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Schuyler Town Talk: Upstate processing duo plan cure for the common hay

Curing a field of hay takes 4 1/2 to 5 low-humidity and rain-free days. Jeff Warren and John Davie say they can do it in a lot less time and put more money into a grower's pocket.

Top Quality Hay Processors LLC, a new company, has a patent pending process that "changes the way traditional haying is done."

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In that process, Warren noted, his company takes the weather factor out of the equation while increasing marketable tonnage by 50 percent. The result, he said, is a high quality bale of hay with a low moisture content, a high level of protein, consistency in flakes, and free of mold and dust. Just what livestock owners are in

search of, Warren said.

Currently setting up shop at the former Seneca Army Depot in the Town of Romulus, Seneca County, Warren, a Penn Yan resident, wants his company to be in operation in the weeks just ahead.

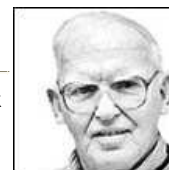
Explaining his operation to the Town of Romulus Planning Board, Warren said Top Quality will turn to area farmers for standing hay within a 20-mile radius of the Romulus plant. The distance is important, he said, because hay needs to be on the dryer within six hours after it is cut.

Top Quality prides itself on the fact, he added, that cut hay never touches the ground. From a cutter, hay is loaded onto lightweight vehicles and trucked to a nearby tractor-trailer for shipment to the Romulus plant.

Cutting and loading, he said, bypasses the usual procedure of allowing cut hay to fall onto the ground and having to wait several days for the crop to dry out or cure. Following Top Quality's plan, Warren explained, a farmer can expect top money for his crop and not have to worry about it sitting on the ground subject to the whims of Mother Nature.

Schuyler Town Talk

Schuyler Town Talk appears every Monday in The Journal. Submit items to Neil Chaffie, PO Box 543, Ovid, NY 14521; 869-5049.



Weighed and recorded at the plant, the crop is placed aboard a conveyor belt and sent to a detangler. From there, it is loaded onto another belt and moves into a radiant heating process where fans dry the crop and may even add a little moisture. Next comes the baling area and storage of 40-pound bales while they await shipment by truck or rail.

Byproducts will include bottled water, alfalfa tea, protein drinks and the bagging of leaf loss or chaff as food for animals such as rabbits and hamsters. Top Quality is working with Cornell University on other by-products, as well.

Warren and Davie, a Geneva farmer, had considered opening their plant on Pre-Emption Road in the Geneva area, but were urged by State senator Michael F. Nozzolio, R-54th Dist., to consider the closed Army base with its vast warehouse space and rail lines. The closed depot lies within Nozzolio's district.


Warren, members of the Warren Family and Davie were in attendance last Monday morning as Nozzolio turned over an \$856,000 check to be used for the purchase of equipment. Warren said the check will be used mostly for equipment allowing Top Quality to boost its planned output from 150 tons of hay this year to 3,000 tons. Top Quality wants to be up to 18,000 tons within three years.

The company notes on its Web site (www.tqhp.com) that it has more than 42 years of farming experience and more than \$1.4 million invested. The plan, Warren said, is to have plants spread about 100 miles apart.




For more information, contact Warren by phone at (315) 694-2527 or e-mail laketolakehay@aol.com.

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