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### POINTS WORTH KNOWING ABOUT THE FILLING OF THE SILO

By E. L. McCaskey

**Practical Pointers That Will Help in a Busy Season.—A Cooperative Solution of the Labor Problem; the Distribution of Men; Work in the Silo**

I SUPPOSE I can count on you at silo filling." The speaker was my next door neighbor.

Details of course were easily arranged. We had worked together at silo filling for years. His remark came as a surprise, however, as I had not thought of the silo filling season as being so near until then.

Silo filling is one of the rush jobs of the year. It comes in the same class with thrashing. In other sections I have heard farmers say that the silo was a nuisance just because of the extra labor it involved "all in a bunch." Where the silo has been in vogue so long, as is the case in our district, the "bunch" labor question has nicely adjusted itself. We

work cooperatively. For several miles down the road and up the side lines as well, practically every farmer has a silo. We have gathered into groups for silo filling sufficiently large to allow four teams in the field, two or three extra men to help the teamsters load in the field, a couple of men to feed the blower and one man in the silo. These same groups of men have been working together so long now that everything at silo filling time moves like oiled machinery. We have proven in a small way that farmers can cooperate.

#### NO MORE ELABORATE SUPPERS

Another feature about our silo filling that is worth mentioning right off, is the fact that we have done away with the elaborate suppers that a few years ago always completed the day's work at both silo filling and thrashing. I can remember how the housewives in this section used to vie with each other to see who could put up the best feed for the visiting farmers or farm hands. These feasts always represented a considerable monetary outlay, were a needless extravagance, and worst of all they were a needless amount of labor for the farm woman. Now-a-days we stop work about five or half past in order that we may go home and get the chores done in good time, and we are our supper at our own tables.

We have not yet cut out the friendly meeting round the neighbor's dining table at the noon hour, though I read in an American paper lately of a section of the corn belt states where each farmer brings his lunch in a dinner pail, thus saving the housewife work. I don't think, however, that carrying the lunch in a dinner pail would appeal particularly to Canadian farmers. Cutting out the supper, however, is easy.

But I started out to give some pointers that I

have learned from experience on the filling of the silo. The first point is the stage at which the corn is to be cut. Most of us used to have the idea that corn for ensilage did not need to be particularly mature. In fact, the first corn that I ever put in a silo had not reached the milk stage. It was green-watery stuff and when the silo was emptied in the winter the silage was so sour and the cattle showed such a dislike for it that I was almost inclined to dub the silo a "frost."

As the years go by I am coming more and more to value maturity in the corn for the silo. I use in or cut to be continually afraid of getting the corn frosted and preferred to have it a little green as a lesser evil of the two. I now would risk frost any time rather than put green corn in the silo. For

some reason or other the cows milk better on mature ensilage and it goes farther. The professors tell us that mature corn has much more food value, and they must be right.

#### WHEN CORN IS FROSTED

In case I do let the corn stand a little too long and it gets frosted, I cut it into the silo just the



#### A Discredited Method

One would need to have a very small area of corn indeed to make this method of corn cutting advisable. The modern machine seen below is rapidly gaining in popularity.



#### This Way is Easier on the Back and Better for the Pocket

Corn harvest is not a thing to be dreaded on the farm of Mr. John Barker, Huron Co., Ont., who may be here seen mounted on his up-to-date corn harvester. Hired help is too scarce and expensive now-a-days to cut corn any other way. Farmers with too small an area to afford a corn harvester themselves, would be wise to own a machine cooperatively with neighbors in similar circumstances.

same, sprinkling it with water and tramping it down solid. It is then just about as good for feeding purposes as if the frost had not gotten near it.

We used to cut the corn with a hoe. Later we bought a couple of corn knives from a mail order

house in Chicago and thought we had the clear thing. For the last three or four years I and two of my neighbors have owned a corn binder cooperatively, and we would not be without it for any money. In up-standing corn it does its work with neatness and despatch. The corn is bound into bundles convenient for handling and for feeding into the cutter. Even where the corn is blown down or lodged, the modern binder has devices that enable it to do creditable work. Only once or twice have we been forced to go back to the corn knives, and that for very limited areas. I would advise every corn grower either to have a corn binder himself or a share in one.

#### AN EARLY START AT CUTTING

In a 15-acre corn field we plan to start the corn harvester half a day before the engine and blower arrive, and the binder is kept going all next day. In our silo filling circle the man on whose farm we are working supplies the horses and the driver for the binder. While we consider it advisable to be well ahead with the cutting, there is always the danger of getting too much corn down. In case of wet and consequently muddy weather men don't like to go into the fields with their teams or to handle the muddy bundles of corn. And yet if the corn is to be gotten into the silo in best condition it must be gotten in soon after cutting.

One little point I would note here. Occasionally due to very unfavorable weather it is impossible to get the corn in sufficiently early in the spring. When silo filling time comes around, even if left until frosted, it has altogether too large a water content to go into the silo. I would cut such corn and allow it to lie in the fields a couple of days to dry out.

The point in the management of the cutting box on which I would lay most importance is in

keeping the knives sharp. This reduces the amount of power required and the machine is able to make a clean cut at every revolution. The knives should be sharp enough to cut the husks en masse of the ears. When the knives begin to get dull the husks will be blown up uncut, although the ears and stalks will be cut alright.

I mentioned that we have two men apportioned to feed the cutting box. It is hard, active work to feed fast and properly, too hard for one man to stand for any length of time. According to our system the two men take turn about at the feeding, and while one is doing the main work the other gathers up the loose stalks and trash and feeds it into the cutter, and with the help of a boy to turn the grind stone or some kind of power to do it, keeps the knives sharp.