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HARVESTORE® TODAY



New Harvestore XL Unloader Introduced at Michigan Farm Tour

Engineered Storage Products Company unveils its latest innovation, the new Harvestore XL Unloader, at the recent Farm Tour in Michigan.

A silo unloader that is more powerful, faster and more efficient than its predecessors and competition, the Harvestore XL® was introduced at the Michigan Farm Tour attended by top-producing dairy farmers from throughout the United States and Canada.

Attendees toured the 600-cow Brenner Brothers & Sons Farm near Hopkins, and the 770-cow Indian Trail Farms outside Byron Center. Brenner Brothers operates 13 Harvestore silos and a Slurrystore for manure management, while Indian Trails, owned by Wendell and Gale Loew, has 14 of the big blue structures plus two Slurrystores. Both farms had an opportunity to test prototypes of the Harvestore XL unloader for several months before the tour. (Learn more about the Brenner Brothers and Indian Trail Farms on the back page.)

"The Harvestore XL unloader meets the demands of modern farming systems," says Jim Hlinka, Harvestore XL Product Engineering Manager. "Before designing the Harvestore XL, we listened to the needs of Harvestore owners, who said they wanted a faster unloading system that would compare to the perceived unloading speed of bags and bunkers. We came up with an unloader that gives them comparable – and in some cases quicker – unloading speed and is bigger, better and faster than the ones before it."

The Harvestore XL is capable of moving 400 pounds per minute of 55 percent moisture haylage, compared to 200 pounds per minute for ESPC's Alliance. At that speed, farmers can unload more forage as fast or faster than they can from a storage bag or concrete bunker, he added.

The Harvestore XL features significantly more chain and arm force capacity, and is available in 1-Phase or 3-Phase models. For example, the force at the end of the arm on the XL unloader is 1,150 pounds, compared to 400 pounds for the Alliance.

And depending upon the unloading situation, the new Harvestore XL unloader has low, high and four intermediate speeds from which to choose, which can be changed as the unloader is running. Its main drive and arm drive systems use separate motors and controls, in a patent pending system. "It also features a Load Sensing System to monitor and react to cutter arm loads," Hlinka says.

"Most importantly, we have improved the chain strength and design, also patent pending," Hlinka adds. "Chain strength is a particularly important improvement for farmers." The conveyor and cutter chains are tested for up to 71,000 pounds of load bearing weight, compared to the conveyor or chain strength of 30,000 pounds for the Alliance.

"I like this new model," said Wendell Loew, owner of Indian Trail Farms. "It features a motorized arm advance. The main drive is direct (no belts) and uses a 'soft start' system, which eliminates shock loading. You can change speeds with a switch, which is a benefit of using a variable frequency drive. The feed delivery rate is much faster than our other unloaders."

"Since the XL puts out more pounds per minute, it doesn't need to run as long, reducing electricity costs. Even though it's difficult to compare the XL with the other units we have due to different types of feed and moisture levels, we sure like this unit and it's really going to fly," he adds.

Burton Brenner, of Brenner Brothers & Sons, also likes the new unloader's features. "I really like the arm advance and variable speed direct drive because it delivers the feedstuffs fast and uniformly. The major change with this



The Harvestore XL Unloader.

equipment is the volume of feed it brings out in a real hurry. The new advance arm is a major improvement over the unloaders of ten years ago," he said.

"We like moving higher moisture feed that fast," Brenner added. "We've been working with the XL unloader for a few months now, and can say that it's everything they told us it would be."

Harvestore owners who would like more information on the XL unloader should contact their local dealer for a demonstration, or call Engineered Storage Product Company at 815-756-1551.



Tour attendees watch the Harvestore XL demonstration.

The NEW HARVESTORE®
BACK ON THE HORIZON!

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Whatever The Weather Harvestores Produce High Quality Feed, Year Around


Brenner Brothers

Even with the unpredictable nature of upper Midwest weather, the Brenners of Hopkins, Michigan, feed their 600 dairy cows a consistently high quality ration, year round. The family's secret? Thirteen Harvestore structures for storing high moisture corn, haylage and corn silage.

"As the cow numbers increased on the farm we just kept going with Harvestores," says Burton Brenner, 49, who operates the dairy with his brother, Ross, 40 and cousin, Bruce, 49. "They just made more sense because the feed quality was so much better and it was convenient to fill them," Brenner explains. "We were able to put in haylage at 45 to 50 percent moisture. That was a big perk because rain often makes it difficult to put up dry hay in Michigan some days of the year." Structures range from two 20 x 50s built in 1960 to a 25 x 110 added in 2000.

Blending a custom ration

"With the Harvestore system it's so easy to blend various feeds and mix and match to make the correct ration for the cattle," says Brenner. "Sometimes we put high quality feed in certain structures and less desirable feed in some of the other units. We can blend the feed for the cows, heifers, steers or calves. That's an advantage of having multiple structures – having the nutrition that is needed."

"With the Harvestore system our nutritionist always has quality feed to work with," Brenner says. "You put good feed in and get quality back out. Quality feed is the vital ingredient to maintaining consistent herd health and good milk production."

Other storage options

The Brenner family has tried other feed storage options – outdoor piles for corn silage and bags for haylage. But weather again proved the value of the Harvestore system.

"Storing feed in a pile is hard to maintain and creates excess spoilage, especially in the summer. The feed quality can fluctuate as much as the thermometer. If you try to blend some of that feed into the ration you're on pins and needles not knowing if there might be a slip in production," Brenner says.

The plastic bags they tried for storing excess haylage didn't work much better, he says. "The bags take up too much room, the plastic wrap is expensive and there is waste," he says. "Bags are tough to deal with especially in winter and then you have to do something with all that plastic. Compared to bags, Harvestores are cleaner, easier to fill and there's less mess and waste."

At Indian Trail Farms, the strategy for group feeding is all BLUE

With 14 blue structures rising above the horizon, it's obvious that Indian Trail Farms depends on Harvestores.

"The Harvestore system gives us a neat and economical way to store forage and grain crops and preserve overall feed quality at time of harvest," says Wendell Loew, 54, one of the farm's owners.

Wendell operates the Byron Center, Michigan, dairy along with his sons, Dan, Ben and Zack, and brother Gale, 64. The family's original 125-cow herd in 1960 has since grown to 770 cows, the most recent expansion occurring in 2004 when the herd increased from 400 cows. Harvestore units have been a constant component of the operation's successful growth for 40-plus years.

The family's first five units were 20 x 50s, erected in the early 1960s and later rebuilt as 20 x 80s. Today the system includes two more 20 x 80s, two 20 x 60s, two 25 x 90s and three 25 x 110s which were part of the 2004 expansion. In addition, three concrete stave structures are used for corn silage.

Great for groups

The Harvestore units fit well with the group feeding strategies at Indian Trail Farms.


Wendell Lowe talks about Indian Trail Farms.

"Owning several Harvestores gives us the benefit of being able to store different qualities of forage separately. We're able to build rations based on the needs of individual groups of cows – dry, springing, early lactation, first lactation and mature cows," Loew says. "I believe the best results can be achieved by more closely trying to match rations to the specific needs of individual groups."

Loew believes that the Harvestore "first in, first out" unloading system delivers higher quality, consistent feed that leads to better cow performance, especially in a group feeding system. "Plus, handling feed is so much easier compared to the stave silos because there is no climbing to change doors or mess with unloaders," he says.

Sticking with what works

"A couple years ago someone asked if I wanted to put up a bunker," Loew adds. "That thought really never crossed my mind because our current set-up works well. We would need trucks and packing tractors, which would be quite an investment. In the long run, it's better to stay within our comfort zone and continue to follow the path we're on. Harvestores have had a positive influence in our operation."

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Win an iPod! If you've had success designing rations around forage stored in a Harvestore, we want to hear from you! We'd like to hear your story and possibly feature it in an upcoming issue of Harvestore Today. Email us your experience or other comments to jgarnett@cstindustries.com for a chance to win an iPod.

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