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Radio News Briefs

For A Growing Minnesota

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Many Advantages to Harvesting Oats for Silage

Oats cut for silage in the late milk to middough stage give best silage yields and top feeding value. Oliver Strand, University of Minnesota agronomist, offers these advantages for oats silage:

* Removing the oats early for silage nearly always gives you a more vigorous forage crop. In a good growing year, you may get one harvest of the underseeded forage in the seeding year.

* Oat silage has the feed value of the grain, and also of the stems and leaves. If you make oat silage when the grain is in the late milk or early dough stage, it's worth about twice as much for feed as mature oat grain.

* Strand says harvesting the oats early for silage also reduces the chance of lodging. Lodged small grains smother the forage seeding underneath. And, by harvesting the oats for silage, you eliminate problems of straw removal and volunteer oats growing in late summer and fall.

For more information on oat silage, ask your county agent for a copy of Agronomy Fact Sheet No. 3, entitled, "How About Oats for Silage."

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Maintain Uniform Time Intervals Between Milkings

Maintain a uniform time interval between milkings to keep high producing cows at peak production. Bill Mudge, dairy specialist at the University of Minnesota, says research shows that high producing cows drop in production when the herd's milking schedule is irregular.

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Control Apple Maggots

Be ready to start spraying for apple maggots the first week in July. This advice comes from Ed Olson, entomologist at the University of Minnesota. Olson says it's difficult to control the maggots in small orchards and individual trees if the infestations become heavy, especially in heavily populated areas. Several good sprays are available. Ask your county agent or garden dealer for information on specific sprays and their use.

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Do a Good Job of Washing Milking Equipment

Problem milk can result if bulk milk tanks are just rinsed and not washed. Vern Packard, dairy industries specialist at the University of Minnesota, says milk solids remaining in the tank after rinsing, moist conditions, and bacteria in the water supply combine to make potential milk quality problems and give a high bacteria count if bulk tanks aren't washed properly.

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Grind Dairy Feed More Often in Warm Weather

Warm weather can cause troublesome odors and flavors in feed, and dairy cows will eat less feed if it's moldy. Ralph Wayne, dairy specialist at the University of Minnesota, says it may pay to grind feed for your dairy herd more frequently in warm weather. High producing cows especially will drop in milk production if their grain intake drops.

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Are You Getting Your Calcium?

June Dairy month is a good time to take inventory of the family's milk-consumption. Extension nutritionists at the University of Minnesota say that milk is a food everyone needs, regardless of age. For one thing, it's a source of calcium, the mineral that helps form bones and teeth and keeps them strong. Milk is important, too, for protein, which builds body tissues, helps fight infection and supplies energy. And milk is rich in riboflavin, a B vitamin that helps keep skin healthy and vision clear.

So whether you drink your milk or get part of it in soups, puddings, or ice cream, here's the amount needed each day by family members: Children under 9, 2 or 3 cups; children 9-12 years, 3 or more cups; teenagers, 4 or more cups; and adults 2 or more cups. Remember, too, that cheese is another good source of the food values supplied by milk.

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Here's How to Select Cantaloupe

Whether it's for breakfast, for dessert or for a fruit plate, a thick slice or half a cantaloupe is a flavorful, colorful taste treat. And right now cantaloupes are an excellent buy in many markets.

But how do you tell whether cantaloupe is ripe? The suggestion of Department of Agriculture consumer marketing specialists is to look for three major signs of full maturity: the stem should be gone, leaving a smooth, shallow "basin"; the netting should be thick, coarse and stand out in bold relief on the surface; and the skin color between the netting should have changed from green to a yellowish-buff, yellowish gray or pale yellow.

A ripe cantaloupe will have a yellowish cast to the rind, a pleasant cantaloupe odor when held to the nose and will yield slightly to light thumb pressure on the blossom end of the melon.

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