

Editor's Notebook



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Upright Silos Making A Comeback?

There are certain safety concerns with both upright and bunk silos. But for one Wisconsin dairyman, an upright silo won out over a bunk silo when he started penciling out differences between them as part of his planned expansion.

"I don't think I'll have the feed spoilage in the upright I would have had in a bunk silo. That alone should save me money over time," says Dave Peters, Reedsville, Wis. "Plus, I have to think about labor. A silo with unloader makes it easy for almost anyone to feed the cows when I'm not around."

Peters put up a 30 by 100-ft. cement silo with a J-Star "Big Jim" unloader. He'll use the silo to store haylage for 250 milking cows once expansion is complete. With the top-unloading, center drop system, he'll be able to unload about a ton of feed per minute. It'll be delivered to a TMR mixer with a conveyor under the silo.

In Peters' view, it takes more labor to fill and pack a bunk silo. "When it comes time to unload, I think you have more labor, too," he adds. "Someone has to run the payloader, move tires and remove plastic. Unloading the upright is a matter of pushing a button. I can show anybody how to do that."

"And what about the land needed for the bunk silo? Isn't the land worth something?"

Peters also expects less maintenance with the upright. He'll check the unloader once or twice a year for routine maintenance compared with having to constantly maintain tires and plastic in a bunk silo. (Sevie Kenyon, Farm Progress Publications).

Deer Whistles Don't Work?

There's no solid evidence that "deer whistles" work. The bullet-shaped devices mount on the front bumper and are supposed to produce ultrasonic sounds at speeds of 30 mph or more that deer and other animals hear but not humans. Deer researcher Jay B. McAninch at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources says that deer grazing along roadways are not likely to be influenced by additional highway noises, especially during breeding season when they

become especially bold. Even though many people say they're convinced they work and that they haven't hit a deer since installing the devices, McAninch says only a small percentage of people ever hit a deer and those who do are usually much more careful afterward. That may account for the reduction in further incidents.

Remember The White Buffalo?

Nearly two years ago an all-white female buffalo calf was born on a Janesville, Wis. farm. Life hasn't been the same ever since for Valerie and David Heider. An average of 50 visitors still come to call every day.

The Heiders aren't complaining. "Obviously, we knew



she was different but we were not aware of the Native American legend concerning a white buffalo calf," says Valerie.

From the outset, the calf drew the attention of Native Americans who consider the birth as sacred as the second coming of Christ to Christians. Chance of an all-white buffalo calf are 10 million to 1, experts say, and the couple has been interviewed by national and international media, including a Japanese crew that filmed a documentary on the calf's first birthday.

The Heiders have opened their farm to visitors seven days a week and put up a gift shop to sell photos, cards, T-shirts and jewelry. One corner contains a museum of gifts from some of the more than 70,000 guests from virtually every country in the world who've come to see the calf.

Miracle now weighs about 600 lbs. and has changed from white to blonde, Valerie says. "A lot of people say she'll turn gray; others that she'll turn back to white," she says.

Native Americans believe Miracle - whose birth was predicted more than 600 years ago in a Lakota Sioux legend - will usher in a new era of peace and understanding among people of all races.

A Different Kind Of Precision Farming

After reading many articles on precision farming, I've asked myself: Is this for me? No, not yet is always the answer. I work 500 acres of undulating, misshapen fields with an average field size of about 25 acres. Here's what the phrase "precision farming" means on my farm:

- Fit the correct size of machine to the correct size of tractor. That's efficient and allows me to finish on the correct date.
- Apply the correct amounts of seed, spray and fertilizer with well maintained and calibrated drills and spreaders.
- Harvest the crop and store it with minimal waste and loss.

Before I go out and buy a satellite positioner, I want to be a bit closer to achieving these basic objectives. This is probably a simplistic view but I believe more can be done with calibration and waste management than is currently done. (T.G. Elmhirst, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, England, in a letter to FARMER'S WEEKLY Magazine)

On-the-go yield monitors are generating a lot of hype and enthusiasm, but soil scientists advise against getting too carried away with all those exciting color-coded yield maps. The colors aren't much use unless the monitor is performing well. Proper installation is essential and there are indications that the new sensors may not always work reliably on older style combines. Fluctuating travel speed and field slope can affect accuracy of data collected. Calibration (against weighted yield checks) is important. Last but not least, rapidly improving design and performance mean this year's state-of-the-art monitor could be next year's dino-

saur. Keep in mind that this equipment is new and equipment manufacturers are to some extent still feeling their way. (Country Guide)

Dairy Goats For Pleasure And Profit



Our good friend Dave Thompson, the editor and publisher of Dairy Goat Journal, says he has a suggestion for the many farmers and ranchers around the country looking for a new money-making enterprise: Why not try dairy goats? Dave's company recently published a book called "Dairy Goats For Pleasure and Profit" by Harry Considine, who is a leader in the dairy goat industry and at one time milked more than 500 head himself.

Dave points out that the demand for goat milk has boomed thanks to some unique properties of the milk. It's easy to digest, and it's more nutritious than cow's milk with large amounts of calcium and phosphorus, vitamin A and B-complex, and protein. Cheese is easier to make since the milk has a lower "curd tension" so cream does not separate as easily. Butter made from goat milk is pure white, and Dave says you haven't tasted ice cream until you've tried the goat variety.

Considine's book contains everything you need to know to set up a milking goat herd, including information about breeds, equipment, markets, feeding, health, and more. Sells for \$17.95 plus \$2 shipping and handling. You can also send for a complimentary copy of Dairy Goat Journal, or Dave Thompson's other publication, Sheep!. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dairy Goat Journal, P.O. Box 10, Lake Mills, Wis. 53551.

Estimating Wheat Yields

If you've ever wanted to be able to estimate wheat yields fairly accurately during the growing season, here's how some crop forecasters do it:

1. Measure out 1 ft. of row with a tape measure.
2. Gather up all the heads in that 1-ft. stretch and count them.
3. Count the average number of spikelets per head.
4. Try to estimate the number of seeds each spikelet will fill out.
5. Use all of those figures as follows. Multiply the number of heads per foot by the average number of seeds expected to fill out per spikelet. This will give you the total number of seeds per row-foot. Divide this number by the inches of row width (8, 10 or whatever). Then multiply this figure by 0.48. The number you come up with will be an estimate of your yield per acre in bushels.

As an example, if you see about 20 heads per foot, count an average of 12 spikelets per head, estimate an average of 2 kernels per spikelet and measure 8 in. between rows, then the field will yield about 30 bu. per acre. Jump that estimate to more than 40 bu. if there are 30 heads per foot.

You can't control the length of your life, but you can control its width and depth. You can't control the contour of your countenance, but you can control its expression. You can't control the other fellow's opportunities, but you can seize upon your own and make the best of them. You can't control the weather, but you can control the atmosphere which surrounds you. You can't control the distance that your head will be above the ground, but you can control the contents of that head. You can't control the other fellow's annoying faults, but you can see to it that you yourself do not develop or harbor similar propensities. And you can't control the uncontrollable just because it irritates you or because you worry about it. The only things you can control are the things that depend on you, only you. (Anonymous)

A farmer went into a bank and changed a \$100 bill into 100 \$1 bills. He then proceeded to sell them for 75 cents apiece in front of the bank. When asked what he was doing, he replied, "It ain't much but it sure beats farming."