

Crop Storage Institute Sponsors Meeting

(Continued from Page A26)

"When we looked at the economics of building the new silo, we looked past the initial cost and at long-term cost for the silo," said VanGilder.

"We have significantly less spoilage with the upright silo than we would have with a bunker silo. With the new equipment and silo, we can fill and unload the silo as quickly as we could a bunker. And we have less labor invested."

Drew Freeman from the Crop Storage Institute concluded the meeting with a discussion on vertical storage systems and a comparison of bunker storage systems.

"For decades, tower silos were

the only way to feed silage," said Freeman. "But then the industry switched to horizontal silos because of greater speed in filling and feeding time."

"The industry has reacted to farmers' desire for speed and efficiency, making the silos bigger and equipment better," said Freeman.

When most farmers expand, they look at the initial cost of investment when they determine what feed storage system to use. When looking at initial costs, the horizontal silos are the lower costing systems, comparing a 5,000-ton vertical storage system at \$160,000 and a 5,000-ton horizontal storage system at \$85,900.

However, according to Freeman, a farmer should consider the additional labor, tractor, and spoilage costs associated with bunker silos when looking at the long-term investment of feed storage systems.

Freeman's research showed that the twenty year investment and operating cost of a 5,000-ton vertical storage system averaged \$2.12 per ton, while a horizontal system with the same capacity

cost \$3.51 per ton, not including spoilage losses.

His research also showed on average 10 percent more loss with a horizontal silo than with a vertical silo. "For every one percent of feed lost in storage, it will cost the farmer \$6 more per cow per year," said Freeman.

While Freeman's research showed that upright silos can be more cost effective, he did concede that horizontal silos can

work if they're well-managed. The keys to well-managed horizontal silos are the packing, density, and good cover. Freeman shared research that showed density and packing quality significantly impacts forage quality.

More information about the Crop Storage Institute can be found on their web site, www.cropstorage.com.

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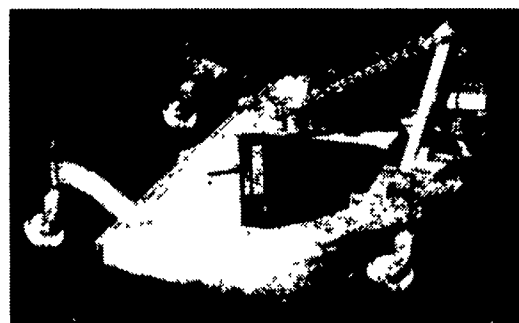
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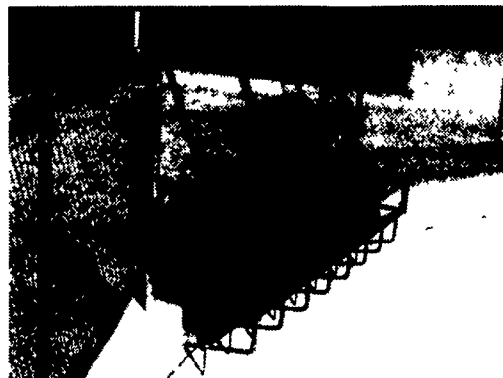
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