

HOW TO MAKE PADDY STRAW A BETTER CATTLE FEED



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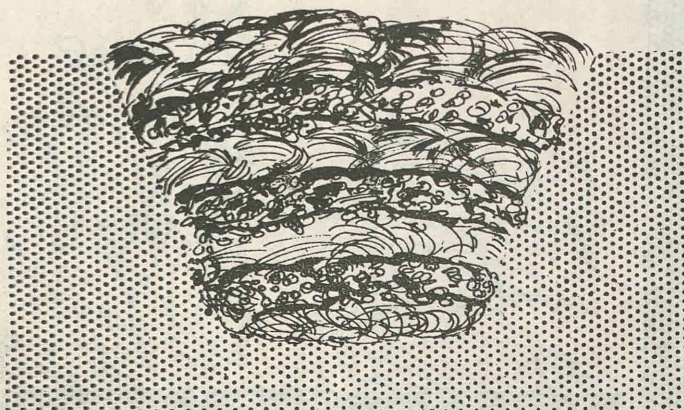
HOW TO MAKE PADDY STRAW A BETTER CATTLE FEED

Cattle, generally speaking, show poor growth and produce but poorly in our rice-growing areas. This is because the paddy straw, on which they are mainly fed, has poor food value.

Calcium (lime) in paddy straw is not easily available to the cattle. And calcium is so important to them. Paddy straw is also poor in proteins, vitamins and minerals which cattle need.

Experiments now show that there is a way by which the feeding value of paddy straw can be improved.

The paddy straw has to be ensiled with a leguminous fodder such as berseem, cowpea or sannhemp which are rich in calcium, minerals and proteins. This way, cattle get a more tasty, easily-digestible and balanced feed than when the paddy straw alone is given.



In the delta region of Andhra Pradesh, farmers commonly use sannhemp along with paddy straw for feeding cattle. This is what they do.

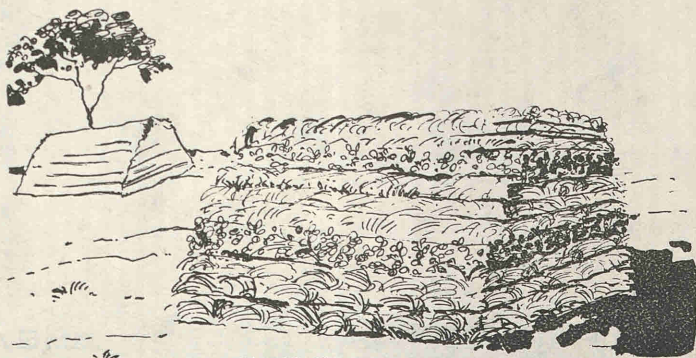
A couple of days before the first (*abi*) paddy crop is harvested, they sow sannhemp in the standing paddy crop.

They soak the sannhemp seed in water for 12 hours, and broadcast it at 40 pounds of seed to an acre. Because of the moisture in the paddy field, the sannhemp grows well.

When the sannhemp is in flower and before it forms pods, it is cut to a foot above the ground level, and left in the field to dry. Care is taken to see that it does not dry up too much.

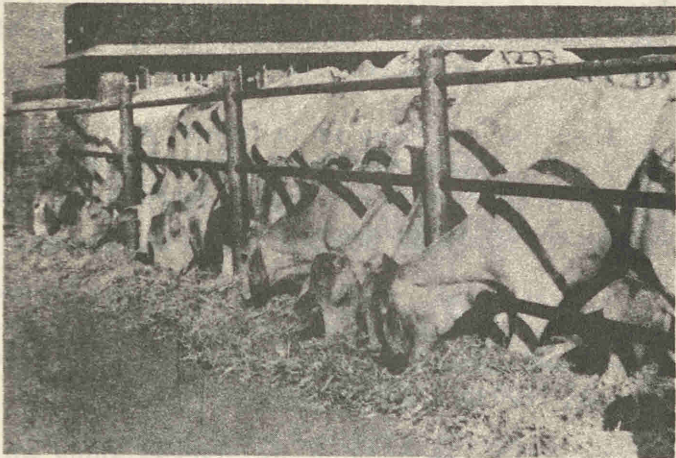
After the sannhemp has dried in the sun for two days, it is tied into bundles weighing three to five pounds and is carried to the paddy straw stack. From an acre, 1200 to 2,000 bundles are obtained.

The sannhemp bundles are stacked along with those of paddy straw. First, three layers of paddy straw are spread to make a stack of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 feet, and then a layer of sannhemp is spread, and then again three to four layers of paddy straw. Sannhemp is thus alternately stacked, the thickness of the layer depending upon the quantity available.



The keeping quality of sannhemp is improved in such a way. Paddy straw and sannhemp, which is a leguminous fodder, together make a balanced feed for cattle.

Wherever possible, you too should take up this method of making paddy straw a better cattle feed.



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