

The Filling of the Silo

What It Will Cost and Equipment That Is Necessary—By Tom Alfalfa

SILO filling methods are undergoing a revolution. A few years ago the demand was all for high power engines and cutting boxes of great capacity. As a usual thing the engine, and probably the cutting box also, was owned by a private individual. When the silo filler notified the farmer that he would be along on a certain day, the farmer immediately got a hustle on and notified his neighbors in every direction that he was filling his silo or silos on a certain day, and would they please come along and help. There was a big crowd, a big rush, a huge meal, a lot of excitement and a quick job. We need not speak in the past tense. This is still the common method of filling silos in rural communities, but it is a method that is not now as popular as it was a few years ago. If the types of cutters and blowers on which the manufacturers now put emphasis, may be taken as an indication of the trend of popular opinion, the tendency is now away from the high power methods of the past, and there is an ever increasing demand for an ensilage outfit of a moderate size and price, such as an average farmer can use to advantage. Perhaps a conversation that I had with a neighbor a few days ago will state the case for the smaller outfit as clearly as is possible. He was very earnest in his endeavors to convince me of the merits of the modern method, as he wished to induce me to go in with him and two other neighbors in the purchase of a silo filling outfit.

Said he, "This system we have always worked under is no good. Take last year, for instance. My corn was ready for the silo on September 20th. Bill got his outfit together and filled a silo or two. Then the demand for his threshing outfit became so great that he had to forget about silos for a couple of weeks. By the first of October my corn was badly frosted, and I decided that it would be better to cut it and let it lie. There it was frosted some more. It was the 20th day of October before there was finally a power available to fill the silo. The corn then was dry and we had a choice between poor ensilage or hauling water to mix with it as it was blown into the silo. We decided to haul water. Then we found that Bill had a lot more silos to fill right away. He wouldn't be bothered with the water, and we had to let the corn go in dry."

I remember the situation very well. Other neighbors had been in the same fix. "Is that all?" I asked.

"No, it isn't," continued my friend with emphasis. "My silo was filled in just about three hours. Just as soon as we were level with the top of the silo, Bill ripped down his pipes, the horses were attached to the truck in about one minute, and in five minutes, tractor and blower trucks were going down the lane to fill the next silo. The next morning the silo had settled six feet, and before we started to use it, it had settled eight feet. We had corn left in the field to more

than refill that silo, but we couldn't ask all our neighbors to come back for another rush job to fill the eight feet in the top of my silo, and I doubt if we could have gotten a machine anyway. The system lost me just one-quarter of the capacity of my silo."

"Anything else?"

"Why, yes. There is not one of us but needs a farm power and cutting box several times a year. For instance, in a good year we all have a little corn left after the silo is filled. Did a few of us have a cutting box with power enough to run it, we could cut the corn as we needed it and feed it to much better advantage than where the cattle are thrown the stalks. All of us have a certain amount of straw and coarse hay that we would like to cut. A small power would make it possible for us to cut our wood. Perhaps we could buy a grain grinder be-

tween us. There is no end to the uses we could make to a small power owned among a few of us." "I think you had better come in on it with us," he ended persuasively. "The four of us could buy a small outfit at a price which divided amongst us wouldn't hurt any of us. We could supply among ourselves all of the horse labor and practically all of the man labor needed to fill our silos. Now doesn't that look good to you?"

"The Power Required."

The picture that my friend painted appealed to me. It will appeal to many others that have had to wait their turn on an over-worked private equipment which in the end only partly fills their silos. The manufacturers have recognized this need and are endeavoring to supply it. For instance, it is possible to get a 10-inch cutter and blower with a capacity of three to four tons of ensilage per hour that can be operated by a three to four-horse power steam engine or a four to

eight-horse power gasoline engine. An outfit of this capacity would fill a 10 x 25 foot silo in about 10 hours. A 13-inch blower cutting ensilage in one-half inch lengths will have a capacity of four to eight tons per hour, and can be run with four to eight h. p. The stronger the power, of course, the greater the capacity of the cutting box. These capacities are well within the reach of the average silo owner.

An attachment to the blower that should never be omitted when the silo filling equipment is purchased, is the silage distributor. This consists of a series of tubes attached to the upper end of the blower which conduct the corn down to the surface of the silage and distributes it at the will of the man in the silo. As the silo fills up, sections of the distributor are detached. A good corn binder completes the equipment.

There are still those, however, who will favor the high power equipment, and as the high power advocates include in their number some of our best farmers, their opinions should carry some weight. Among these is one of the best farmers in the eastern Ontario county in which he lives. Recently I asked Mr. Gray for his opinion as to the relative merits of large or small power outfits for filling silos. He answered as follows:

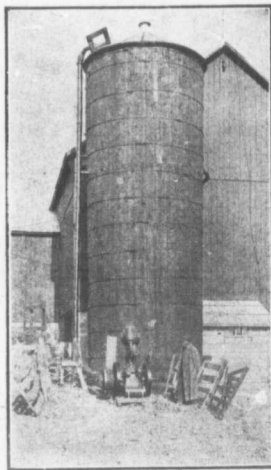
"Your question is somewhat difficult to answer definitely. While silos can be filled to good advantage with a small power outfit, it must of necessity mean that a cutter with a carrier attachment be used instead of a blower. Experience has taught us that corn from a blower well operated, will pack into the silo much better and more easily than from the carrier machine. Again, if the actual time of the man is taken into consideration, less labor per ton will be taken into consideration in operating the outfit. When it is impossible for farmers to cooperate and use large machines, then a small power outfit can be used to advantage, but I am much in favor of the large machine."

The Tractor a Source of Power.

The rapid introduction of farm tractors on the comparatively small farms of Ontario, means a supply of power for silo filling that we have not previously enjoyed. The most of these factors will not provide sufficient power for blowers of the greatest capacity, and if they are to be used as a source of power, smaller cutting boxes will have to be the rule. Mr. J. N. Kernighan, of Huron Co., Ont., is using one of these tractors for power, and he writes me of his experience as follows:

"We have had experience with the large silo filling outfit for the past 15 years, and used the carriers before that with smaller outfits. However, last year we used a Mogul tractor 8-16 oil

(Concluded on page 14.)



A 7 h.-p. Engine Filling a 34 foot Silo, with a 10 inch Cutting Box.



The Corn Binder is Now an Essential Part of the Silo Filling Equipment.

EVERY acre of grain is an easy matter together one the their own the tribe, help than month, more ac with the about read pasture a was a zoo Kitchen way out. carload of the way h soon excl was simil had pract implemen The onl ready ha advis u handle th and has But it is rather th most inde He told r hay load make wh satisfaction there was loader in that I had The evid us confide plements

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