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HAY-CROP SILAGES

H. R. Searles

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Hay-Crop Silages Will Keep

They Can Be Made in Wet Weather

Molasses or Acid Needed

Feed Like Other Silage

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION DIVISION
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Hay-Crop Silages Will Keep

Alfalfa or sweet clover makes satisfactory silage when properly handled.

More widespread experience on farms, however, is necessary to determine definitely the place of hay-crop silages on Minnesota farms. Silos filled the last few years had varying results. Sudan grass and reed canary made unsatisfactory feed in most cases.

They Can Be Made in Wet Weather

Legume silage can be made when weather is unsatisfactory for haymaking.

The quality of legume silage like any other depends on the quality of the material put into the silo. Coarse, overripe alfalfa or sweet clover makes poor hay and it will also make poor silage.

Individual conditions must determine where and when legume silage is worth a trial.

Legume silage is not so palatable as corn silage.

Alfalfa silage costs more to make than good-quality alfalfa hay and is no higher in feed value.

Sweet clover does not make a good hay but can be made into a very useful feed as silage by the addition of either acid or molasses.

Molasses or Acid Needed

Legumes can be made into fairly good silage without the addition of molasses or acid if the moisture content is exactly right. However, such a method is not practical for if the silage is too wet it will rot and if it is too dry it will mold.

Acid or molasses should be added to insure a good-quality silage. Because molasses is easier to secure and to handle, it is the most practical material to use. Five to 7 gallons of molasses furnish enough sugar to ferment and form the acid needed for preserving the silage. An easy way is to mix 20 gallons of molasses and 20 gallons of water and then run it in with three tons of green material. A barrel may be set on a platform and the mixture run into the blower by gravity. The pipe and hose should be one inch or larger and have two valves, one to regulate the speed of flow and the other to shut off between loads.

The material should be cut fine—to less than one inch.

The crop should be cut when it is at the best stage for hay. Alfalfa should be one-tenth in bloom. Sweet clover should be cut just before bloom.

Alfalfa may be picked up with a loader from the swath. It should be put into the silo at once before it dries out.

Sweet clover will handle more easily if put in bundles with a binder. Because sweet clover stems are large and since it is placed in bundles, more time may be allowed between cutting and hauling than in the case of alfalfa.

The legume silage is about one-fifth heavier than corn silage. Bands should be added to the lower half of the silo to take care of the extra pressure in silos of light construction.

Feed Like Other Silage

Legume silages can be fed with hay and grain the same as corn silage. They are three times as high in protein but no higher in total feed value.

Legume silage should not be used as the only roughage. Although it is very palatable, cows will not eat enough of it to give them as much dry matter as they would eat in the form of good legume hay. Best results are obtained when it is fed along with hay in normal amounts of 25 to 30 pounds a day per cow. Because of its high protein content it makes a better summer pasture supplement than corn silage.

Note: If you have used or are using hay-crop silages, please send your name and address to the Agricultural Extension Division, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn., so a questionnaire can be sent you asking for information needed.

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