

❖ PASTURE PONDERINGS ❖

(Continued from Page 14)

good forage management, you may need to increase paddock size or decrease the grazing period.

A good rule of thumb is to have a

three-inch stubble after grazing for most cool season grasses. This generally allows more leaf area to remain, does not affect carbohydrate reserves, and the forages can

recover much faster. If your stubble heights are shorter than that, regrowth will be slower and you should lengthen your rest periods.

Remember that a quick way to kill off desirable forage species is to continually overgraze and allow the grazing of regrowth without a proper rest period for recovery.

A good way of managing a grazing system is to move your livestock through the system according to the forage growth. I have seen systems operated and managed according to a calendar. The problem with this method is that the stage of the forage growth is never considered and generally results in overgrazing or undergrazing and not effectively utilizing what forages we offer to the livestock. In this system, we have a set schedule and, regardless of the stage of the forage growth on a certain day, they will be in a certain paddock.

It doesn't take rocket science to realize that you could easily get into trouble by following this type of system. We need to have flexibility in a grazing system to have it work properly. This flexibility needs to be not only in the rotation scheme, but also with the physical parts of the system, such as the fencing and watering systems.

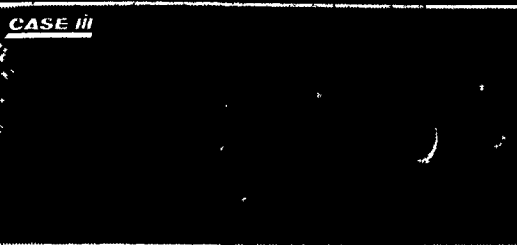
A good way to take a look at systems to see how you can add flexibility to your grazing program is to attend pasture walks and field days to see how other graziers are doing it. This gives you an opportunity to get answers to many questions you may have or to observe how others have solved a particular problem. Then you could adapt their ideas into your system.

It also affords you an opportunity to find out things that do not work as well and prevents you from making a similar mistake. These informal outings are an excellent way for graziers to learn from each other. There is a listing of upcoming field days and pasture walks in this section of *Lancaster Farming*.

A field day I want to draw your attention to is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Grazing/Forage Lands Conservation Coalition. This is the coalition that I discussed with you in my January ponderings. They have planned a field day and pasture walk on August 23, 2000 on a Snyder County dairy farm. The hosts for this event will be Tim and Denise Wetzel. Just because it is a dairy farm, do not feel that because

(Turn to Page 16)

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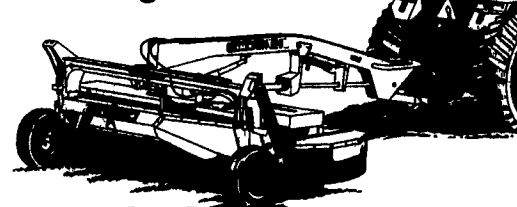
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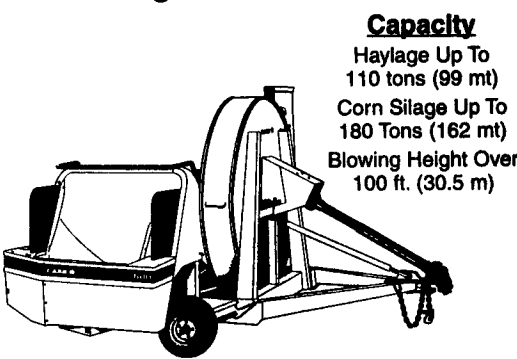
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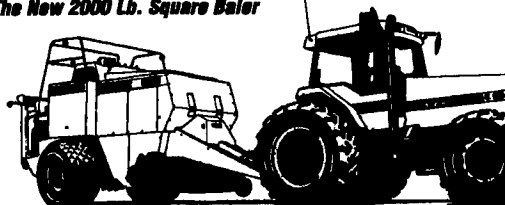


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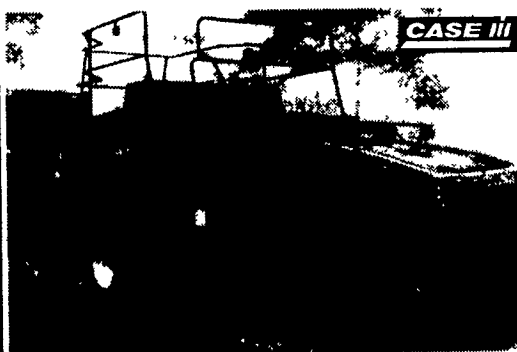
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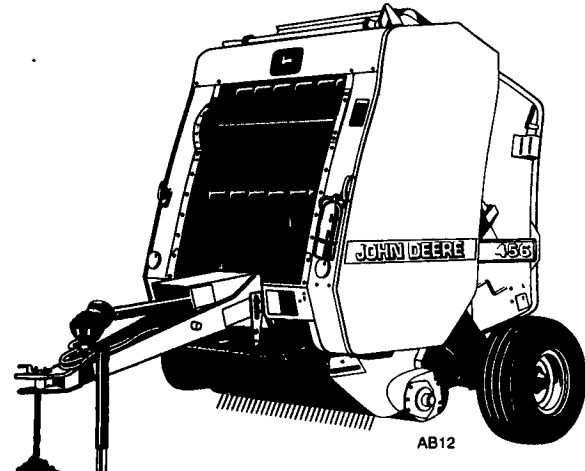
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