

How Much Is That Corn Silage Worth?

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NORTH CORNWALL (Lebanon Co.) — If corn silage were not available, a standard alternative would be to feed dry hay and corn. So, calculating a price for corn silage should be based on a price equivalent to these more widely available feedstuffs.

These commodities prices are often listed in farm publications, making these calculations more transparent.

On a dry matter basis, 1 ton of average corn silage is equivalent to about 5 tons of ear corn.

From this base, adjustments should be made for moisture, harvest, and transportation.

Base Price For Alternative Feeds

Average quality grass hay at 90% dry matter.
/tons X .5 = (a)

Ear corn at 90% dry matter.
/tons X .5 =
X (factor) = (b)

* Because some year's silage includes less ear corn than normal, you may need to adjust the ear corn value in the base price. This is especially important in a dry year. Simply give the standing corn a score from 1 (little or no ear formation) to 5 (normal) and use the applicable factor that corresponds to the score.

Ear Score	Factor
1	2
2	.5
3	7
4	9
5	1.0

Total (a) and (b) for a base price at 90% DM.
(a) + (b) = (base)

Correcting For Moisture

%DM of purchased silage/
%DM of base silage (90%)
X (base)
= (moisture adjusted price)

Harvesting

Large capacity custom operators can harvest corn silage for about \$2 per ton. Individual farmers may have higher costs. To be fair to the seller, a standard range should be used to calculate the cost of turning standing corn into chopped material. Depending on the convenience of the field and other factors affecting field work efficiency, the silage price should be reduced by \$3 to \$4 for harvesting.

Transportation

This sheet calculates a price f.o.b. from the seller's farm, so transportation cost applies only when the seller transports. In that case, when the seller transports, transportation is added to the price.

A loose standard for this cost is 50-cents/mile/ton. If the buyer hauls, then no transportation adjustment is necessary.

(Note: f.o.b. stands for "free on board" and means that a seller agrees to put something on a truck or other mode of transportation at no charge, but the transportation costs must be paid by the buyer. The term is widely used in business.)

Additives

Additives are only a concern when buying silage already chopped. Anyone can add anything to silage and claim it makes the silage worth more.

Often this is very true, but sometimes conditions and application rates negate the effectiveness of the additive.

Sometimes the additive covers up an otherwise poor management decision. These instances should not be the concern of the buyer. Don't pay more, sight unseen, for anything added to silage.

If there is a question about the improvement to the silage, have it tested. The seller is entitled to a premium for higher quality silage.

However, the buyer is not automatically indebted to the seller for everything added to the mixture.

Other Considerations

Inspect samples throughout the purchasing process. If the corn is sold standing in the field, be certain to close the deal in time to harvest at proper maturity and moisture.

It should not be the seller's concern (discount) if late chopped (by the buyer) silage has poor feed quality.

When purchasing fermented silage, check for fineness of cut, odors, and molds. Any aspects that do not meet the buyer's standards are valid points for negotiating a discount.

On the other hand, if you really need corn silage and no other is available, your bargaining position is weak, leaving you no choice but to pay more. At that point, you should consider your option to feed grass hay and corn until silage does become available at a price and quality you can accept.

EXAMPLE:

Let's say you want to buy corn from a neighbor to chop and put in your own silo. The going rate for ear corn is \$80 and the price for average grass hay is \$110.

Walking through the field showed you that the ears are slightly off from what would be there in a normal year, so you would score the ears a '4.' You expect to make the silage at 70 percent moisture (30% DM). What price should you offer for the silage?

Hay	\$55
Corn	\$36 (80x.5x.9)
Total	\$91 at 90%DM

Correct for moisture .30/.90 x \$91 = \$30.34

You will harvest the silage with good equipment, but the field has some oddities making it harder to operate in. Deduct \$3.34 from the price for harvesting.

\$30.34 - \$3.34 = \$27 per ton.

This \$27 is the price offered for the corn in this example. For your own situation, follow the same calculations, adjusting as the situation fits.

For more information, contact a local Penn State Extension farm management agent.

4-H & FFA Martinsburg Dairy Show

LINDA WILLIAMS
Lancaster Farming
Correspondent

MARTINSBURG (Blair Co.)
— The annual Morrison Cove 4-H and FFA Dairy Show was held on August 3 at the Memorial Park.
MORRISON COVE
4-H, FFA DAIRY SHOW

MILKING SHORTHORNS

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SENIOR 3-YEAR-OLD: 1. Edna Schilling.
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SENIOR CHAMPION, RESERVE SENIOR CHAMPION, GRAND CHAMPION & RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION: Edna Schilling.

QUERNEY

JUNIOR CALVES: 1. Jan Snider. 2. Shareen Hershberger. 3. James Oldham.
INTERMEDIATE CALVES: 1. Aaron Gable. 2. Kendy Gable. 3. Joey Oldham.
SENIOR CALVES: 1. James Oldham. 2. John D. Morrow. 3. Shareen Hershberger.
SUMMER YEARLINGS: 1. Aaron Gable.

2. James Oldham. 3. Joey Oldham.
JUNIOR YEARLINGS: 1. Mark Snider. 2. James Oldham. 3. Shareen Hershberger.
INTERMEDIATE YEARLINGS: 1. Jan Snider. 2. James Oldham.
SENIOR YEARLINGS: 1. Shareen Hershberger.
JUNIOR CHAMPION: Jan Snider.
RESERVE JUNIOR CHAMPION: Aaron Gable.
JUNIOR 2-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Kendy Gable.
SENIOR 2-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Kendy Gable.

JUNIOR 3-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Aaron Gable. 2. Kendy Gable.
SENIOR 3-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Mary Morrow. 2. Kendy Gable. 3. Joey Oldham.
4-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Kristi Snider.
5-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Jan Snider.
AGED COWS: 1. Aaron Gable. 2. Kristi Snider.
DRY COWS: 1. Aaron Gable. 2. Kendy Gable. 3. Shareen Hershberger.
JUNIOR HERD: 1. Aaron Gable. 2. Kendy Gable. 3. Joey Oldham.

SENIOR CHAMPION: Jan Snider.
RESERVE SENIOR CHAMPION: Aaron Gable.
GRAND CHAMPION: Jan Snider.
RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION: Aaron Gable.
BROWN SWISS
SUMMER YEARLINGS: 1. Nicholas Burkett.
JUNIOR 2-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Edna Schilling.

SENIOR 2-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Jason Mowry.
JUNIOR 3-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Nicholas Burkett.
4-YEAR-OLDS: 1. Edna Schilling.
AGED COWS: 1. & 2. Edna Schilling.
JUNIOR HERD: 1. Edna Schilling.
SENIOR CHAMPION: Nick Burkett.
RESERVE SENIOR: Jason Mowry.
GRAND CHAMPION: Nick Burkett.
RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION: Jason Mowry.

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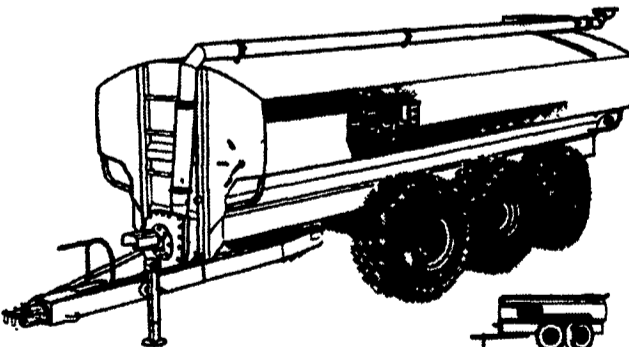
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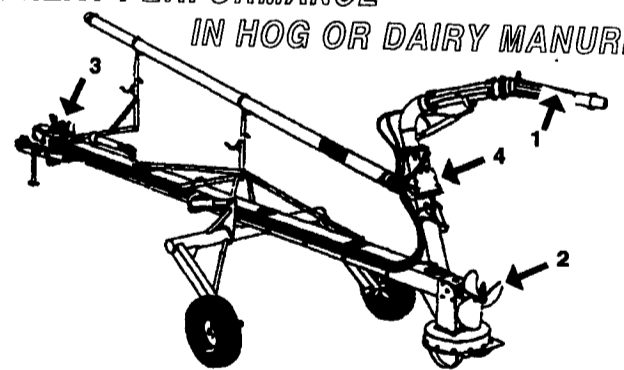
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