

Making the Most of Corn Crops

It is one thing to raise a good crop of corn and quite another to utilize it so that one gets the most feeding value from it. From experience, I am convinced that the silo is one of the most economical and satisfactory adjuncts to livestock farming that is to be had. Silage is far superior to stover or cornstalks for feeding purposes and has many advantages over the other methods of corn harvesting. I have been told in a few instances that it did not pay to make corn less silage and that the silo was a useless contribution. I have seen silos standing idle that should have been doing valuable service and saving money for their owners—all this has occurred through the improper making and use of the silage.

The Best Silage.

When farmers first begin to use the silo, they were advised that the corn should be put in very green. This resulted and still results in a very sour silage which causes a severe diarrhea and this in turn brings on other ailments. I have heard many diseases laid at the door of the silo. Many of them have been taken up again, but we still hear claims that silage-fed cows are more susceptible to tuberculosis, that silage causes abortion and a dozen other dangerous diseases.

Practical results show that corn must not be too green to make the best silage. It has been recommended for cutting all the way from the tasseling stage to the time when the stalks are ripe and mature. Dairymen and stockmen who have had a great deal of experience say that corn nearly mature makes the most palatable and satisfactory silage. Just after the kernels are glazed over and commence to harden, all of the plant food is stored in the ear; all that is left to do is for the moisture to evaporate. "When corn is about right for hand cutting, it is also about right for silage," is the latest advice. The only difference between the grain corn and the silage corn is that in the one the moisture is evaporated out of it, while in the other, we want the moisture to remain—enough to moisten the mass thoroughly when placed in the silo.

In some sections of the state the frost gets into the corn field before the corn harvester does. Should this occur, the corn harvester should be busy in the field the next day after Jack Frost has been busy at night. If the frosted corn is allowed to stand a week or 10 days, it becomes dry, weathers and makes an unpalatable silage, at the best. If the corn is so dry that there is not enough moisture to saturate the mass, water should be added through the blower while the corn is being cut up. This may be added by a hose attached to a tank or elevated barrel. It is claimed that some of the best silage ever fed at the Indiana station was made from corn upon which most of the leaves were dry and all the water an inch hose would carry was run into the blower constantly during the filling.

Filling the Silo.

The greatest cost of the silage is in the initial investment required to buy a silo, corn binder, cutter, distributor, engine, etc., but we must bear in mind that this investment is not for a single year but is scattered over a great many years, if the materials are handled carefully. The investment in all of these, if one man is to own and operate them, is immense. This is impractical unless one has a large acreage to put up. Professor Warren, of Cornell, found in his investigations that the average New York farm is too highly capitalized with machinery—in other words, the valuation of the machinery on the average farm is higher than it should be in proportion to the size and value of the land.

It is almost a necessity that a few farmers co-operate in their silo filling. This reduces the cost per ton of the silage after it is made. In response to a query sent out by the Missouri Experiment Station, over 200 farmers replied, stating that their silage cost them from 23½ cents to \$1.65 per ton, the average being about 60 cents a ton. This is much cheaper than the corn could have been harvested by any other method. The corn binder is quite an essential piece of machinery for harvesting the corn crop. If the crop is good and the hauling distance not too great, at least one day's supply should be cut before the silo is to be filled. Then, while the work is progressing, a man keeps cutting and this keeps the corn green all the time and none dries out. In many localities, an engine from a local threshing outfit may be hired for from \$8 to \$10

per day, the one whose silo is being filled to furnish the coal and board the men.

Economy View.

There is another point in connection with filling the silo which has some bearing upon the economy of filling, i. e., that of feeding. A number of Nebraska farmers working together, kept accurate accounts of the amount of silage put through by various feeders and found that it was more profitable to hire a man to do all the feeding than to have a new man on the job each day. They found that an experienced feeder would put through one-third more fodder in a day than was put through when a different man was on each job. This makes quite a saving when one is handling from seven to 10 men, so they hire a feeder and pay him 25 cents an hour.

A point where so many amateur silo owners make a mistake is in taking the ears from the stalks. It has been demonstrated that better results are gotten where the whole corn silage is fed than where just the leaves and stalks are put into the silo and the grain used separately.

The most particular details of silo filling is to have the cut material well distributed around inside the silo. Put at least two good men inside, and three are better. They should keep the corn well distributed, have the center a little higher than the outside and keep tramping. This is the all-important part. Each air space that is left will be surrounded by moldy silage and so each air space that is crowded out will give just that much more edible silage.

After the silo has been filled, some precautions are usually taken to keep the top from spoiling. Some put wet straw through the cutter until it is a foot or more deep on top of the silage; others pack the top well and then sow oats on thickly. These soon sprout and the root growth quite effectually excludes the air. Others put on several inches of sawdust, while still others dump on a barrel of salt, but the latest idea of shutting out the air from the top of the silo is to run a half-inch layer of hot pitch over the surface. This excludes the air and may be broken up and laid aside for use next year when the silo is refilled.

Feeding Silage.

How, when, and to what animals silage should be fed, are much mooted questions. To answer them fully would require volumes. I have seen good, sweet silage fed to all classes of farm stock with no ill results attending. I have heard speakers say that silage should never be fed to horses or animals with but a single stomach, but I have seen horses come out in the Spring in fine condition when they were wintering almost exclusively on corn silage. All farm animals will eat it. It is a fairly good substitute for green feed for chickens, hogs, and dairymen cannot get along without it. Green and excessively sour silage must be fed pretty carefully if no harm is to result, but silage made of corn that is properly matured is palatable and safe feed for all kinds of stock.

The process of fermentation which takes place in the silo changes some of the unavailable materials in the stalk and ears to available animal food. No chemist has as yet been able to fully explain this, but it has been shown to be true and hence it lessens the food value of the corn crop to take the ears off and feed them separately.

Finally, never feed moldy or frozen silage. Moldy silage is sometimes poisonous and should be thrown where stock cannot get it. Frozen silage is all right after it thaws out, but often causes a severe diarrhea if fed in the frozen state.—I. J. Mathews.

About the Farm.

We have found that an important item to remember in sheep raising is to see that the sheep are provided clean quarters, clean feed and good pasture. The sheep is a particular animal.

Of course you have a flower garden. Then pick the blooms frequently. Have a bunch of flowers always on the dinner table, in the living-room, and in the hall.

"Drought is evaporation out-stripping rainfall." Therefore, drought is not a matter that should be left to the weather man alone to control. The farmer by his method of cultivation has some control over evaporation, therefore, also control of drought.

If cockle burrs grow up in the clover or meadow grass, frequent

mowings will keep them under control. Do not let this weed go to seed.

Kerosene oil applied to roosts, nests and cracks or crevices of poultry house walls which are infested with red mites will rid the premises of them. If they have been allowed the right-of-way until thoroughly established, the buildings will need to be gone over thoroughly, and several gallons of oil used. A sprayer such as is used for potato bugs is the best to apply the oil with. Prevention is better than cure.

The Way of a Woman.

The way of a woman is God's own way
Of making a beautiful thing of life;
Of healing the hurt of the toiling day,
Of lifting with love the shadows of strife;
Of reaching our sorrow and care and care
With the inner sweet of her perfect soul;
Of giving us courage to trust and to bear,
Of helping us grow to the life that's whole.

The way of a woman is God's own creed

Of patience and sweetness through all that comes;

The grief and the sorrow, the cross and the deed,

The trumpet's call or the roll of drums;

Of making us better that she is near,

Of keeping us better that she hath borne

The gift of the aching heart and the tear,

The grace of the glory of golden morn.

The way of a woman is God's own law

That unto the lives around her feet

Her love shall lift us to holy awe

And make us better, and true, and sweet;

And make us wiser than merely wise,

And make us stronger than merely strong,

To struggle and strive for the peace that lies

In the rest that floats from the wings of song.

—Baltimore Sun.

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