

Stricker points out his free-choice mineral bin where milking cows can sample 14 different minerals, plus salt, as they desire.

Forrest Stricker, right, and his herdsman, Glenn Ocher talk about changes they want to make to the fencing and about an idea Stricker has for the rye field.

Intensive Pasturing Is Right Way For Berks Farmer

CONNIE LEINBACH
Berks Co. Correspondent

ROBESONIA (Berks Co.) — The sound of a herd of cows munching on grass is music to Forrest Stricker's ears.

"It's neat," he said, noting that he had never really heard it before he began a new nutrition program of intensive pasturing, where a farmer relies chiefly on the nutrients in various grasses to supply cows with most of their daily nutritional needs.

It's a method of farming Stricker embraces because it uses what the earth has provided. "It all goes along with stewardship of the earth, and that a cow eats grass," he said, nodding and smiling. "That's what she was created to do. Let the cow go out and graze."

Before Stricker began relying on pasture for the bulk of the nutritional needs for his 115 Holsteins, 58 of which are milking, they used to mostly stay in the barn and were fed a total mixed ration (TMR). Once a day he took them outside for exercise and air, he said. Because he confined them to one pasture, they overgrazed it.

It's only been since April that he took the plunge and began this new program. He is tentatively pleased with the results so far, especially that his cows have held to the same levels of milk production. Another farmer in Berks County, Will Comley of Hamburg R.D. 3, also is using the method, said Clyde Myers, dairy extension agent who is helping the farmers.

Myers said farmers in the western part of the state have used the method for a while and it is just now moving to the southeast region.

It's an old way of farming, but it has the added bonus of our greater knowledge about the types of nutrients in grass.

The way it works is simple: Move the milking cows into a pasture where the grasses are six to eight inches high. Let them chew it down until it is three inches high, then move them to another pasture with fresh grass: Open and bred heifers and dry cows can eat the older grass in other pastures because their nutritional needs are different. Calves need high quality grass just like milking cows.

The chief aspect of intensive pasturing is "controlled grazing," Stricker noted. It's important not to let the cows chew the grass down so far that they hurt shoots. That's what happened in the pasture where Stricker used to put his cows: They chewed it so far down there wasn't any left.

Research has shown, Myers said, that grass at the six- to eight-inch height is the most nutritious. It contains more than 20 percent protein, so you don't have to feed supplemental protein.

"When feeding haylage and corn silage you have to feed them so much more to get the same amounts of energy and protein," Stricker said.

Before he began this program, he devoted only 15 acres of his 290-acre farm to pasturing. Now he devotes 50 acres to grass with plans to expand that amount this summer.

Costs Stricker incurred to begin the program were \$4,000 for electric fencing, \$1,000 for an underground watering system to supply water to every pasture, and, of course, seed.

Stricker situated his intensive grazing pastures on hill-sides. Land that is marginal is good for this program, Myers said. Stricker planted his corn crop on more level fields.

Stricker fenced off the new pasture area in several strips of about two to six acres each. Explaining that he is experimenting with different mixtures of grass, he said the gras-

ses he has planted are rye, orchard grass, bromegrass, and timothy. He's also planted New Zealand White Clover and alfalfa.

"But I've found that they don't like the alfalfa as much as the others," he said. "It shows you how much man knows . . ." One can see by looking at the pasture in

JOHN DEERE SQUARE BALERS

Only one baler can keep up with Bill Buser

York area farmer Bill Buser makes a hefty 40,000 solid square bales a year. And 30,000 of those bales are straw...hard on even the toughest balers.

What does he look for in a baler to keep up with his busy work schedule?

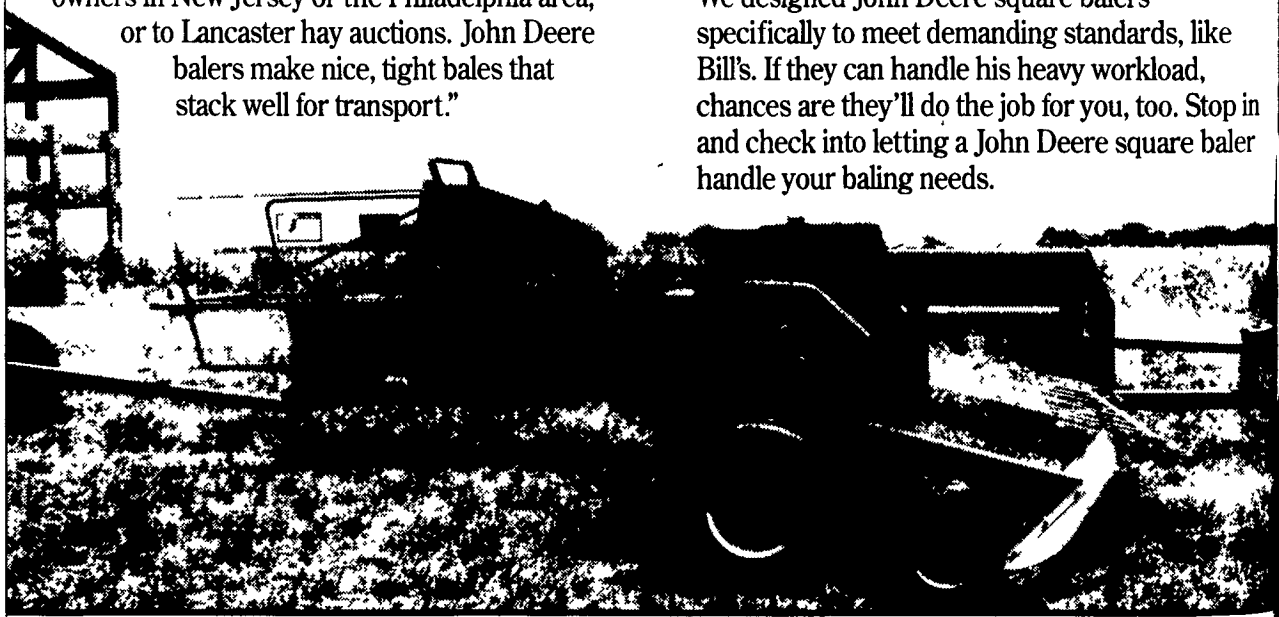
Solid, square bales that stack like bricks.

"I truck nearly all my bales. Either to horse owners in New Jersey or the Philadelphia area, or to Lancaster hay auctions. John Deere balers make nice, tight bales that stack well for transport."

An even flow of hay. "I like the auger feed on John Deere balers, too. It delivers a more even flow of hay into the baler." And that hay gets packed into the solid, square bales Bill likes — because John Deere balers pre-compress hay inside a tapered chamber before it enters the baling chamber.

Balers built for years of performance.

We designed John Deere square balers specifically to meet demanding standards, like Bill's. If they can handle his heavy workload, chances are they'll do the job for you, too. Stop in and check into letting a John Deere square baler handle your baling needs.



SEE ONE OF THESE DEALERS FOR A DEMONSTRATION:

ADAMSTOWN
EQUIPMENT INC.
Mohnton, PA
(near Adamstown)
215-484-4391

CLUGSTON AG
& TURF, INC.
Chambersburg, PA
717-263-4103

EVERGREEN
TRACTOR CO., INC.
Lebanon, PA
717-272-4641

GUTSHALL'S INC.
Carlisle, PA
717-249-2313

KERMIT K.
KISTLER INC.
Lynnport, PA
215-298-2011

BARTRON
SUPPLY, INC.
Tunkhannock, PA
717-836-4011

DEERFIELD AG &
TURF CENTER, INC.
Watsonstown, PA
717-538-3557

FINCH SERVICES-
HANOVER, INC.
Hanover, PA
717-632-2345

LANDIS BROS. INC.
Lancaster, PA
717-291-1046

CARLYLE &
MARTIN, INC.
Hagerstown, MD
301-733-1873

DUNKLE &
GRIEB INC.
Mill Hall, PA
717-726-3115

A.B.C. GROFF, INC.
New Holland, PA
717-354-4191

LEHIGH AG
EQUIPMENT
Wescosville, PA
215-398-2553

CLUGSTON FARM
EQUIPMENT
Needmore, PA
717-573-2215

ENFIELD
EQUIPMENT INC.
Whiteford, MD
301-452-5252

GUTSHALL'S INC.
RD #2 Box 74-A
Loyaville, PA

LONE MAPLE
SALES & SERVICE
New Alexander, PA
412-668-7172

LOS...
MILLER...
MILLER...
OXFORD...
P...
EQU...
215-...