Harvest Ear Corn With Your Combine?

A Minnesota dairy farmer has been harvesting ear corn with his combine for the last 5 or 6 years. It eliminates one piece of equipment and saves a corn by-product, but there also are other benefits.

"This way, we get more bulk and fiber in with the grain, and that's important to heavy-producing dairy cows," explains Joe Stransky of Owatonna. "The corn and cob mixture is more palatable, and we have less trouble with fat cows and twisted stomachs."

Stransky adjusts his combine so that he retains half of the cobs, which are blown into the wagon with the shelled corn. The adjustment consists of: (1) speeding up the cylinder and moving it a little closer to the concaves so the cobs can't go through; (2) removing the top sieve; and (3) opening up the bottom sieve. This breaks up the cobs and holds back about half of them.

Says Stransky: "Combining is faster than picking and shelling. We can combine 25 acres in the same amount of time that we can pick 10 acres. After we started doing this, we sold our picker."

Stransky's combine is a model 6600 John Deere, but he says it will work on other brands. This method could probably also be used with rotary types made by International, New Holland, White or Oliver.

Stransky has a few other tips for farmers who would like to combine their ear corn:

- The corn should be harvested at about 25-27% moisture. It is put through a roller mill before being blown into a Harvester. Stransky uses a distributor under his blower to keep the light cobs from separating to the outside of the structure.
- Says Stransky that this corn and cob feed could also be put up in a conventional silo, provided it can be fed out with a forage unloader with a sweep arm.
- For more information, contact: Joe R. Stransky, Route 4, Owatonna, Minn. 55060 (ph 507 451-1181).

Octagonal Barn Easy to Build

"You can build it yourself without any of the special equipment needed to build a pole barn. It's attractive and, for smaller farmers, can make feeding livestock easier without going to the expense of automated equipment," says Ted Tucker, Lincoln, Mass., who designed and built his own octagonal barn.

Half of the 30 ft. dia. barn is used to house his horses, and the other half is used for storage. Tucker also added a hay loft which holds 250 bales. The cupola at the top of the barn has glass windows. Tucker put pulleys on the windows so they can be easily opened or closed.

He built his octagonal barn from rough sawn lumber, using a telephone pole for the center support. The loft is designed so hay can be dropped directly into the horses' mangers. The basic design, he says, could be scaled up to whatever diameter desired.

Do-it-yourself construction plans for Tucker's octagonal barn are available for $3.00 from: FARM SHOW, Octagonal Barn, COUNTRY JOURNAL, 130 Main St., Battleboro, Vt. 05301.