

# WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

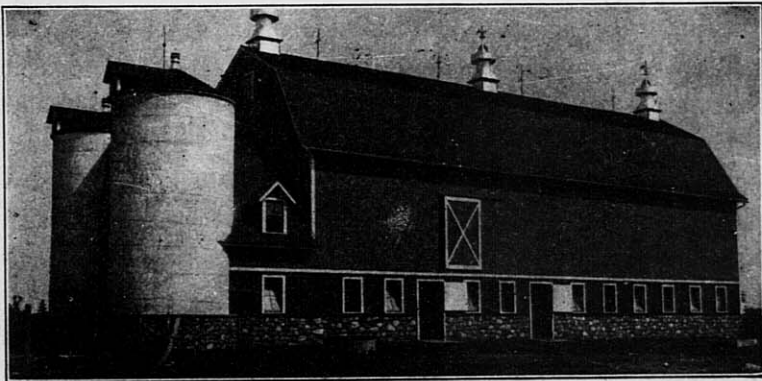
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## SILO AND SILAGE

BY

SUPT. GEO. MCKERROW  
MADISON, WIS.



EVERY STOCK FARM SHOULD HAVE A SILO

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WISCONSIN

# SILO AND SILAGE

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MADISON, WISCONSIN

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Silos were first pits in the ground for storing food, now they are a combination of the pit and above ground structure.

It is about thirty-five years since the first ones were introduced into this country and about thirty-three years since the first one was built in Wisconsin.

The silo has come into use in this State far more rapidly than in any other and has been one of the chief factors in our rapid advance in the dairy industry. There was a time when Wisconsin had about as many silos as all the other States, and still has as many as the three next highest combined, and no State has a better class of silos or needs them more. The day is not far distant when no Wisconsin farmer will be considered up-to-date who does not have a silo. Every stockman or dairyman who has no silo can afford to pay ten per cent interest on the money invested in a silo and make five to ten per cent profit on top of that.

Corn, which is the natural economic plant for silo filling in Wisconsin, can be grown throughout the State, even to its northern extremities, and if caught some seasons by the early frost is still valuable if put in the silo at once and almost useless if left out of a silo.

The lasting types, when building something permanent, are in the long run the cheapest and best, such as solid concrete, stone, glazed tile, brick, cement blocks, etc.

**Construction.** Where only temporary silos are wanted, then some form of stave structure does very well and can be moved later. The question of cost and permanence should decide the kind to build. This matter of cost can be best determined by cost of material in each locality.

The round silo is the best form, but the square form, with three rounded corners and one corner for a chute, when built of stone, answers very well. All of them should be well reinforced with steel rods or heavy wire placed not more than a foot apart. The continuous door should have good rods across every two feet and connected with every second reinforcing rod or wire. All walls should be air-tight or as nearly so as possible.

The solid wall, six-inch concrete silo should be built with a slush mixture and should be well worked with a spade next the forms on the outside inside of the wall, so as to get the closest grained water-tight surface, and to make sure that it is water-tight and air-tight the walls on both the inside and outside should be whitewashed with a creamy mixture of pure cement.

Where it can be done, a silo should be from six to eight feet in the ground below the feeding floor. It should always be kept in mind that depth in a silo is more important than width. Silos on the average Wisconsin farm should not be less than thirty feet deep nor more than sixteen feet in diameter. Where more silo room is needed, it is better to have two narrow silos than one wide one. A second silo for summer feeding is now considered a necessity by our best stockmen and dairymen.

The continuous door is the only one to use. In feeding out you are taking your silage off on the level of the door practically all the time. The planks used in the doorway only being eight or ten inches high, there is very little raising of silage to get over the door and very little digging out to take out the next plank.

Early varieties of corn that will fully mature in the locality are the ones that will give the greatest feeding value per acre one year with another. In the northern part of the State and on the heavy clays in the southern part, flint varieties are making the best silage, on

account of the large amount of leaf and flinty nature of the corn which matures with high protein content. In other sections of Wisconsin, the earlier, leafier varieties of dents give very good satisfaction. The corn should be well dented or glazed before putting in. If put in too green, a sappy, sour, poor ensilage is the result, which is also dangerous to feed.

In filling, the greatest care should be taken to have the corn thoroughly mixed. A distributor from the top of the silo that will catch and run all the corn together around the outsides, controlled by the operator, will aid in getting a better and even settling and a better class of silage, which should be thoroughly tramped around the walls. When the filling is completed, then a heavy coating of water on the top helps in preserving the silage in good shape near the top.

In feeding out, a sufficient amount should be removed each day to keep it from spoiling. The outside next the wall should be kept low and in cold, freezing weather a covering of fine hay or straw to a depth of eight or ten inches will keep the surface from freezing and most of the silo freezing comes from the surface. When feeding in the morning, one-half of this hay or straw can be moved over and the feed taken from that half of the silo, and at the next feeding the other half can be uncovered to feed from. Freezing does not injure the silage much, but frozen silage if fed frozen will injure stock.

A fair proportion of dry feed, preferably alfalfa or clover hay, should be fed with corn silage to secure the best results. Good, well matured corn silage with alfalfa hay in right proportions makes a good balanced ration for all growing stock. A small addition to this of a well balanced grain ration gives excellent results in economical production and keeps dairy cows doing their best.