

David Fink

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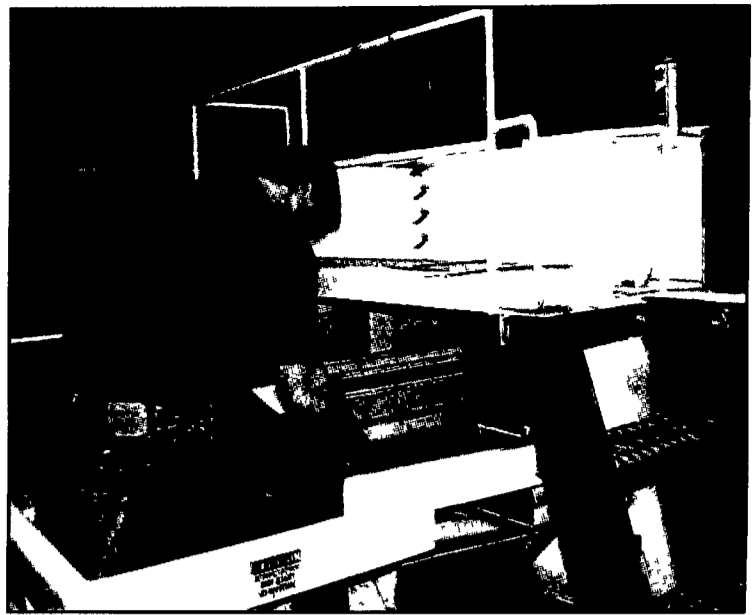
Fink increased his hay-growing acreage from 900 acres last year to about 1,100 acres this season. Handling the increased volume has been a breeze with the new double-compressor, according to Fink. He noted significant labor savings over his previous double-compressor.

"If we wouldn't have had it, we would have worked like crazy," he said.

His older machine operates on the same basic principle as the new one, but lacks the ability to handle large square bales unless they are first sliced in half in a separate process. With the new machine, the large bales (normally 3- X 3- X 8-foot) are fed directly into the processor.

The new double-compressor features a number of other improvements, including a precision scales for monitoring bale sizes.

The machine requires two workers: one to operate the controls, and another to load and unload.



Local mechanic Jim Mackey works on adapting the processor's scales unit.

The double-compressor operates on a 260-horsepower diesel engine which provides the power to compress hay from a density of about 10 pounds per square foot (psf) to about 20 psf.

Fink paid \$440,000 for the machine. He expects it to pay for itself in five to seven years.

Smaller double compressors are also available, he said.

In offering the Oct. 18 field day, Fink said he is targeting "not only hay producers, but 'wannabe' hay producers."

Beside hay compressing demonstrations, the event will feature a number of speakers, including:

- Donna Foulk, Rutgers University, on the hay needs of horses;
- Dr. Ann Swanker, Penn State equine specialist, on horse nutrition;
- Les Vough, University of Maryland Extension forage specialist, on harvesting hay;
- Stan Steffen, Oregon hay producer, processor, and exporter; and
- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture representative.

Equipment and forage preservative representatives will also be on hand. Equipment displays will include a hay macerator and super-conditioner rolls.

For more information or to register for the field day, contact Fink at (610) 767-2409.

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