

## CPM AND THE CUBING INDUSTRY

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It would appear that California Pellet Mill Company is a "Johnny come lately" to the hay cubing industry, as well as this program. I would like to put these rumors to rest with a little history of our efforts along this line.

About eighteen years ago, we developed for experimental purposes, a field cubing machine that we spent considerable time and money to develop and test. The product that we produced at that time was much larger than "cubes" as we know them, but basically, we ran into the same problems that field cubers seem to have today:

Variance in moisture from windrow to windrow.

2. Heavy weight of machinery caused compaction in the fields.
3. Capacity of the machinery was limited and caused problems for farmers in watering back the alfalfa crop rapidly enough to obtain maximum yields after cutting, drying, and "wafering".
4. Maintenance of mobile machinery and diesel motors for a six to eight hour day operation seemed excessive to our company.

About the same time, the feed industry did a complete about-face on pelleting equipment with demand and sales doubling virtually every year, so our entire energy and resources went into research, development, and sales to this rapidly expanding market. I might add that these efforts have paid off in the largest percentage of feed, alfalfa, and other commodities being pelleted on California Pellet Mills in the world today.

All the while, we have not forgotten the long fibre packaging of hay and have watched these developments closely in the field units, but decided that the same problems were existent today as they were when we first tried "wafering". What made us really take a lot of interest was stationary cubing and the possibilities that were inherent in these units:

1. Higher capacity per horsepower hour.
2. Lower labor requirements for the machinery.
3. Possibility of 24-hour a day operation.
4. Easier maintenance and operation
5. Possibility of complete ration cubing.

We do believe, based on our 40 plus years of experience in the pelleting business, that stationary cubing will ultimately win the battle for a market that now seems to have no end to its demand for cubes. We also believe that the same principles that are involved in pelleting of feeds and feed ingredients will become standard in the stationary cubing business in the very near future. These principles are:

Uniform feeding of the hay to the equipment.

2. Removal of foreign material from the hay, such as metal and other damaging material.
3. Proper conditioning of the hay before cubing.
  - a. Proper moisture content of hay at the cuber.
  - b. Proper amounts of water or other additives consistently fed to and mixed into hay.

4. Mechanical curing of cubes after manufacturing
- 5 Removal of fines from cubes and return for recubing.
- 6 Mechanical handling, bulk storage, and bulk shipment to lower the cost to the ultimate consumer.
7. Low die and roll cost per ton of cubes manufactured.
8. Quick die and roll changing to lower "down time".
9. 24-hour per day operation of machinery without having to stop for lubrication or various adjustments.

With one season behind us in the stationary cubing business, and with several of the units sold and in operation in various parts of California and New Mexico, California Pellet Mill Company welcomes the challenges of this industry with an eye on closing the "cost gap" between cubing and baling. Who knows but some day people may pay a premium price for bales and we intend to play a part in making this come about.