one-third of the way from the crown to the base," said Roth. "When the milk line is midway, the plant's moisture content is ideal for storage in air-tight silos."

When the milk line reaches the kernel's base, a black layer forms there, and the digestibility of the stover is reduced. "Corn at this stage should be harvested without delay," said Roth. "It still can be ensiled, but the risk of abnormal fermentation is increased."

Weather can affect the rate of corn's moisture loss. "After an extremely dry growing season, moisture content may be 5 to 10 percent lower at any given stage of maturity, and corn may be ready for harvest a lot sooner," said Roth. "Excessive rainfall may slow down moisture loss and delay harvesting."

Corn was late developing this year due to the cold spring. Because of this, farmers in some areas may need to delay harvest or harvest after frost. "Frosted corn tends to have too much moisture," says Roth. "If this is the case, allow the corn to dry out as much as possible before harvesting."

"In all cases, use the condition of the crop, not the calendar, as your guide."



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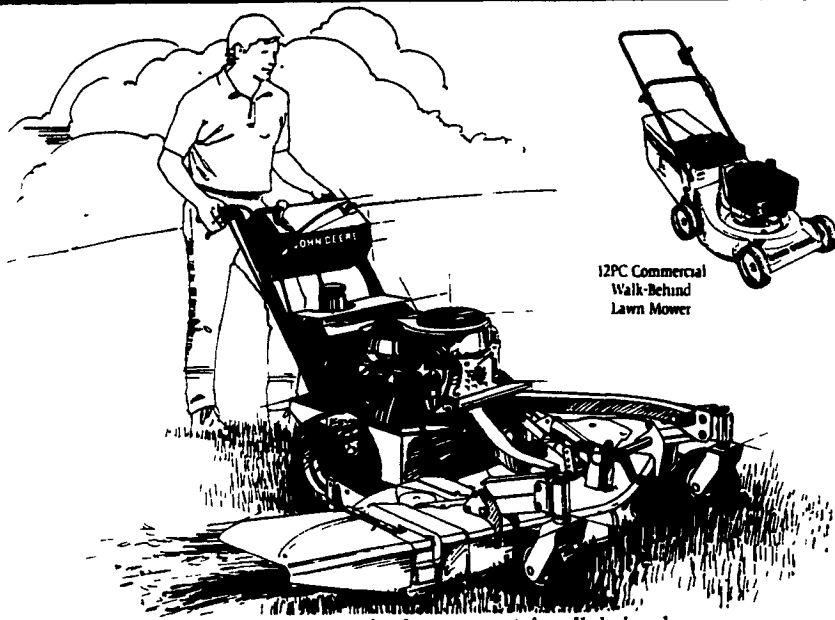
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