

CORN SILAGE HARVEST

CORN SILAGE HARVEST CONSIDERATIONS

The corn crop continues to move along towards maturity. Hot temperatures and areas of low rainfall can cause corn plants to mature much quicker than expected. In times of increased crop stress whole plant moisture can drop much faster than the milkline may indicate. Harvest timing of corn silage is one of the most important decisions that will be made on a dairy farm.

Harvesting corn silage at an appropriate moisture helps preserve the best feed quality and yield and ensures good storage characteristics. You can follow these guidelines for target harvest moistures based on the storage structure being used: upright silo, 60-65%; bunker silo, 65-70%; silage bag, 60-70%. To estimate harvest moisture, begin by remembering the date that tassels emerged in the field. Silks will emerge shortly after tassels; from silk emergence 45 days are needed for the corn kernels to reach 50% milkline. While kernel milkline and whole plant moisture are not necessarily connected it is a good indication to begin moisture testing. Once the whole plant moisture is known, an average moisture dry down rate of 0.5% per day can be used to predict when to begin harvesting. Harvested silage

moisture content can be estimated using a “grab test.” When a handful of silage is squeezed for 20-30 seconds and holds its shape, the moisture content is over 75%. If the squeezed silage ball quickly falls apart the moisture content is likely between 60 and 70%. Silage that will not stay together when squeezed is dryer than 60% moisture. Silage that is too wet may have issues with fermentation and seep nutrient rich juices when packed. Whereas silage harvested too dry is difficult to pack causing air pockets where mold can develop. Digestibility and crude protein can also decline when harvest is delayed. Corn silage should be cut into 0.5 to 0.75-inch-long pieces for improved packing and storage qualities. Silage particles of this length can be packed firmly, ferment more evenly and are more palatable.

Legacy Seeds’ Ration Choice Leafy Corn Hybrids offer an extended harvest window because they are selectively bred for a slower rate of dry down in both the plant and ear. The Leafy Corn Hybrids will stay near 65% whole plant moisture and 50% milkline for a longer period than a typical dual-purpose corn silage hybrid. This helps the odds of harvesting and storing the best quality feed.



WALKING FIELDS

GRAIN FILL UPDATE

August has presented more challenges for the 2020 growing season. Heavy storms and Derecho through the Corn Belt, timely rains for some, droughty conditions for others but very warm temperatures throughout the month. At the Research and Learning Center in Waupaca, Wisconsin there was less than an inch of accumulated rainfall through the month. Warm temperatures have pushed crops along quickly. At the beginning of the month we were 83 GDD’s ahead of the 30-year average of 1581. Now at the end of the month we are almost 140 GDD’s ahead of the 30-year average. These conditions have created some stressful conditions for crops trying to fill grain. Corn requires about 0.25 inches of rain per day during grain fill and most heavy soils can only hold 2 inches of moisture per foot of rooting depth. Early season root development is showing to be critical right now. Test weight will be the first to suffer followed by kernel abortion and in some cases stalk cannibalization. Soybeans tolerate short periods of drought stress very well because of the overlapping developmental stages, however, long periods of drought stress can reduce the number of pods, seeds per pod and seed size. These stress reactions by the plant are ultimately caused by nodules stopping the nitrogen fixation process because of a lack of soil moisture and carbohydrate supply from the soybean plant.

ASR IN CORN

ANTHRACNOSE STALK ROT SCOUTING

Continued scouting of fields through the black layer or physiological maturity will prove to be invaluable as conditions seem favorable for harvest standability issues. Begin in fields and areas that have experienced a considerable amount of stress. Identify five representative areas of the field and evaluate the standability of a minimum of 20 plants. Evaluate standability by pushing the stalk at the ear to 45 degrees. Along with pushing the stalk, also pinch the stalk at the first internode above the brace roots and at the first internode below the ear. Use these findings to help prioritize the harvest order of fields or hybrids. Anthracnose Stalk Rot; is one of the most common stalk rots. Black shiny lesions form on the surface of the stalk and rotting pith causes stalk lodging. Burying infected residue with tillage is an effective way to manage anthracnose stalk rot. Other management includes selecting ASR hybrids that have anthracnose stalk rot resistance genes that provide some very good resistance to the pathogen. Legacy has many ASR hybrids across many trait platforms and maturities to help manage standability and late season plant health.



FINAL ALFALFA CUTTING

CUTTING TIMING AND FROST

Every year around the first part of September Legacy's alfalfa team always gets asked the same question, "should I cut my alfalfa?" My instant gut reaction is "NO!" but a series of questions likely clears things up for the grower. "What is the "normal" frost date in your area?" The "average" frost date in the trade territory is anywhere from September 10th to the 20th. An alfalfa plant will continue to deplete the root reserves for up to ten days after cutting, and it will take about four weeks to replenish those reserves. Depleting these reserves dramatically affects the winter survival of the plant. Typically, an alfalfa plant will not start to restore the carbohydrates in the crown until it is about 8-10 inches tall. "Do you need the feed?" If feed is needed, growers should cut after a killing frost, which is 23° for several hours and leave four to six inches of stubble. If this is not followed you can expect to lose at least the amount harvested from next years' first crop harvest. For the best chance of winter survival, a stand needs five to six weeks of growth leading up to a killing frost and very good soil fertility.

WHEAT SEEDS PER POUND

LEGACY SEEDS 2020 WHEAT SEEDS PER POUND

Wheat seeding season is breathing down our necks with the Hessian fly free date coming up during the second week of September. Seeding rate recommendations should start around 1.2 million seeds per acre in mid-late September and increase to 1.6 million seeds per acre near October 1st. In early October seeding rates should increase to 1.8 to 2 million seeds per acre before the first killing frost.

2020 Seeds per pound by variety

- LW1155	14,400 SPP	- LW1785	14,638 SPP
- LW1776	13,399 SPP	- LW1785	12,705 SPP
- LW1911	12,816 SPP	- LW2022	12,816 SPP

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