

New York dairy producer is convinced . . .

"There is a difference in hybrids for corn silage"

As operator of a 250-cow milking herd near Adams, N.Y., Larry Stinson was intrigued by data from Cargill Hybrid Seeds showing that some corn hybrids harvested for corn silage are more digestible and have better feeding qualities than others.

"But even though I am a Cargill Hybrid Seeds dealer, I had to sell myself first," said Stinson. "The concept sounded interesting, but I wasn't going to recommend it to my customers before I was comfortable with the program. Like other dairymen, I had generally thought that corn silage was corn silage and that total tonnage per acre was about all that mattered."

To "field-test" the concept, Stinson filled two upright silos with two different Cargill hybrids. One contained a hybrid that the research showed to be more digestible than the other.

"Although it wasn't scientific research, I was amazed that cows fed from one of the silos consumed five pounds more dry matter of total ration and produced more pounds of milk per day than when they were fed from the other silo. Now I use the program to recommend silage hybrids for all of my customers," he said.

Wide Quality Differences

University and Cargill Hybrid Seeds research conducted since 1987 shows large differences in both forage and grain yields, and in silage-quality attributes for different



Above: Dr. John Ferry (left), a dairy management consultant, analyzes dairy rations for Larry Stinson, Adams, N.Y.
Left: Stinson's cows are fed silage produced from hybrids that rate high in key forage quality traits.

hybrids. Cargill research shows the average hybrid differences for the following traits: Neutral detergent fiber (NDF)-17%; crude protein-14%; fiber (NDF) digestibility-12%; and whole plant digestibility-6%.

Those quality differences can amount to thousands of dollars per year from reduced soybean meal and corn supplement costs.

Dr. John Ferry, a dairy management consultant who works with Stinson, said hybrid differences in digestibility and other feeding traits have important bottom-line implications.

"I think we too often latch onto every feed product or gee-whiz thing that comes along that might increase total production without looking carefully at the cost implications," said Ferry. "But cost per hundred-weight of milk is what's important. And hybrid selection for quality traits is an important method of

improving production without increasing costs. Improved rumen digestibility means cows will consume more, increasing milk production. And by improving rumen digestibility we can reduce input costs from other feed sources," he said.

A Menu Designed For You

Cargill Hybrid Seeds has developed a database of corn-silage traits that can be used to identify hybrid genetics with superior tonnage and enhanced feed value. The resulting menu—divided by maturity groups—lists key forage quality traits that show which hybrids within a maturity are best suited for corn silage production.

To determine the hybrids with the highest profit potential for your dairy or beef cattle, contact your local Cargill Hybrid Seeds dealer. Or, call 1-800-657-4810.



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