

He Waters Soybeans Before Planting

Soon after Joe Dresbach started broadcast-seeding soybeans, he realized he was losing much of the seed because it split open when it was flung from the spreader. He started wetting the beans before planting and found that the water not only reduced splitting but also gave the seeds a boost that helped them germinate and grow better.

Dresbach started broadcasting soybeans because he wanted the benefits of narrow rows without investing in new equipment. He had been broadcasting wheat for years so he was familiar with the practice.

The last couple years Dresbach's broadcast-seeded acres have boosted yields 25 to 50 percent over test plots still planted with 30-in. rows. He attributes part of the gain to

broadcast seeding and part to the added moisture, which got the beans off to a fast start.

To dampen the beans he loads them into the fertilizer spreader he uses for broadcasting and sprays them with a hose for 10 min or so until they're damp. Excess water runs out the bottom.

Dresbach spreads beans onto level, well prepared seedbeds that he has usually disked two or three times. After spreading, he disks one more time to cover the beans. One drawback to broadcasting is that it requires more seed than planting in rows. He tries for 12 to 18 seeds per square foot. (Excerpted from a report by Gail C. Keck in the OHIO FARMER)



One-Crop Farmer Breaks Crop Rotation Rules

Canadian farmer Ken Rempel farms about 720 acres and it's all seeded to one crop. Every year he seeds it to the same crop and that's the way it's been for 26 out of 28 years on some of the land, and for 15 to 17 years on other parcels.

Although growing the same crop on the same ground year after year generally is not recommended, Rempel maintains high crop production standards that has made it work. And he says it keeps things simple.

The majority of his barley crop is fed to the 2,000 hogs he finishes each year. All manure and crop residues go back on the land. "We've produced barley and hogs since the day we started farming," he says. "It's an ideal mixture for our conditions. Barley grows best on the soil we have here."

His formula for success includes selecting certified seed each year, using disease-resistant varieties in rotation with 2-row barleys, working straw and stubble deep into the soil each fall, and supplementing hog manure with commercial fertilizers.

Each spring granular fertilizer is banded into all crop land along with an application of pre-emergent herbicides. In the fall, all crop residue is till deeply into the soil with at least two passes of a field cultivator. More than 20 years of the practice has dramatically improved soil till and productivity, he says. Back in the 1950's and 60's, when straw was baled and removed, Rempel says the land was a lot less mellow.

He's constantly on the lookout for disease outbreaks. If he notices a problem developing, he switches that field the next year to one of his disease-resistant varieties.

Rempel's yields consistently average better than 80 bushels, with peaks of as high as 126 bu. per acre. He says he's never had a serious weed or disease outbreak and the soil is more productive than it was 28 years ago when he first decided to concentrate on barley after concluding his soil couldn't produce high-quality wheat. (Excerpted from a report by Lee Hart in COUNTRY GUIDE)

"Peanut Butter" Fence

Are you having a hard time keeping deer out of your garden? Then it's time you discovered one of the little-known virtues of peanut butter. Wildlife ecologists at the University of Wisconsin have demonstrated that a single strand of charged wire smeared with peanut butter creates a virtually deer-proof fence.

Previous experiments with single-strand electric fences have shown that deer go over

or under them with ease. But the smell of peanut butter strikes the interest of curious deer, who investigate with their noses and get jolted by more than 3,000 volts of electricity. The brief shocks, delivered by a standard 12-volt fence charger, don't injure the animals, but once zapped, most deer won't go near the fence again. (HARROWSMITH COUNTRY LIFE)

Gravity Gate Closer

Here's an ingenious gravity-powered gate closer we spotted on a wooden gate in England. A short length of flexible plastic tubing is fastened to the gate about 2 ft. out from the gate post. It runs back through a pulley attached near the top of the post to a weight that hangs inside a length of protective pvc pipe. The weight pulls down on the flex tubing to close the gate after you pass through.



Saving Rejected Calves

When a cow loses a calf, you can take advantage of the situation by skinning the dead calf and putting the hide on an orphan that might not otherwise be accepted by the calfless mother.

That's what Heather Thomas of Salmon, Idaho, did recently. "Once a cow smells its own calf it locks that smell into her brain. From then on she can pick her calf out of a herd," she says.

"The dead calf should be skinned very soon after it dies. The legs should be skinned so that the live calf's legs go through the leg holes of the dead skin. This holds the

'jacket' securely in place. The tail of the dead calf should be left attached to the skin. The cow is going to smell that calf's hind end and it better smell right. After a few smells of the jacket-bearing newcomer, most cows are convinced. Once the calf has nursed a few times, and the pair are well-bonded, the dead skin can be removed. The cow will mother and protect that baby as diligently as if it were the one she gave birth to."

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Homemade Vaccine Cuts Death Loss In Pigs

By Shirley Roenfeldt

Dallas Tidwell uses a homemade serum extracted from sows' blood to vaccinate newborn pigs against several scour-related illnesses.

The serum vaccination works similar to the way pigs receive antibodies through the sow's colostrum milk. Cull sows are kept and hyper-immunized (over-vaccinated to boost their immunity level). The blood serum increases the level of immunity that can be passed onto the offspring. The cull sows are hyper-immunized for clostridium, TGE (transmissible gastroenteritis), E. Coli, and some strep-related problems.

The program's success is shown by a drop in the overall death loss from more than 20% to 3%, reduced veterinary, medicine and vaccine bills, and almost complete elimination of the disease outbreaks that once plagued the operation. Before starting the program, Tidwell was spending about \$1,500 to \$2,000 a month for vaccines alone.

Tidwell's veterinarian, Dr. Kenny Krausnick, developed and fine-tuned the program. "We were using a lot of commercial serums to combat problems within the herd," says Krausnick. "Dallas asked if we could make our own serum and also get the added benefits of the herds' natural immunities."

The cull sows are vaccinated once each week for six weeks before their blood can be drawn. Three to five sows donate one gallon of blood each month to produce the serum. The blood is refrigerated for at least 12 hours to let the serum rise to the top. A centrifuge is used to spin out any remaining impurities from the serum. A preservative is the only added ingredient to the blood serum. About 3,000 cubic centimeters (cc) of

serum can be made from each gallon of blood. Each pig is given 3 cc of the serum orally within 12 hours of birth.

"We had a real bad clostridium problem," says Tidwell. "Since we started using the serum, we haven't had to vaccinate any sows or their offspring against clostridium. We also had a chronic TGE problem. Since starting the serum program, we haven't had any serious TGE scours outbreaks. If a litter breaks out with TGE or some type of scours, it receives another dose of the serum. The labor cost of the program is less than the labor cost of constantly treating sick pigs."

Although Tidwell uses the serum in a large operation, he says it can work in almost any hog operation with scours-related herd health problems. A serum program could be economically set up for a producer with about a 100-sow herd, Tidwell and Krausnick say.

The initial investment was \$1,500, including \$1,100 for the centrifuge. A producer could get by without a centrifuge by allowing gravity to work and continually pouring off the serum that rises to the top, says Tidwell. However, this process is more time-consuming than using a centrifuge, he adds.

Besides the centrifuge, the equipment includes a small vacuum pump that costs about \$75, collection jars, rubber tubing, and a syringe to administer the serum. Tidwell uses old 1-gal. pickle jars to collect the blood. A local machinist adapted the lids to connect with the rubber tubing.

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