

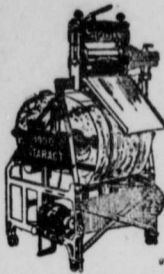


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### MOULDY SWEET CLOVER

Is a Dangerous Feed, Especially to Young Cattle.

Investigational Work by Provincial Veterinarians — It Makes Castration and Dehorning Risky—More Research and Experimenting Necessary.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

Recently considerable sickness and losses have been reported among cattle being fed on ensilage. In some instances only a few animals have been affected on a particular farm, but in a few cases the losses have been serious, as one farmer is known to have lost 17 animals out of a herd of 50 cattle. The frequency and peculiarity of these losses has led the Department to have investigations and experiments made to determine the cause.

Investigational Work by Ontario Veterinarians.

The staff of the Ontario Veterinary College have been in close touch with the veterinary surgeons throughout the province, and reliable information obtained as to the prevailing circumstances where cattle have died. In all cases investigation has revealed the fact that the losses have occurred among cattle fed extensively on sweet clover ensilage which had become mouldy. Samples of the ensilage were shipped to the Veterinary College, and experiments conducted clearly indicated that mouldy sweet clover ensilage was harmful to cattle. From observations and information available at the present time, it would appear that the harm is confined to sweet clover ensilage which has become mouldy, and that the continued feeding of it is liable to cause death. **Young Cattle the First to Succumb.**

It is an interesting fact that young cattle under three years of age are the ones which suffer most severely and succumb the quickest. In illustration of this the case mentioned where in a herd of 50 cattle the 17 which died were all young cattle under two years of age and in good condition. No sickness had been present in the herd until after the feeding of the ensilage commenced, and the losses occurred within a few weeks. Apparently mature cattle over four years of age are able to withstand the ill effects better than young cattle. However, continued feeding of damaged sweet clover ensilage may be harmful to cattle of all ages.

**It Makes Castration and Dehorning Dangerous.**

It is also interesting to note that operations such as dehorning and castration performed on cattle that have been kept largely on mouldy sweet clover ensilage caused sudden death in many cases, while the same operations similarly performed on cattle fed differently have not been followed by ill effects. The exact nature of the poisonous factor associated with the ensilage, and the manner in which it produces harmful effects in cattle and to cause their death has not yet been definitely determined, and any opinions expressed at the present time are based on practical observations.

**More Research and Experimenting Required.**

In fact a large amount of intense study, investigation and research will be necessary to obtain reliable conclusions regarding the possible dangers incidental to the feeding of mouldy sweet clover ensilage, or as to whether sweet clover cut at certain stages and under certain conditions develops harmful properties as silage. In the meantime sufficient evidence is at hand to justify warning farmers against the feeding of mouldy ensilage to live stock in order to avoid losses, and under no circumstances should operations including dehorning and castration be performed on cattle which are being fed on sweet clover ensilage if it appears mouldy. Such animals seem to develop marked vascular changes which produce a tendency to internal hemorrhage resulting in death.—Dr. C. D. McGilvray, President, Ontario Veterinary College, Toronto.

**Clover Seed Grown at Home Is Safest.**

Clover seed from Italy and other countries of similar climate produces plants that are not hardy in northern districts of Canada and the United States. In 1919 four and one-half millions of pounds of this seed came into the United States. This seed is not sold to farmers in the condition that it comes in, because seed-houses know it is inferior and will not produce good crops. Therefore it is mixed with native clover seed and undoubtedly is the cause to a considerable extent of the unsatisfactory clover crops.

The only way to be safe is to buy from reliable firms which will guarantee the source of the seed or purchase from growers in the immediate vicinity.

When purchasing direct from growers care should be exercised to secure seed free from noxious and otherwise troublesome weed seeds.—A. C. Army, University of Minnesota.

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