

# Dairy Pipeline

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## Harvesting Corn Early

Many dairymen are low on corn silage and corn grain. They will be harvesting some of their corn as early as possible, perhaps as green chop. Others will be feeding hot, uncured silage.

While these normally are not recommended practices, they can help stretch present feed supplies, and tie a dairyman over until some better or more economical feeds become available.

Here are a few thoughts which may help you make the best of a bad situation.

## Green Chopping Corn

If you have to feed green chopped corn, don't be surprised if both production and fat test drop. Chances are, it's lower in protein, lower in fiber, higher in moisture, and different in nutrient content than what you had been feeding. You may have difficulty getting sufficient dry matter into the cows, and you should be alert to other adjustments that are necessary to keep the ration balanced.

Don't wait until you are completely out of forage before you start green chopping. Start while you still have some higher protein, higher fiber, drier forages to feed along with the green chop. This should help cows make better use

of the feed and reduce the risk of digestive upsets, butterfat depressions and production losses.

Or maybe you will want to restrict the feeding of green chopped corn to certain groups of cattle. Heifers, dry cows, and tail-enders probably will be affected less by it than higher producers.

## Uncured Silage

It's very easy to throw cows "off" by feeding hot, uncured silage. It's a problem many dairymen face, especially those who have only one silo, and depend upon custom filling services. And, once cows are off, it's hard to bring them back again!

It certainly would be nice to have two silos and two different harvesting dates to work with! Then, you could always be feeding cured silage out of one silo while the other is being filled and cured.

In the absence of an addition silo, you might be able to fall back on a stack or bag to carry you through the filling season. Yes, it may be more inconvenient and you may have more storage and feeding losses. But if you can avoid throwing your herd off, it may be worth the extra inconvenience, losses and costs.

To do this, you'll need to cut some silage early, perhaps an earlier-planted, early maturing field. Several weeks later, you

could then fill the other silo.

If you don't have any early corn, still fill a bag or more a stack for feeding out of next year at filling time; that'll help you next year but it doesn't solve this year's problem. This method has the advantage of concentrating all silo filling activities into one period of time.

To minimize the problems of heating, of feeding uncured silage, and of poor bunk life, consider using a silage preservative, especially on the silage you will be feeding out first.

Some additives, such as ammonia, work as a preservative, while also providing an economical source of protein (NPN). However, ammonia is dangerous to handle, and excess amounts in the feed can be toxic to cattle. So, if you use ammonia, be careful, and follow the recommendations precisely.

## Immature Corn

Another alternative, if you don't have any early corn is to cut the corn at an immature stage and put it in a stack or trench. This material will be high in moisture, and will be better suited to a stack or trench where juices can escape. To help boost the energy content of the material, and to help dilute the moisture, ground ear corn, or some other dry form of energy, could be added to the silage at time of ensiling.

Several problems associated with harvesting immature corn are: you sacrifice yield - that's a hidden cost to you, the material is higher in moisture and it's lower in fiber and energy.

So, if your present silage is in short supply, don't cut the entire crop at an immature stage. Limit this to only the amount you need now, and as I mentioned earlier, be sure to make any adjustments in the ration that are necessary for keeping it properly balanced.

As silo filling time approaches, you still have time to make a few decisions and adjustments which might help carry you through this year's situations and pave the way for a better situation next year. Take time to think about your situation and your options - now, rather than after silo filling time.

# Mason-Dixon

## Erosion Control Project covers 14 Pa. counties

CHAMBERSBURG — Franklin County is part of the Mason-Dixon Erosion Control Project covering 14 counties in Pennsylvania and eight counties in Maryland and two counties in Delaware for special conservation assistance.

This area is rated as one of the most productive agricultural areas in the northeastern United States, states John R. Akers, District Conservationist for the Chambersburg Field Office of the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

Average annual soil losses in the Mason-Dixon Erosion Control Area are estimated to average 17 tons per acre per year on unprotected cropland. This greatly exceeds the normally acceptable soil losses of two to four tons per acre per year.

The Special Project Area in Franklin County is a 161,944-acre area located primarily in the shale area of Franklin County. The five townships of Hamilton, Lettorkenny, Lurgan, Montgomery, and St. Thomas comprise the Special Project area or about 34 percent of Franklin County.

Some of the shale soils farmed in the Special Project Area have less than 20 inches of soil over shale rock. When 40 inches is considered a deep soil, erosion losses on these shallow soils must be held to less than two tons per acre per year which is a thin sheet of less than 1/64 of an inch per acre per year. Sheet erosion is not visible to the naked eye. Therefore, when one observes rills or small gullies, the losses are three to five times the acceptable loss per acre per year.

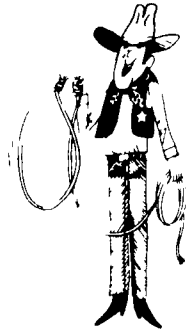
With above average rainfall for June and July this year, erosion losses have been very visible with rills and in some places gullies have formed since corn was planted in the spring. It is too late to prevent these losses but planning can be done this fall to minimize the soil erosion losses for next year.

Anyone desiring conservation planning or practice assistance may contact the Soil Conservation Service office at 550 Cleveland Avenue, Chambersburg, or call 264-7013 for an on-farm appointment.

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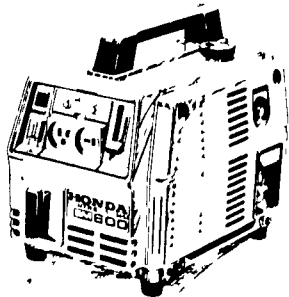
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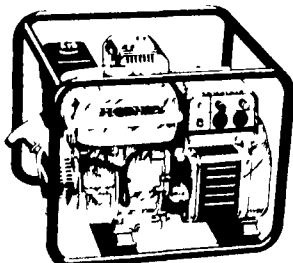


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