

FARM NEWS

USE NEW APPROACH IN POLLINATION OF ALFALFA CROP

A new approach to the problem of getting maximum pollination of alfalfa is being tried by Michigan alfalfa seed producers.

B. C. Martin, Michigan State College entomologist, says that many growers are moving four or five colonies of bees per acre into the field soon after bloom is well started. The bees are moved from an apiary at least a mile and a half away so the bees will work the alfalfa to a greater degree in becoming oriented to their surroundings again.

Pollination of alfalfa presents a special problem because the flower must be "tripped" or opened by the pollinating insect before pollination can take place. Although some wild bees such as leaf cutter bees and the bumble bee are efficient trippers of alfalfa, they are so limited in numbers that they normally only pollinate for a small seed crop.

Honey bees collecting nectar from alfalfa are not very effective in pollination, but honey bees collecting pollen from alfalfa trip the flower fairly satisfactorily.

Since honey bees often prefer to get their pollen from clover and some other plants, it's important to bring them into the alfalfa field at the right time. That way they work the alfalfa while looking for some of their more desirable blossoms.

M.S.C. Specialist Urges Caution In Grazing On Short Sudan Grass

Michigan farmers who have sudan grass pastures coming along for summer grazing should let the grass get two feet tall before turning livestock on it, warns M. B. Tesar, Michigan State College farm crops authority.

Tesar explains that when grazed too short, sudan grass may be poisonous to cattle and sheep. It also produces less when grazed before it is two feet tall. "If you start grazing it at the right time it is very productive and not poisonous to any class of livestock," he said.

Sudan grass may be grazed continuously after it reaches a height of two feet. Good stands of this grass, seeded early in June, should give about 30 cow days of pasture in July, 45 in August, 30 in September and ten in October if the season is normal. The high production of the grass in July and August is especially valuable during a dry season, since other pastures may take a seasonal slump at this time.

Tesar also pointed out that sudan grass can be grazed heavily in September. This gives an answer to the "problem pasture" period when legume pastures should not be grazed if they are to survive the winter.

"Even though there never has been a proved case of livestock poisoning from sudan grass in Michigan, two precautions should be followed," the farm crops man said. One is to avoid pasturing short plants or tillers before the grass is two feet tall because they may contain enough prussic acid to be poisonous to cattle or sheep. The other is that the short growth produced after a heavy frost may be poisonous.

Plan Muck Farmers' Field Day July 30

The annual Muck Farmers' Field Day will be held July 30 at the Muck Experimental Farm, located near Bath, according to Michigan State College soil science researchers.

Tours of the experimental plots will begin at 10 a.m. and again after the noon program. Representatives of the M.S.C. departments of agricultural engineering, botany, entomology, farm crops and horticulture will be on hand to explain their cooperative projects.

Commercial machines for farming muck also will be exhibited. Tillage trials, variety trials, fertilizer experiments and many other tests of interest to muck farmers are conducted at the farm and will be explained at the field day.

Feed Poultry In Shade For Good Flock Health

To keep poultry eating and gaining, Michigan State College poultrymen advise farmers to put the feeders in a shady spot.

Good, weatherproof feeders will encourage proper feeding, reduce waste and help prevent contamination. Possibly even more important than shade for feeders at this time of year is the water supply. Plenty of fresh, clean water also should be made available in a shady location, the poultry specialists urge.

In language, clearness is everything.

Blossom-Rot May Attack Tomatoes This Year

Because of the dry weather, you may find blossom end-rot in tomatoes this year, reports Willard E. Bosserman, assistant county agricultural agent.

Blossom end-rot appears as a sunken water soaked spot at the blossom end of the fruit. As this spot enlarges, it turns darker in color and becomes leathery. The condition is not caused by any parasitic disease, but is caused from lack of moisture.

As the plant is setting fruit, its demand for water is great. Moisture often-times needs to be applied. However, soil moisture can be conserved by cultivating to kill weeds and in the home garden by mulching.

Grain weevils and other injurious insects will begin to hatch and work in newly stored grain, especially combined grain that may be a little high in moisture. Granaries should be first swept and cleaned thoroughly — use mother's vacuum cleaner if you can get away with it — spraying with methoxychlor or DDT, three tablespoons to the gallon will take care of most of the pests present in the granary. The granary should be left open for a day or two, to air and dry out before any grains are stored. A longer airing is better yet.

Grain will be penalized again this year if moisture content is too high, also will spoil. Remember the old salt test and it will help you to determine when the grain is ready for thrashing. Add a teaspoonful of salt to a pint of grain in a dry container. If the salt comes out bunched together and sticky, the grain is not yet ready for thrashing. If the salt comes out as it was put in, the grain is dry.

Clean Combine Will Mean Cleaner Grain

With grain harvest time coming up, Michigan State College farm crops specialists remind farmers that thorough cleaning job on the combine will mean cleaner grain.

That means more than just knocking off the worst of the dust. It involves a complete clean-up to make sure the first grain that comes through will be in good shape.

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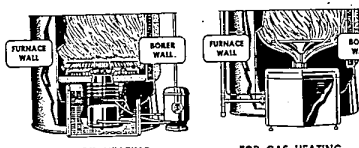
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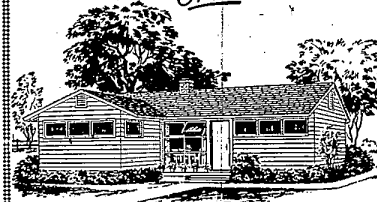
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