

## Conference Honors Successful Producers

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and the manure can be applied right in the pastures.

The farm uses a combination of bale wagons, ring feeders, and unwrapped bales for supplemental feeding.

"Lanes and fencing are the most important things you can do in grazing," he said. But you only have a 2-3 day "window of opportunity."

And timing the fertilization and "interrelationships with the species you choose" can be critical, Opitz noted.

Opitz noted that producers

must be completely committed to using pasture in their operations or it simply won't work. "If you don't want to, don't do it — you'll fail," he said. "If you commit to it and do your homework, it will work."

Some of the challenges Opitz has faced include farming on shallow, shale soils; the labor and mental intensity of managing the grazing operation; seasonal calving program challenges; and working as a partnership.

Opitz noted that he works on the enterprise with the family.

He mentioned his son, Mark, and said, "I'm pretty good at buying the cow, and he's pretty good at keeping the wheels on."

Producers who want to adopt

grazing can apply it to any size herd. The keys are:

- Ensure the grass is grazed at the correct height, and ensure root reserves are good and maintained until winter dormancy.

- Ensure there is a clover component in the grass mixtures.

- Nitrogen must be applied to

the pastures annually, in the late summer or early fall, at minimum. Opitz uses about 40-60 units per acre of mostly urea, along with some ammonium sulfate.

Caring for cattle during times of drought and intense summertime heat is critical. Opitz

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Ray Smith, scientist, VPI, and producer Charlie Opitz spoke Wednesday morning at the Pennsylvania Grazing and Forage Conference.



Award winners at the banquet included, from left, Robert Stout, research technician at Penn State, accepting for James and Barbara Warburton, Outstanding Pasture Producer Award; Robert Oswald, Forage/Conservation Farmer Award; and John Comerford, Research/Extension/Teaching Award.

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Jeff Bogus, Bovine One, Nu-Health

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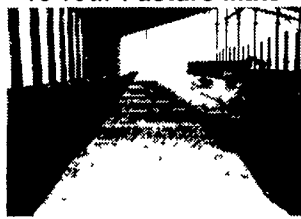


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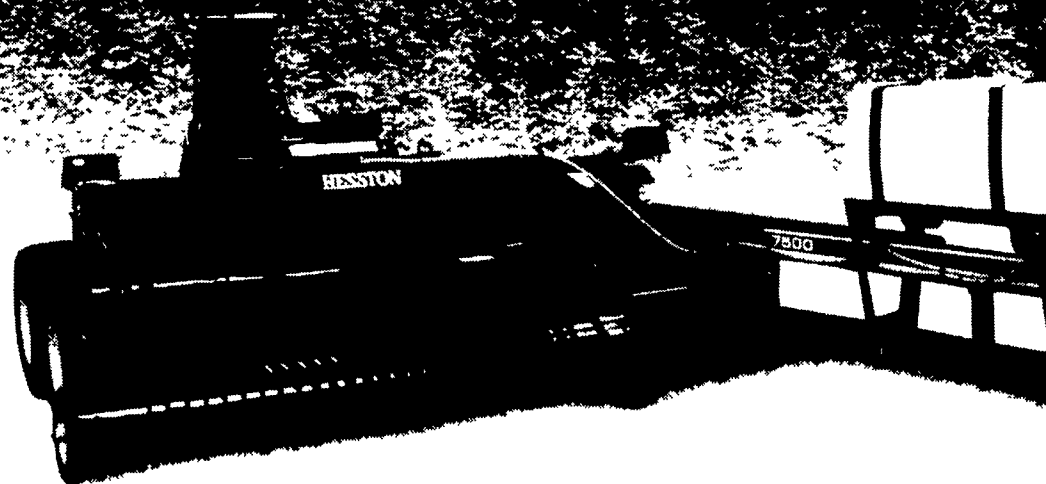
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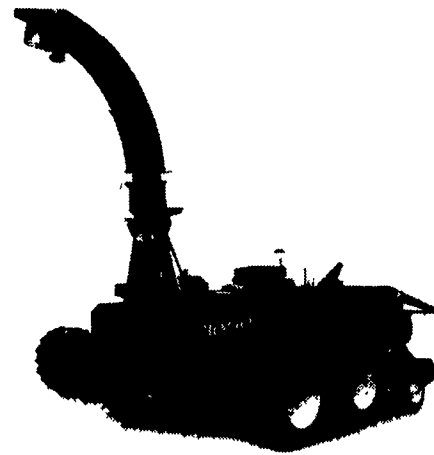
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