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High prices for protein supplement make it important for farmers to consider adding a nonprotein-nitrogen (NPN) source to

NPN Boosts Silage Value

corn silage at ensiling time, says County Agent M. M. Smith. This should be done, however, only if the moisture level of the ensilage is in the normal range of 63-70 percent moisture.

Adding NPN to materail that is too dry or too wet (lots of seepage) may result in abnormal fermentation and reduced palatability of the silage, says Smith.

Urea is one of the most economical and widely used NPN additives for silage. Adding urea at the rate of 10 pounds per ton of material ensiled can appreciably raise the crude protein equivalent content of corn silage to about 12-13 percent on a dry matter basis.

This makes corn silage almost equal to mixed mainly legume forage in protein content. This protein supplementation by means of the grain mix or concentrate can be markedly reduced. For example, a 14 percent grain mix may then be adequate for dairy cows on a high corn silage ration.

commercial

preparations containing urea, anhyxdrous ammonia or ammonium phosphate plus added minerals also are available as additives. A farmer should compare the cost of his feeding program using these against urea alone, plus proper mineral feeding before choosing an NPN source for addition at ensiling, says Smith.

Fewer problems often are encountered with the use of urea as a silage additive than when it is included in a grain mix. Part of the NPN is converted to less soluble forms of nitrogen during the ensiling process. This may increase utilization of nitrogen and reduce possibilities of toxieity including off-feed conditions.

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