

IOWA

Farm AND Home REGISTER

A New Feedlot For 1,000 Cattle

By Glenn Cunningham
(Register Staff Writer)

BLOOMFIELD, IA. — A new feedlot and automatic system for feeding 1,000 or more beef cattle a year is being put into operation on a 550-acre Davis county farm six miles north of here.

It is to be one of the largest cattle feeding operations of its kind in this area of southeastern Iowa, according to Raymond Howard and Clifford Winger of Ottumwa, the owners.

Howard, 41, has been improving the pastures since he bought the three farms in the setup in 1958-59. Winger, 43, became a 50-50 partner in the ownership and operation last July 1.

Both men live in Ottumwa and are devoting full time to improvement of the farm, taking care of crops, managing an Angus beef herd of 100 cows and their calves, and getting the feedlot in operation.

weeks ago and found to be in excellent condition.

The operation calls for producing all of the feeder calves they can on their 250 acres of pasture, much of it renovated and improved with a seeding of birdsfoot trefoil, then buying additional feeders.

Howard said they are hoping for an average of two pounds a day gain on cattle on full feed and "we can produce enough feed for 1,000 cattle a year to be finished to a high good or low choice grade."

"I've always before fed cattle to a high choice grade but there's too narrow a spread (margin for profit) for that kind of finish on cattle marketed now," he said.

Howard said they would like to get cattle up to 700 pounds before putting them in the feedlot and it may be that they'll start feeding some grain while calves are on grass and get them up to 800 pounds.

He said that up to now he has fed only his own home-raised calves. He said he'd "always managed to sell in the fall and has been pleased with that market."

Howard, who operated an insurance business in Ottumwa 18 years, sold this interest to a brother, Dale, last year. He also sold his interest in a Kansas City, Mo. insurance firm at the same time.

Winger, who has been associated with three brothers in a construction company, has been "on leave" since July 1 and is just starting to learn the farming business.

THE NEW mechanized feeding setup, on which construction was started a year ago, includes two airtight silos, feed mixing center, bunk-auger system, hay storage building and paved lots.

Investment in the facilities to date totals \$35,000, according to Howard. An additional \$10,000 to \$12,000 is to be spent for another auger and bunk, another building, scales, etc.

The larger silo, 30 by 50 feet, has a capacity of 960 tons of corn silage. The smaller one, 21 by 20, has a capacity of 6,250 bushels of high-moisture shelled corn.

Both were erected in the summer of 1962 and filled with crops harvested in the fall of that year. The contents were tested a few

CLAY BARNETT, Bloomfield farm owner and chairman of the Davis County Soil Conservation District, said Howard has done a wonderful job in clearing and renovating 200 acres of timber pasture.

Howard, who hired a bulldozer to clear the land, said this cost from \$15 to \$50 per acre but that "it's well worth it when you consider improvement of the farm and income return from improved pasture."

"You can make as much profit from grazing an acre of trefoil as you can from an acre of hay," he said. "If you can raise a 400 to 500-pound calf on an acre of pasture that's not a bad return."

Here's the way Howard improved his cleared land:

Sticks and small limbs were left on the land. This helped prevent erosion on newly-cleared slopes or hillsides. Agricultural lime was spread the same year of clearing.

The soil was left to settle until the next year when Howard used a heavy duty disk to prepare a seedbed

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Clear Brush, Timber From 145 Acres

FEEDLOT—

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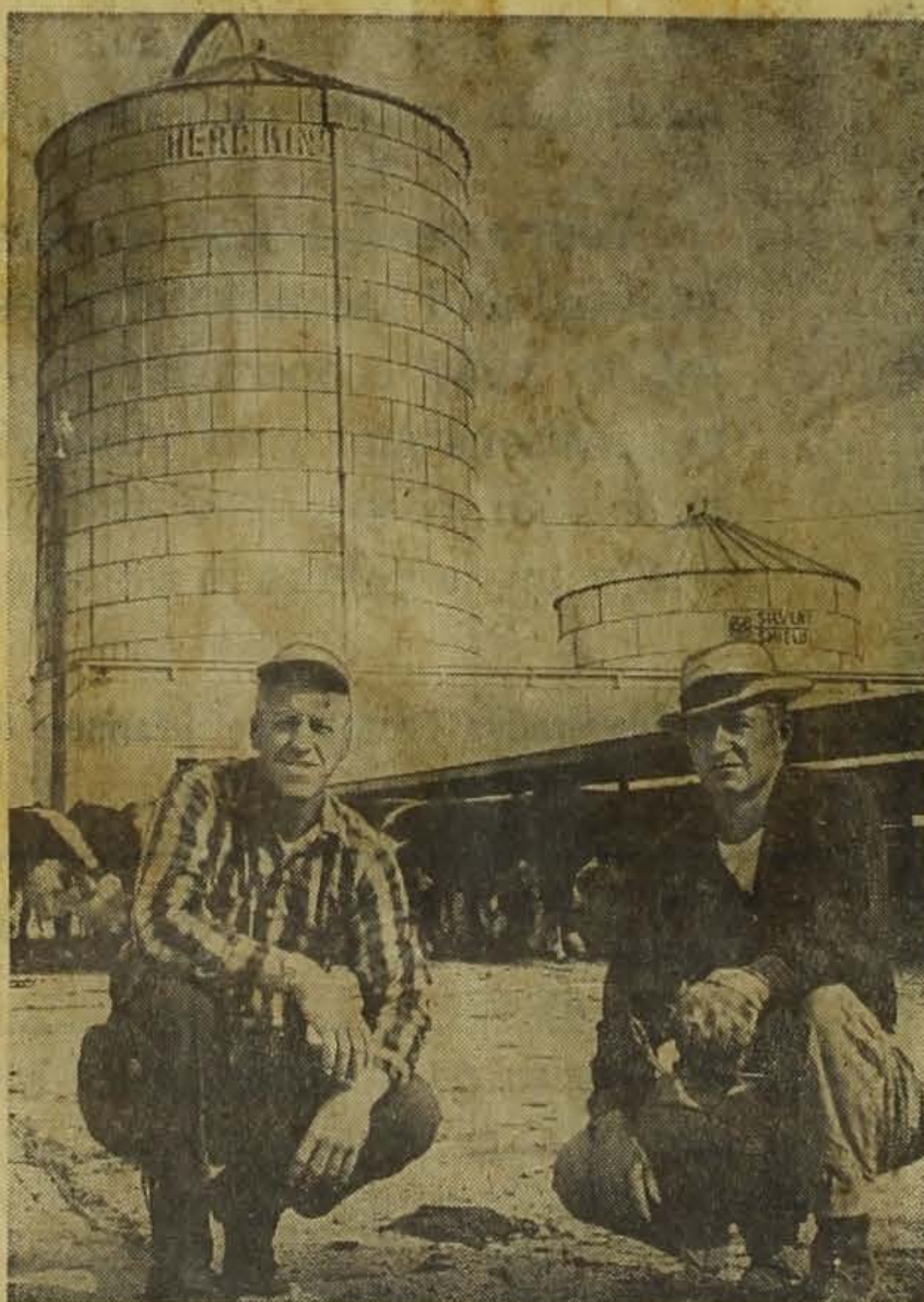
and after seeding it was disked again.

His rate of seeding is 5 or 6 pounds of birdsfoot trefoil and 6 to 8 pounds of orchard grass per acre. This is heavier than normal because he is sowing seed on rough ground.

He topdresses his pastures with phosphate and nitrogen every other year and says trefoil and orchard grass stay green right up to freeze-up.

Howard cleared about 145 acres of brush and timber, still has 15 acres to clear and improve. He has a 15-acre tract he is leaving in its original state "so we can always see what all of it was like."

There are six ponds and two erosion control structures on the farm. These provide water for all pastures. Pipes carry water to tanks equipped with float controls.



Winger (left) and Howard in the new feedlot.