

## Beef Briefs

by  
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### PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF BALE STORAGE TRIAL

A trial was conducted at Penn State last year which compared three storage methods of large round bales of grass.

The grass was either stored inside as dry hay or harvested as balage at about 40 percent dry matter and stored either by wrapping in plastic with a Kverneland (Nearbo, Norway) wrapper or stored in a plastic tube (Pronovost Equipment, St. Tile, Quebec).

The balage was stored on a concrete pad outdoors. After about 170 days of storage, the hay and balage was fed to mature beef

cows in dry lot using either a conventional ring-type bale feeder or a feeder with an inverted cone and a solid base. All the material was sampled at harvest and after storage and the feeding waste was measured.

As would be expected when comparing a fermented feed with a dry one, the protein values tended to be higher for the balage after storage, while there was some reduction in TDN values. A significant difference was found for changes in TDN between the dry hay and that stored in the tube. Changes in TDN value were -8.3 percent, -10.4 percent, and -9.2 percent for dry hay, tube storage, and wrapped bales, respectively. The cattle readily consumed all

of the forage. Small spots of mold were occasionally seen on both the wrapped and tubed balage; however, they were usually on the surface and no more than 3-4 inches in diameter.

A greater concern was feeding losses. There was no difference in the amount of dry matter that was wasted between the different types of bales. There was, however, a highly significant difference in the amount of wastage between the two types of feeders that were used.

Use of the ring-type feeder resulted in four times as much wastage as with the cone-type feeder. Upon observation, this was probably due to the solid base in the cone feeder capturing forage as it was pulled out of the bale by the cow.

Wastage was 8.0 percent of the dry matter offered by the ring feeder, and it was 1.9 percent for the cone feeder. After conversion to an as fed basis, this means there was 149 more pounds of dry hay wasted for each ton of hay offered and 305 more pounds of balage wasted for each ton offered in the ring feeder. For an average cow fed hay valued at \$70 per ton for 5 months, this is an average loss of

\$10.33 per cow.

With a difference in price between the two types of feeders of about \$550, a 53-cow herd would pay for the cone type feeder in one year.

There are some other considerations for processing and storing hay by these methods:

- The cost of wrapping is about \$4 per bale and must be compared with other forms of storage, including bags, before making a decision about which kind of storage to use.

- It should be apparent that labor costs are significantly higher for wrapping or putting bales in a tube.

- Putting bales in a tube implies that all bales must be moved to the permanent storage site at the time of baling, thus further increasing labor costs.

- There is usually going to be a cost associated with disposal of the plastic after feeding.

- There is significant evidence to show that total recovery of feed value from standing forage can be enhanced by wrapping or tubing bales. The long-term cost of that recovery must be weighed against the benefits.

#### Time To —

- Be sure all the new calves have

been identified, and those that are destined to be steers are castrated with a knife.

- Gear up the nutrition of 2- and 3-year-old cows with calves. Unless they are particularly heavy milking cows, their needs can best be met with 1-2 pounds of corn per head daily to insure they will handle the calf, continue to grow, and get rebred on time for a calf again next year.

- Get dewormer lined up for cows at turnout. A strategic deworming program includes treatment 2-3 weeks after turnout and again after the last frost. If cows were not dewormed last fall, they should be dewormed now and again 2-3 weeks after turnout. Use a drug that kills both the mature and immature forms of the worm (class II dewormers.) They are available in injectable, paste, and pour-on forms.

- Get your bull power in shape. If you need to buy a bull, remember to buy one with good records that has EPDs that are high for the traits that make you the most money. If the breeder prices him higher than you are used to paying because these records are available, pay him. You will make more money from the deal than he will.

## Pork Prose

(Continued from Page C3)

check, low starter feed intake, or poor nursery facilities is to simply wean one week later.

- Records. Tells you where you are. Helps you troubleshoot problems.

#### Summary

1. Image is now the issue. It's important for you and it's vital for our industry.

2. Your market is the difference between success and disaster. If your marketing options are limited,

you have little choice but to supply the buyer with what he wants. That applies to .80 inch of backfat as much as it does to reaching Level III on the Pork Quality Assurance Program.

3. The production crank. Do your sows produce? If you can improve productivity even a small amount, the increases in profit will astound you. Is your building full? If it's not, the part of your building operating at less than capacity makes for an expensive parking lot.

## Farm Program Sign-Up In Progress

LIONVILLE (Chester Co.) — The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) is accepting for the 1994 Feed Grain and Wheat programs. This sign-up period continues through April 29.

"All farmers with an established crop acreage base are eligible to participate in the voluntary programs," ASCS official Hollis D. Baker said. Program benefits include price support loans and deficiency payments.


At sign-up, farmers may request 50 percent of their estimated deficiency payments for wheat and feed grains. Baker said the payments will be limited to the farmer's intended program acreage.

There are no acreage reduction requirements for wheat, corn, grain sorghum, oats or barley.

Established target prices are \$4 per bushel for wheat, \$2.75 per bushel for corn, \$2.61 per bushel for sorghum, \$2.36 per bushel for barley and \$1.45 per bushel for oats.

"Farmers will have wide latitude in current programs, including permission to plant soybeans or other oilseeds on optional flexible acreage," the ASCS official said.

Additional 1994 farm program provisions may be obtained from the Chester/Delaware County ASCS Office.



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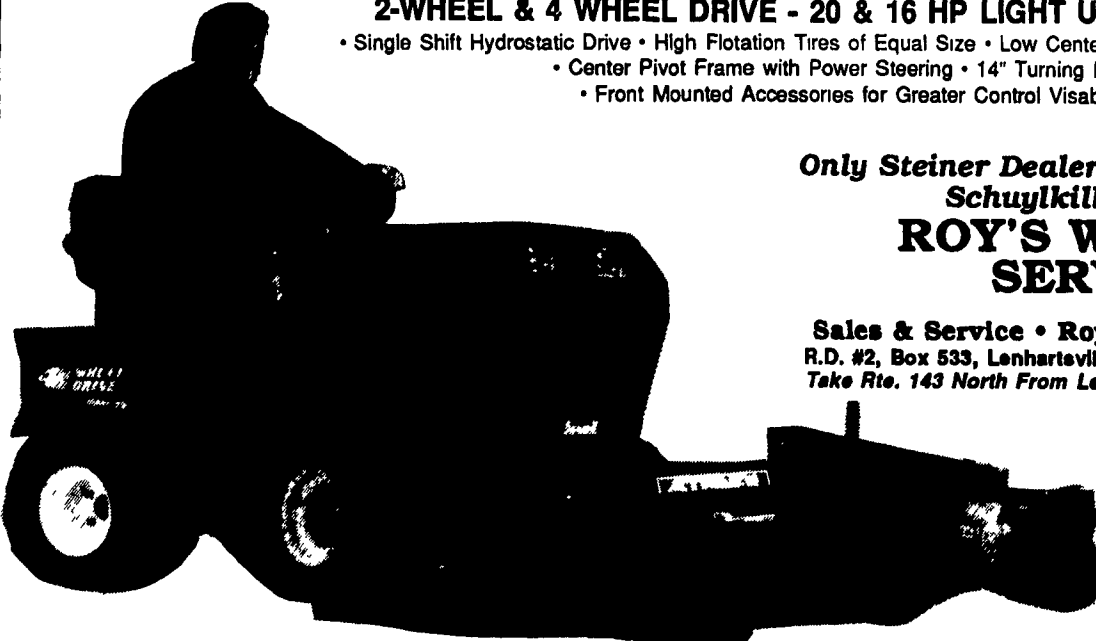
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