



CropLinks Sept. 14, 2018

Corn Silage Harvest

The return of the fall rain often signals the beginning of corn silage harvest. In most areas of the province corn silked during the first week of August. Silage is normally ready 45 days from this point. Full maturity (black layer) is normally 60 days after silking. The kernel milk-line is usually used to determine when to harvest corn silage. First identify if the corn is dented. Then break the cob in half and look at the kernels from the side. After denting, there is a whitish line that can be seen on the kernels. This line divides the solid and liquid parts of the kernel. As the crop matures this line will progress from the outer edge of the kernel toward the centre of the cob. When the kernels are fully mature and the black layer has formed this is 100% milk-line. The target for silage harvest is when the milk-line is one half to two thirds the way down the kernel. At this maturity starch accumulation is maximized while digestibility has not declined a great deal. The kernel can be opened from the side to confirm the division between the solid and liquid proportions. Each $\frac{1}{4}$ movement in milk-line normally takes about one week. For example; moving from $\frac{1}{4}$ milk-line to $\frac{1}{2}$ milk-line takes about a week. And moving from $\frac{1}{2}$ milk-line to $\frac{3}{4}$ milk-line takes about a week.

From here you need to look at the moisture content of the plant. There can be quite a range of whole plant moisture even when the cobs show $\frac{1}{2}$ milk-line. Putting up silage too dry makes packing too difficult, making the fermentation process much slower, leading to heating and dry matter loss. Harvesting wet silage can lead to seepage, clostridia fermentation and poor pH drop.

Correct moisture levels depend on the silo type:

Horizontal bunker silos 65-70%

Bag silos 60-68%

Tower silos 62-67%

To determine whole plant moisture, some corn stalks should be run through the harvester and the [microwave method](#) used.

If the sample comes back too wet, you can wait to harvest, expecting to lose .5% of moisture per day. This time can lengthen or shorten slightly depending on the weather. Once you hit the field with the harvester, moisture can be managed slightly by raising or lowering the cutting height. Increasing the cutting height by one foot often decreases the moisture by 2-4%. There is a lot of moisture held within the corn plant stock.

Lastly, take the time to check and see if your kernel processor is giving you adequate processing by checking the silage coming out of the spout. Take a 1 litre sample (32 ounce sample) and spread it out on the tailgate of the truck. Manually sift through the entire sample and count all the half or larger kernels of corn. If there are more than two, then the roller mill should be inspected and tightened if necessary. Nicked kernels are no longer enough. We are looking for complete fracture of the corn kernels to maximize starch digestibility.

Obsolete pesticide and livestock medication pick-up- Farmers can safely dispose of unwanted agricultural pesticides and livestock/equine medications at a designated collection site from November 5 – 16, 2018. Find NS dates and locations [here](#).

Product will only be accepted from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Please review [eligibility](#) and [acceptability](#) guidelines before dropping off your product.

The next opportunity will not be until 2021, so don't miss this chance!

Planting Wheat?

Don't forget to refer to [last month's](#) CropLinks. Did you delete it? You can

find older issues of CropLinks on any of the Field Crops pages of the Perennia website.

Tips for Terminating Alfalfa This Fall

If rotating from alfalfa to spring seeded crop:

Burn-down with 2,4-D .5 l/ac + Engenia .5 l/ac + roundup 1.25 l/ac will give 90% or better control on the alfalfa

****DO NOT APPLY ENGENIA/BANVEL/DICAMBA BEFORE PLANTING WINTER WHEAT****

If killing alfalfa to plant no-till winter wheat this fall:

Burn down with Eragon 60 ml/ac (or 60 grams/ac depending on formulation) + merge .4 l/ac + Roundup 1.25 l/ac

Water volume with this treatment is key and should be at 30 gallons/ac.

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