

Dairy Extension Specialist Recommends:

Put High-Moisture Corn in Silo

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Ensiling high-moisture corn can provide an economical and convenient method of storing corn grain that is to be fed to livestock on a farm.

This method of storage makes artificial drying unnecessary, reduces risks from mold and blight problems, and enables heavy purchase of grain at the depressed prices often present at harvest time.

Most research indicates that the feeding value of high-moisture corn for dairy cows usually is similar to that for dry grain, when fed on an equal dry matter basis. For fattening cattle, high-moisture corn often may have about 10 per cent greater feeding value on a dry matter basis.

Silos to be used for storing high-moisture grain must be

reasonably air-tight and adequately reinforced with extra hoops and the like. High-moisture ear corn which has been adequately ground or otherwise prepared will keep well in most upright silos that are in good condition. Well-built and properly used horizontal silos have been used satisfactorily in some cases.

Prepared high-moisture shelled corn requires close management and extremely good silo conditions. It is best to use only gas-tight silos for storage of high-moisture whole shelled corn. Ensiled whole shelled corn should be prepared before being fed to dairy cows.

Suggested moisture ranges for ensiling corn are, as follows: Ear corn at 30-40 per cent moisture for the whole-ear (32 per cent preferred), and shelled corn at a kernel moisture of 25-

30 per cent (28 per cent preferred). Dry shelled corn also may be reconstituted to a moisture level of 25 per cent for ensiling purposes.

Corn to be ensiled may be prepared using a burr mill, hammermill, crushers or rollers, and certain types of blowers, field choppers and pickers equipped with recutting screens and other special attachments. Preparation of ear corn before ensiling should be equivalent to that attained by grinding with a 3/4 to 1 inch screen.

During warm weather at least 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 inches of corn should be removed daily to prevent spoilage. Corn removed should be fed within 12 to 24 hours after removal to prevent heating and spoilage. Silo size should be tailored to herd needs.

Generally, ensiled high-moisture corn is extremely palatable to cattle. Too frequently dairy-men who lack experience with high-moisture corn will overfeed it and/or fail to adequately balance their ration with sufficient protein and minerals.

Users of high-moisture corn should take advantage of forage testing and professional feed programming. These services

are available from Penn State and other sources.

When properly ensiled and fed in a balanced ration, feeding high-moisture corn produces good results, and sometimes may even reduce problems with feed refusals and digestive upsets in high-producing herds.

Feeding a blend of high-mois-

ture corn and a concentrate or supplement is preferred over separate feeding in many situations. Preparing a complete ration at feeding time of high-moisture corn, supplement and forage offers even greater advantages.

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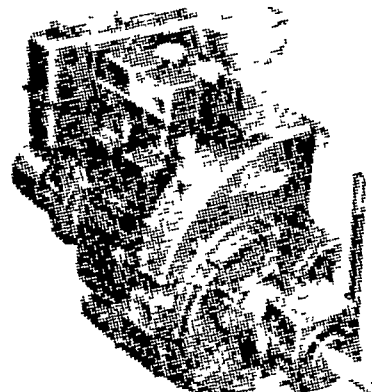
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