

Penn State Cooperative Extension Capitol Region Dairy Team

MANAGING STALK ROT AND CORN SILAGE QUALITY Del Voight Regional Agronomic Agent Penn State

Driving around the region, I pass many fields that are severely drought-stricken, and taller corn is beginning to lodge.

There are a host of reasons why corn lodges and, depending on the reason, may impact not only the quality but the health of the crop, and mycotoxins in rations may result.

Many dairy farms experience the call from the nutritionist that mycotoxin levels are high. What you need to do is get around the infected material in the silo so you have access to clean silage elsewhere in the silo. Few track-back the infected crop to where it originated in the field. In many cases it can be traced to a severely infected stalk or ear rot section of a field.

This is not enough, however. The area in the field needs to be identified and a plan must be put into place and followed up on. The first step in successful management of stalk rot is to recognize that it is manageable. Second, growers need to plan in winter to combat stalk rot. Finally, growers need to follow the plan of attack.

Stalks may lodge because of insect damage, genetics of the hybrid, and more likely disease brought on by many factors of

importance, such as soil potassium levels. A trained eye will determine which is responsible. In all cases where stalks lodge and problems occur, a soil test from the area in question, compared with an area that shows no signs, may prove fruitful in diagnosis.

If growers have problems in diagnosis, coordinate a visit with an extension agent or one of the many certified crop advisers. This is usually done after the fact and is useless for this year's crop but will allow you to change things for next year. Let's plan the attack now.

The first attack will be hybrid selection. An old extension proverb is to never plant the same hybrid in the same field next year. Sound simple? Follow it. I have been in many fields where this simple message is ignored and disaster occurred in the field.

Second, choose hybrids that not only maintain yield but have high resistance to stalk rot. I am looking at a seed catalog now and can pick three for my farm that have very high resistance to stalk rot pathogens. At winter meetings, ask the dealers for their top picks for stalk rot resistance (anthracnose is the major one rated) in mind.

One final note: some cooperative research I am involved in suggests Bt corn can reduce the incidence of disease invasion through keeping European corn borer from eating into the stalk. Be sure that is in the balance of

your hybrid decision.

With soil test in hand, get to the plant food dealer and correct any deficiencies in nutrients, putting the highest priority on potassium. I have several personal experiences where very low potassium levels caused stalk rot in the field and this was compared to areas of the field with no stalk rot with adequate potassium. It is also well documented in the literature.

Third, avoid the "sins" of soil management. If the soil is wet, stay off it, especially with the planter! It is easy for me to say that, and I am aware of the farmer's plight. But when soils are wet, sidewall compaction at planting can cause deficiencies in nutrients and eventually stress the plant and allow it to become susceptible to stalk rot pathogens as well as many other problems.

If you do decide to "sin," be sure your planter is retrofitted with finger-type closing wheels to break up the smearing action of the double disc openers. It makes no sense to correct a potassium deficiency and then not allow the roots to absorb it because of compaction. (I could talk more about compaction at a later date, because we are finding some interesting results on dairy farms.)

Plant early to allow the plants time to generate roots that will harvest deep water zones. Avoid drought stress and subsequent invasion by stalk rot pathogens. This year is a great example of that. In many cases, early planted corn is lower yielding this year but at least will yield. Mid- and late-planted corn are hardest hit by the drought. In most cases, a call to the local extension agent will provide you with research-based parameters of what is early mid- and late-season for your area. Then strive to have 90 percent of corn planted on the early side of the ideal planting date.

Now that you have properly selected a hybrid, planted the hybrid early, corrected potassium deficiencies (within fields), and alleviated compaction, it's time to begin harvesting disease-free corn silage that will avoid that call from the nutritionist.

Trust Kicks Off Harvest Appeal

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Lancaster Farmland Trust officials will celebrate an important milestone when they officially kick off their annual funding campaign, Harvest Appeal 2002, at a reception to honor J. Freeland Chryst, honorary campaign chair.

In late August, the Trust helped Cliff and Grace Stirba of Paradise Township preserve their 67-acre farm — the 150th farm that Lancaster Farmland Trust has preserved since 1988.

A reception is scheduled Tuesday, Sept. 10, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the historic Lancaster Trust Building lobby on North Market Street.

The Trust preserved a record number of farms in 2001, and interest from farmers remains high. "The timing of this campaign couldn't be better, because it is essential that we reach our goal of \$200,000 by year's end so that we can provide assistance to a growing number of farm families who want to preserve their land," said Ted Bowers, Trust board vice chair. Funds raised during the campaign cover operating costs for the organization. Bowers

said, "Jay Chryst's reputation in local business and philanthropic circles will have a tremendous impact on our ability to help more farm families preserve their land."

J. Freeland Chryst is the chairman and founder of the Jay Group, a full service marketing support and sales promotion company serving Fortune 1000 companies around the world. The company recently opened their fifth local plant and employs more than 300. The Jay Group will be honored on Sept. 27 at Central Penn Business Journal's Top 50 Fastest Growing Companies awards breakfast and ceremony in Harrisburg.

Chryst is native to Lancaster County and has demonstrated a commitment to the community through service to numerous local nonprofit organizations. From 1993 to 1998, he chaired Millersville University's highly successful \$27 million capital campaign. In a recent interview, Chryst noted that the "preservation of Lancaster County's farmland extends the quality of all our lives."

Custom Cattle Feeding Workshop Upcoming

MIDDLETOWN (Dauphin Co.) — The Blueprint for Success Program will hold its first Custom Feeding workshop of the fall season Sept. 16. The workshop will be conducted at the Lancaster County Extension office at 7 p.m.

The purpose of this workshop is to assist cattle feeders who may be interested in custom feeding. The workshop will provide information and resources that enable producers to make decisions in their own feeding operations. Topics for the September workshop include:

- Making the most of limited supplies in a drought stressed year.
 - Sample contracts and close-outs.
 - Promotion and advertisement of your custom feeding operation.
- Additional workshops will be conducted in October and November with more details to follow. For more information on the September workshop, or future workshops, please contact Scott Wright at the Pennsylvania Beef Council office at (717) 939-7000.

PMMB Announces Fluid Milk Price For August

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board (PMMB) announced the prices to be paid to Pennsylvania dairy farmers for August class I milk (beverage) as an average of \$14.53 in the west-

wealth. These prices include the over-order premium of \$1.65 per one hundred pounds of milk.

Farmers, whose milk production is pooled under a federal order, will receive a marketwide blend price based upon the value

of all classes of milk. However, the blend price received will vary as the component composition of a farmer's milk differs from the established benchmarks.

ern areas of the commonwealth, and an average of \$15.02 in the central and eastern areas of the common-

**3 Compartment
Tobacco Bale
Boxes**
Complete with air
cylinder or
manual press
Isaac B. Stoltzfus
1718 Valley Rd.
Christiana PA
17509
(Former location
of Valley Road
Wagon Shop)

YODER'S Windmill Service

Specializing in new & used
windmill sales & service

CALL FOR PRICING
717/532-4591

Send written inquiries to
2006 Bedford Road
Shippensburg, PA 17257

BUCK
MOTORSPORTS PARK

**HIGH HORSEPOWER
FAMILY FUN & EXCITEMENT
Saturday, September 14th**

**THE BUCK PULL-OFF
THE EAST COAST SERIES FINALS**

JASPER ENGINES & TRANSMISSIONS PULLING SERIES

Hot Rod
4WD Trucks

Smoker Series Super
Stock Tractors

4000 Horsepower
Modified Tractors

Wheelstanding
2WD Trucks

**The Top Pullers - Pennsylvania, Maryland,
Virginia, New York**

**5 - BIG CLASSES OF GROUND POUNDING ACTION!
THE LAST TRUCK & TRACTOR PULL
OF THE 2002 SEASON!**

(Sponsored by Lancaster Ford Tractor & Equipment)

Adults \$12.00
Children 5-12 \$6.00
Children Under 5 • FREE

**GATES OPEN AT 5:00
EVENT STARTS
AT 7:00 SHARP**

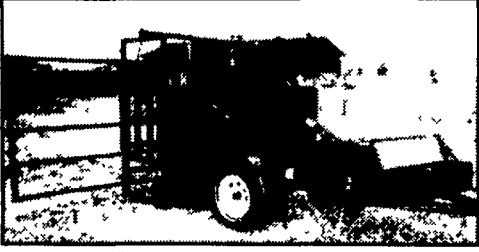

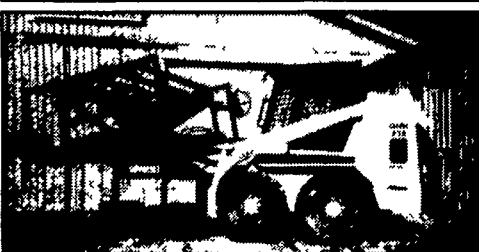
For More Info Call The Office At
(717) 859-4244
or track at
(717) 284-2139
1-800-344-7855
www.buckmotorsports.com

**BUCK
MOTORSPORTS PARK** 10 miles S. of Lancaster on Rt. 272

SEE YOU AT THE BUCK!

**HEAVY DUTY
HOOF TRIMMING TABLES**

Endorsed by the International Hoof Trimming School of Wisconsin

- 12-year building experience in the tables design
- 2"x2" tube frame chute
- chute measures 75"x28"x75" high
- 4" casters for cradle fold-up
- 2 10-inch lift belts
- 3500 lb. axle with or without brakes
- two hydraulic cylinders for extra stability
- tool box for D.C. pump and battery protection
- manure grate to keep work area clean
- fold away side gate
- removable head board
- 45 min. video from International Hoof Trimming School of Canada

FOUR MODELS TO CHOOSE
1. PORTABLE 2. STATIONARY 3. 3-POINT HITCH
4. SKID STEER MOUNT

BERKELMAN'S WELDING
RR 7, AYLMEER, ONTARIO, CANADA N5H 2R6
(519) 765-4230 1-877-230-9993
Web Page: www.berkelswelding.on.ca