

Cattle Victims Of Grass Staggers

GUELPH — While most people welcome the return of green pastures, they may be of some concern to Ontario's cattle producers. Cattle could become victims of a deficiency ailment known as grass tetany or grass staggers, says Prof. Tom Lane, Department of Soil Science, University of Guelph.

Grass tetany is the result of a diet deficiency of magnesium in susceptible animals. Under

"susceptible" Professor Lane includes cows which have just calved or are in their lactation cycle. Additional factors such as cold, wet or windy weather when the cows are turned out to spring pasture can also be a contributing factor.

Season and climate influence the level of magnesium in plants. Lush, early spring pasture contains less magnesium than mature forage sampled in the

summer and autumn. A summer drought increases the level of magnesium in plants but the level will drop following autumn or fall rains. When combined with stress to the animals and poor weather conditions, the symptoms can be sudden and fatal.

It is important to identify symptoms as soon as they develop. These include elevation of the head and a glassy-eyed expression; muscle tremors

and a stilted, jerky gait; loud pounding heart, frequently audible at a distance; and violent convulsions preceding death if the animal is untreated.

The simplest method of controlling tetany is to supplement diets daily with

magnesium oxide during danger periods. This is easily accomplished with animals on a forage diet. Herds on pasture require a different approach.

Other than ensuring the animals eat some mineral containing magnesium

oxide, an alternative may be to spray magnesium onto the growing forage. Professor Lane advises farmers who feel they have a deficiency problem to contact their veterinarian or the county agricultural office.

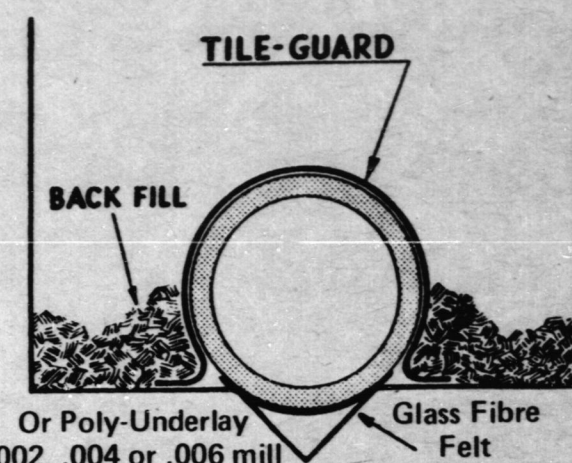


A small portion of Tented City is shown here at the site of last year's International Plowing Match. (Ag. Department Photo)

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Acid-Treated Corn Aids Pig's Growth

GUELPH — Pigs fed acid-treated corn diets will grow faster and feed efficiency equal to or better than pigs fed dry corn diets. At the University of Guelph, 144 pigs were used in two feeding trials. There were three diets in each trial: acid-treated corn, high moisture corn, and dry corn.

In the first trial, 48 individually penned pigs were used. Those on acid-treated corn and high moisture corn had an identical daily gain of 1.48 pounds. Pigs fed dry corn rations had an average daily gain of 1.54 pounds. There was no difference in the feed efficiency of the pigs on the three diets.

The second trial consisted of 96 group-fed

pigs. Pigs fed the acid-treated corn diet had an average daily gain of 1.72 pounds. This was significantly better than the 1.68 pounds obtained by both groups of pigs fed dry and high moisture corn.

Pigs fed acid-treated corn diets also had an improved feed efficiency over those fed on dry corn.

Corn treatment with organic acids in Canada first started on a commercial basis in the fall of 1970. In some cases, the corn did not store as well as intended. Improper storage resulted in mold growth and some loss of feed value.

Pigs fed the poor feed had lower performance and in some cases refused to eat

it. However, says Mr. Norrish, crop scientists offer some tips for the successful use of acid treatment.

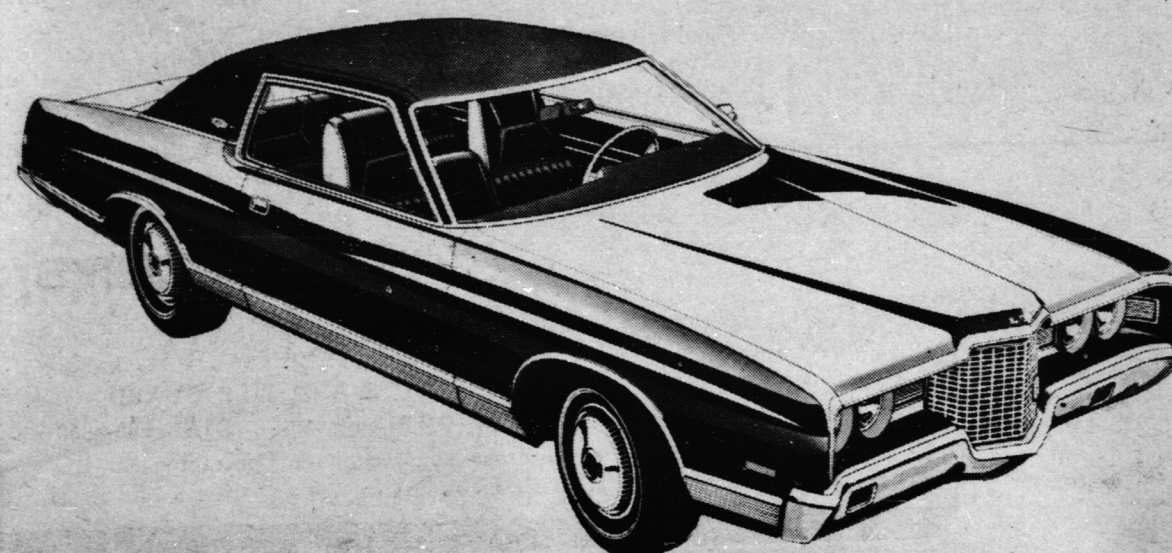
Always determine the moisture level beforehand, so the correct amount of acid can be applied.

Do not store acid-treated corn with regular high moisture corn or dry corn. Considerable spoilage can result.

After treatment, check the containers to make sure sufficient acid has been applied. If it is suspected that insufficient acid has been used, the corn should be retreated to ensure proper storage.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using acid.

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Slams Oil Price Hike

"The federal government had better start practising what it preaches, and crack down on these outrageous price increases by the oil companies."

Gordon Hill, President of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, was commenting in Toronto recently on the increased prices reported for Bunker Oil used to heat greenhouses.

"The greenhouse growers of Western Ontario tell me that one oil company has raised its price on Bunker C. Oil by an incredible 45 percent," Hill said. "Can you imagine what would happen if farmers raised their prices by 45 percent? There would be an almighty howl, and a federal enquiry. It wouldn't be tolerated."

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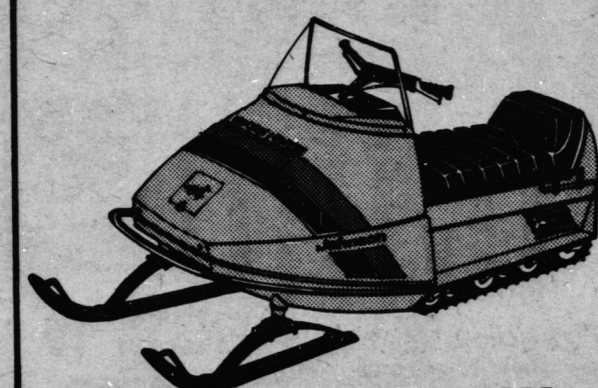
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