



dhia

Scott Williams
Training Coordinator

Call 1-800-DHI-TEST, fax (814) 865-3294
Web site <http://www.dhia.psu.edu>
Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association
DHIA Service Center, Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

QUESTION: When do I start to chop corn silage under drought conditions?

ANSWER: This is not a question that is on everyone's mind in Pennsylvania, but while in Franklin and Berks counties, I was asked this many times.

Drought conditions are widespread in some of the heavily populated dairy counties.

Corn that was considered the best for that time of year six weeks ago is now looking like mature, mid-fall corn except for the obvious lack of grain and reduction in size.

The actual answer to the question should be the same as corn silage harvesting in normal years.

Moisture of the chopped whole plant should be the guide as to when harvesting should begin.

Guidelines such as milk content, sugar lines, and others are often associated with maturity levels, but they are still dependent on the moisture level for proper ensiling.

Normal years will see most measures of corn maturity following moisture levels. Areas that are suffering most from this year's drought will not be able to judge by corn grain maturity levels.

Places that have some grain may not be able to wait until it gets to dent stage for fear that moisture needed for ensiling will be gone.

Proper moisture for corn silage is somewhere between 63 and 68 percent.

What is important to remember is that the presence of carbohydrates that comes mostly from the grain actually aids in the fermentation process.

Depending on the level of grain development, we may need to use extra precaution to aid in the fermentation process.

If we were successful with corn silage in the past down to 58 and 60 percent moisture, this may not be the year to try to repeat it.

We may also want to consider using some additives to aid fermentation even though they may not have been needed in the past.

Some of the farms that I visited had already checked moisture and it was down to 68 percent. They are readying themselves for harvest now.


Special attention should be paid to standards concerning the length of cut. The corn will be different enough that the knife setting should be evaluated so the particle size is not too small.

We may need to start a bit higher

Dairyman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOC

PA DHIA
Consulting
Dairyman



than normal moisture levels because harvest time will be longer in many cases because more acres will be needed for the same tonnage.

These extra acres needed for our total tons will have to be hauled from farther away. Some thought about our current ability to get the job done in the normal amount of time may warrant considering extra labor for the harvest season.

We may want to choose a custom harvester with bigger equipment in order to get the crop in on time.

As a last thought, I would like to mention that those who are under these conditions need to plan now for grain needs.

Not only will you need to purchase more grain than you did in the past, but you will probably need to feed more grain per head.

This is due to the fact that the corn silage that is made will in many cases be more like grass silage.

Measures of energy content will most certainly be lowered.

Good corn silage with energy content of 65 mcal or higher may only top out at 50 mcal.

This will present new challenges in feeding our cows. I suggest working out some projected diets using estimates of what we might expect for feed quality and do some planning now to meet the needs of what is sure to be a challenging year.

Innovative Farming

(Continued from Page A30)

and October by using forage crops.

"My whole way of farming really changes my work load," he said. "I kind of get a vacation."

Along with time to spare, Louis finds his grazing practices give the cows more time to graze as well. "This spring I planted a small amount of rye in standing sod and had 4 to 5 inches up before the grass shown through," he said. "I was grazing on that rye a week earlier than on the grass. We had the cows out grazing around the middle of April, when most farmers are never out before May."

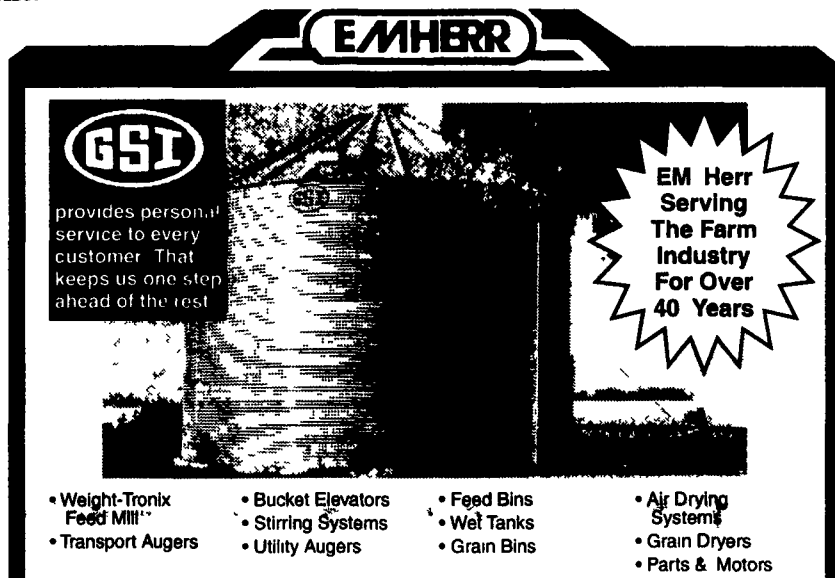
In an effort to promote grazing, Louis will use the gathering to allow other farmers to visit his 20 acres of corn, planted for grazing, an eight-acre pasture of turnips, and his low-cost swing-over milking parlor.

"A lot of people have done a

good job starting off with a grazing program, but they haven't continued with it," he said. "I encourage my fellow farmers to visit with me on the 27th to hear about my experiences. Hopefully, I will have ideas that will work for other grazers."

Incorporating unique farming techniques is nothing new for the Hawley family. They began intensive grazing 10 years ago and were recognized in 1998 for their grazing practices by the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council, as well as Lancaster Farming. Their farm has also been recognized as a Dairy of Distinction.

Louis is an active board member of the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program and strives to uphold his philosophy of low-cost farming. For more information, or to register for the open house, call Louis Hawley at (717) 278-2972.



EMHERR

GSI provides personal service to every customer. That keeps us one step ahead of the rest.

EM Herr Serving The Farm Industry For Over 40 Years

- Weight-Tronix Feed Mill
- Bucket Elevators
- Feed Bins
- Air Drying System
- Transport Augers
- Stirring Systems
- Wet Tanks
- Grain Dryers
- Grain Bins
- Parts & Motors

Lancaster Farming

Check Our Web Site

www.lancasterfarming.com



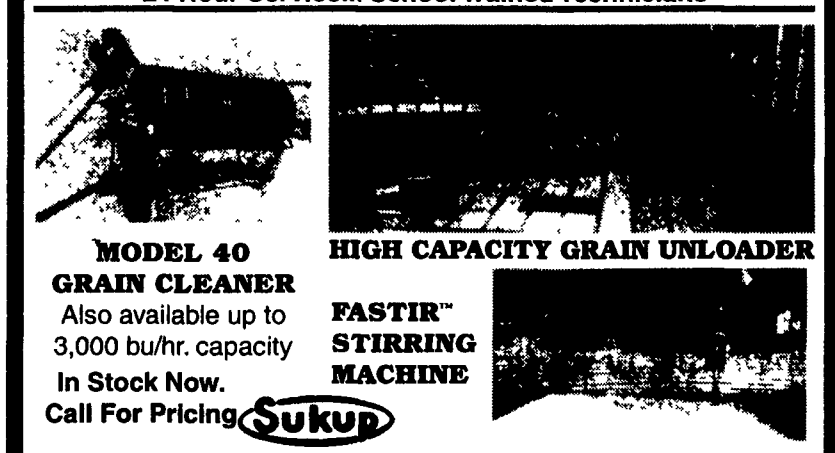
GSI AIRSTREAM

AUTOMATIC BATCH OR CONTINUOUS FLOW GRAIN DRYERS

The Competitive Edge "Smart system" eliminates guesswork

Grain Dryer On Display at Ag Progress

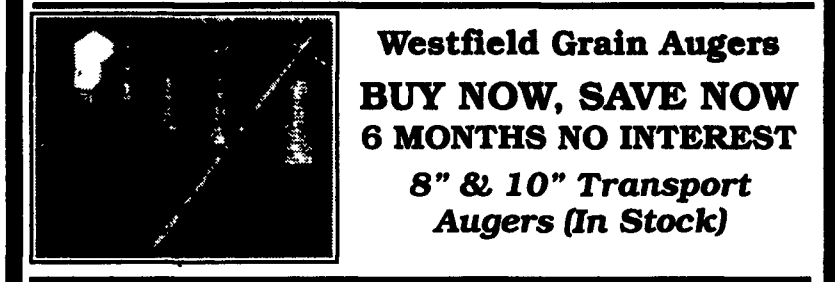
Call Us For Your Grain Dryer Service Work - 24 Hour Service... School Trained Technicians



MODEL 40 GRAIN CLEANER
Also available up to 3,000 bu/hr. capacity
In Stock Now.
Call For Pricing **Sukup**

HIGH CAPACITY GRAIN UNLOADER

FASTIR™ STIRRING MACHINE



Westfield Grain Augers

BUY NOW, SAVE NOW

6 MONTHS NO INTEREST

8" & 10" Transport Augers (In Stock)

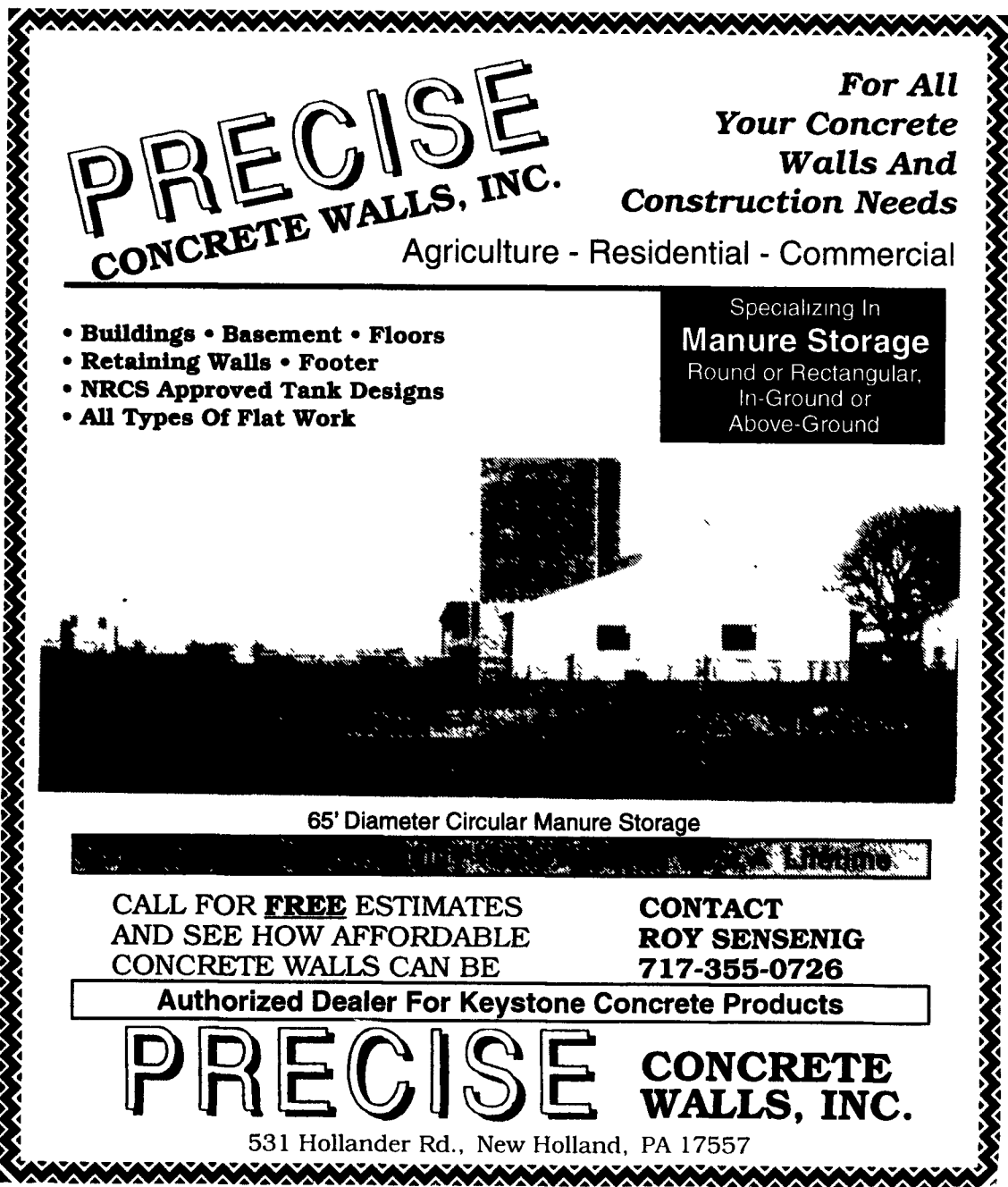
★Full Line Parts Dept.★
★Sell, Service & Install★

EMHERR EQUIPMENT, INC. FARM & HOME CENTER

Rt. 272 South
14 Herrville Road
Willow Street, PA 17584
Ph. 717-464-3321 or
Toll Free 800-732-0053

Mon.-Fri. 6:30 am to 8 pm
Sat. 7:30 am to 6 pm
Sun. Closed

ACE Hardware
UPS Shipping Point
8/21



PRECISE CONCRETE WALLS, INC.

For All Your Concrete Walls And Construction Needs

Agriculture - Residential - Commercial

Specializing In **Manure Storage**
Round or Rectangular,
In-Ground or Above-Ground

65' Diameter Circular Manure Storage

CALL FOR **FREE ESTIMATES** AND SEE HOW AFFORDABLE CONCRETE WALLS CAN BE

CONTACT ROY SENSENIG 717-355-0726

Authorized Dealer For Keystone Concrete Products

PRECISE CONCRETE WALLS, INC.

531 Hollander Rd., New Holland, PA 17557