

Examine Agronomic, Nutritional Traits To Make Best Hybrid Selections

DES MOINES, Iowa - Select corn silage hybrids with strong production agronomics first, and then fine-tune the selection for nutritional differences.

That's the recommendation to silage growers and livestock producers from Dr. Bill Mahanna, nutritionist with Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc the leading producer of silage hybrids in North America

"As silage growers start feeding this year's crop and begin to make decisions for next year's planting, it is important to look carefully at the total value package of each silage hybrid," Mahanna said. "Agronomics, yield potential, and the nutritional profile of each hybrid must be viewed along with the agronomic needs of the farming operation and the nutritional needs of the ration"

According to Mahanna, corn silage is growing in importance as forage for livestock because of its high tonnage potential (the reason agronomics is key), relatively low labor requirements, ability to receive manure applications, high energy density and feeding consistency

"Before we can worry about nutrition, the plant has to emerge from the ground and yield," Mahanna said. "Silage yield is still the biggest driver of profitability per acre. Granted, 'bite-for-bite' energy density is desirable, but producers cannot sacrifice very much yield and still make their cropping (or livestock) enterprise profitable"

The importance of various agronomic traits depends upon individual customer needs, as well as environmental conditions and soil types. To maximize yields, growers should look at drought stress tolerance, brit-

tle stalk resistance, root and stalk strength, early growth, staygreen (late-season plant health) and, in some cases, corn borer resistance

At the same time, however, silage producers must understand that nutritional quality can vary significantly between hybrids. So, when selecting corn for silage, Mahanna advises growers follow the same priority that was reported by a recent four-year silage hybrid study conducted at the University of Wisconsin. They should consider yield (tons of dry matter), high grain content (percent starch), standability, and proper relative maturity

Nutritionally, corn silage is unique because it is made up of grain and forage, said Mahanna. This presents challenges from both a laboratory analysis and ration-balancing perspective. Fortunately, silage producers can begin to "benchmark" the value of hybrids by cooperating in silage yield tests and by monitoring the two key nutrients that contribute to the energy of corn silage - starch and sugar content and the digestibility of the cell wall (dNDF). These test are available at a reasonable cost from many laboratories.

In choosing products, silage producers should partner with seed companies that can provide reliable yield and nutritional data. Hybrid decisions should be based on data from at least 20 test locations collected over a number of growing seasons. This ensures that observed differences are genetic and not the result of environment, harvest maturity or sampling error.

"It is important to have enough information on silage hybrids to make decisions that will benefit both the cropping and livestock enterprise for the entire year," Mahanna said. "The payoff is worth the effort."

Meat Safety Program Reduces Salmonella

PARK RIDGE, ILL - A meat safety program implemented in large meat packing operations two years ago has sharply reduced the presence of disease-causing salmonella bacteria in meat, according to the USDA

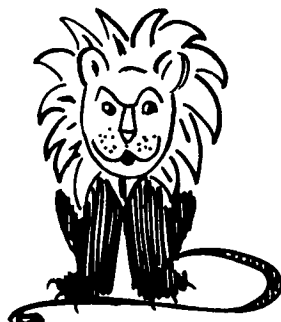
Under the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system, salmonella incidence has fallen by as much as 50 percent at most slaughter houses. The only exception was on pig carcasses in small packing houses.

Large slaughterhouses for poultry and livestock have been under the HACCP regime for two years, small plants for one

year and very small plants since January.

Ninety percent of the 300 large plants and 84 percent of the 2,300 small plants have met salmonella performance standards under HACCP, the Agriculture Department stated. Of the 3,162 very small plants - those with fewer than 10 workers and less than \$2.5 million in annual sales - 185 have withdrawn from federal inspection.

HACCP, first developed as a way to assure food safety for U.S. astronauts, calls on food processors to identify danger spots for food contamination and to resolve them. Before HACCP, carcasses were examined by hand for wholesomeness.



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JD Corn Planter 7000, Exc Cond. Used One Season. 814-448-0147

JD 850, 4WD, loader & backhoe, good cond \$11,500. 410-239-1502

Kuhn 4-star tedder pull-type \$1475; NH 477 haybine 7', excellent, \$3200; JD 10' packer \$775; AC 8-ton running gear, \$775. 610/562-4464.

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MF 65 gas, rebuilt w/ Allied loader, \$6300; Howse 76' HD 3ph brush cutter, \$2100. 315/688-2610, 717/892-3888.

FNH 499 haybine, hydro swing, 12' cut, field ready, \$4000. 717-530-1004

Kawane fold gang disc, 13.6 cut, H.D frame. Call Mornings 7:30-10:30 717-949-3769

White 543 corn planter, 6x30, no-fill, dry fert, monitor, \$1,200. 301-898-7426.

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NI 5212 disc MC, red Agco, exc. Call Mornings 7:30-10:30 717-949-3769

8x8x18 bale wagon, wooden sides, \$750; Athens 7-tooth disc chisel, \$3650; Int. 4R S-fine cultivator, new, \$775; NH 461 haybine, \$3500. 610-562-4464.

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IH 510 soybean drill, 24 hoe, DD, nice, \$1,500. 301-898-7426.

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NH 499 haybine, \$2,800, field ready, sold farm, 301-898-7426.

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