

Crop Storage Institute Sponsors Meeting

JAYNE SEBRIGHT
Lancaster Farming Staff
MIDDLETOWN (Dauphin Co.) — Farmers, extension agents, and industry professionals met in Middletown on Thursday to discuss "Profitable Storage For Your Farm." The Crop Storage Institute sponsored the meeting and provided lunch for all attendees.

The featured speaker was Tobina Schmidt, a graduate stu-

dent from Kansas State University, which is internationally renowned for its silage research. Schmidt discussed "the good, bad, and the ugly" about the various silage storage systems.

For upright silos, Tobina highlighted the good aspects, which included less than eight percent spoilage and low land requirement. The bad aspects included slow filling time, high initial costs, and slow unloading

time. Effluent burns and dangerous fumes were the ugly aspects of upright silos.

The good aspects of silage bags included low cost, temporary nature, variable site storage, and less than 15 percent spoilage in good situations. Annual costs, plastic tears, plastic disposal, and contractor dependability were listed as the bad aspects of the bags. Poor packing density, mold, air infiltration, and spoilage as high as 50 percent were listed as the "ugly."

Good aspects of horizontal silos, such as trenches and bunkers, were low initial costs, high volume, and fast unloading time. The bad aspects of horizontal silos included silo contamination, side spoilage, effluent run-off, large exposed surface, and crucial packing density. The ugly aspect is that it must be covered.

Schmidt also reviewed a study comparing animals fed normal silage and animals fed a mixture of normal silage and spoiled silage. The Kansas State study showed that dry matter intake significantly decreases with greater percentages of spoiled silage in the ration.

"We recommend that people put top spoilage in a pile and do not feed it," said Schmidt.

Schmidt said, while many farmers think the only part of silage that is spoiled is the visible layer of spoilage, there is an additional layer of silage that has turned acidic.

"If there is seven inches of visible spoilage, there is more than likely another 15 inches that has turned acidic," said Schmidt.

Schmidt encouraged farmers to log on to Kansas State's new web site, www.oznet.ksu.edu/silage. The web site is filled with information and research regarding proper silage storage.

Schmidt also highlighted Kansas State's new list serve, Silage-L, which has 245 members, including farmers, industry people, and University researchers. Farmers can ask questions about their silage harvesting and storage methods through the list serve. The service is free from Kansas State. To sign up for the

list serve, email listserv@ksu.edu and type in the body of your email, Sub Silage-L and your name.

Jason VanGilder, who farms with his father, uncle, and brother on DoVan Farms in Somerset County, spoke about his new 132 feet by 30 feet concrete silo. DoVan Farms has the largest vertical storage system in North America. They milk 250 cows and use a TMR mixer truck to feed their cows.

The new silo is built with a drive through feeding system underneath of it. Conveyors from other silos also go into the feeding room.

According to VanGilder, they can unload a 18-foot box wagon into the new silo in 10 minutes. They can unload a ton a minute from the silo into the mixer truck.

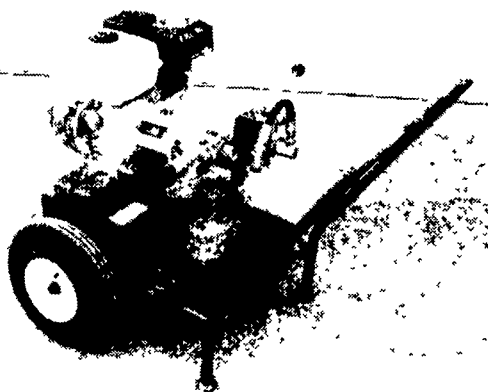
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Speakers at Thursday's Profitable Feed Storage For Your Farm meeting included (from left) Jason VanGilder, a Somerset Co. dairy farmer; Drew Freeman, from the Crop Storage Institute; and Tobina Schmidt, graduate student from Kansas State University.

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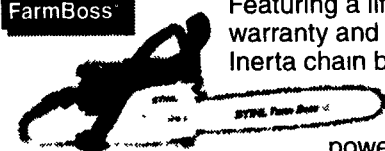
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