## orn age

(Continued from Page C11)

ears and has leaves that have tumed brown and are falling off. Be careful not to harvest prematurely because corn with ears and some green leaves may still have the potential to resume growth and accumulate dry matter later in the season. The net energy content of drought damaged corn often is 85-100 percent of nommal, and it sometimes contains slightly more crude protein. One concern with drought stressed corn is the potential for high nitrate levels in the silage. High nitrate levels are found most frequently where excessive nitrogen rates were applied and when a drought stressed crop was chopped within three days following a rain. Ensiling crops that are suspected to have high nitrate levels is preferred to green chopping, because the fermentation process will decrease nitrate levels by about 50 percent. When in doubt, obtain a forage analysis with nitrate determination before feeding the questionable forage.

Silage additives

are the more widely used additives

for whole-plant corn silage. They

are used primarily to increase the

crude protein content of corn sil-

age. Anhydrous ammonia also

tends to reduce protein breakdown

Urea and anhydrous ammonia

## in the ensiled crop and may result in a higher true protein content than obtained with urea. It is not as widely available as urea. Preferably, additions of these nonprotein nitrogen compounds (NPN) should be limited to the amount necessary to raise the crude protein content from about 8.5 percent to 13 percent, measured on a dry matter basis. Appreciably higher levels may hinder femmentation and increase the risk of toxicity from certain clostridial bacteria or excessive NPN in the diet. Add NPN at a level to provide 0.15 pound of actual nitrogen (N) for each percentage of silage dry matter. For example, if the silage contains 70 percent moisture and 30 percent dry matter (DM), add approximately 10 pounds of urea per ton (45 percent N). This is computed, as follows:

Ib N/ton =  $0.15 \times \%$  DM (0.15 x 30 = 4.5)

Ib Urea/ton = 4.5/ %N as decimal (4.5/.45 = 10)

Note: Urea=45% N; Anhydrous ammonia = 82% N

Preferably, NPN should be added only when the dry matter content of the silage is between 30 to 40 percent, which avoids abnormal femmentation and losses of added nitrogen (N).

Silage Preservatives And Inoculants Most preservatives and inoculants are aimed at promoting lactic acid production, reducing dry matter losses during storage, reducing heating, and increasing bunk life. In some cases, one or more of these benefits have occurred in controlled studies, but not in all trials. Likewise, some improvement in milk production has been found in some studies, but not in others.

Research has included organic acids, such as propionic or aceticpropionic mixtures or their salts, certain enzymes alone or in combination with antioxidants, as well as silage inoculants containing one or more types of bacteria. When used, these products should be added according to the manufacturer's

directions. Some people advise their use routinely for insurance purposes. The products cannot, however, overcome poor practices for ensiling, feeding, or managing silos.

Since whole-plant com silage typically is well preserved, preservatives and inoculants should not be used routinely. They should be considered, however, when the crop is ensiled at moisture levels under 63 percent and over 70 percent. They also may be considered for use in the top or bottom third of horizontal silos, depending upon the expense for treatment and the potential for spoilage.

## Transferring corn silage

Occasionally, it is desirable to transfer corn silage from one silo to another. This often can be done with a minimum of risk, if silage is well-preserved, as indicated by smell and bunk life or pH level. The transfer should be made during cool weather and done as quickly as possible.

Prepared by: Greg W. Roth, assistant professor of com managemen and Richard S. Adams, professor of daury science.

Where trade names appear, no discrumination is intended, and no endorsement by Penn State Cooperative Extension is implied.

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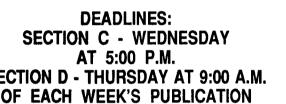
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