



Cornell University Cooperative Extension

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*The Ag Report is pro-
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*The NYS IPM
Weekly field Crops
Pest Report is at*

*[http://blogs.cornell.edu/
ipmwpr/#](http://blogs.cornell.edu/ipmwpr/#)*

Capital Area Ag Report September 18, 2014

“People are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their mind.” Franklin D. Roosevelt

Announcements

Tile Drainage School

Wednesday, Nov. 12, 9:30 am—3 pm—Sponsored by CCE, at The Factory Eatery, 20 Prospect St., Ballston Spa. Speakers include **George & Travis Allen** (Allenwaite Farm Inc), **Steve Mahoney** (River Bend Farm Agricultural & Environmental Services), **Larry Geohring** (Cornell Dept of Biological & Environmental Engineering). Topics include drainage installation, materials, and machinery; Minimizing Environmental Risks of drainage water; Maintaining & Operating drainage systems; Fixing problems in existing systems; Compliance with USDA regulations.

Registration is \$40, due Friday, Nov. 7th. Space limited to 80 participants. Payable to: CCE of Herkimer County 5657 State Route 5, Herkimer, NY 13350, or call (315) 866-7920 (Barb Johnson). For Program Questions Contact: Aaron Gabriel, adg12@cornell.edu 518-380-1496 Kevin Gano, khg2@cornell.edu, 315-866-7920 Ashley Pierce, arp253@cornell.edu, 518-272-4210

FYI

Check out the Ag Exchange (<http://agexchange.cce.cornell.edu>) to sell standing crops, buy feed, need custom machinery work, need some trucking, whatever your need, check out the Ag Exchange. It is fast, easy and requires no password.

*Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities
Cornell Cooperative Extension provides
equal program and employment opportunities*

I recently spent \$20 on **mint oil mouse repellants**. I put one in each corner of my 14'X14' shed. After a day or two, I caught a mouse in a trap that was 18 inches from the mint oil packet. So, this repellent did not work in this situation for me.

Agronomy—Aaron Gabriel

Corn: We have another difficult corn silage harvest, since much of the crop is immature. Harvesting immature corn silage will always come short of harvesting at the proper maturity—there is no way to completely make it better. However, there are steps you can take to minimize the problems. The article at the end of this issue by Larry Chase has the best management practices. **Be sure to use an inoculant on immature and frosted silage.**

When evaluating corn field for harvest, along with whole-plant moisture, look at the stalks. Are they firm, or are they getting soft and weak. Nutrient cannibalism and disease will weaken stalks and the crop can fall over making harvest difficult.

How much is standing silage worth??? There is a spreadsheet from the U of Wisconsin that will help you answer that question—<http://corn.agronomy.wisc.edu/Season/DSS.aspx>

You will probably be talking to your seed salesman before corn harvest is over. **When buying next year's seed**, remember that we cannot use the Bt rootworm hybrids year after year in the same field, and probably on the same farm. The corn rootworm is developing resistance to the genetically modified hybrids. Since the adults are quite mobile, the rotation of control strategies needs to be practiced on a region-wide basis—at least adjacent fields.

Sorghum: More sorghum (one-cut) is being grown. This year it is evident, that although it may need little water, it sure does need some heat to grow. The seeds mature first at the top of the seed head. When those first seeds are in the soft dough stage, it should be harvested. There may be some immature sorghum harvested as well this year. Being a new crop, there is lots to learn. Moisture content is critical for proper fermentation. If moisture is >70%, then be sure to use an inoculant. **If sorghum gets frosted, ensiling sorghum will eliminate the prussic acid problem.**

Soybeans: A good article about managing frost-damaged soybeans can be found at: http://www.agweb.com/article/how_to_manage_frost-damaged_soybeans/. If beans have reached the R6 stage, they can be harvested as grain. If they have not matured sufficiently, then read “Deciding Between Grain and Forage Harvest for Late Maturing Soybeans” at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/2008/1006barnhartpedersen.htm>. Soybean forage may be your option.

**Dairy Nutrition Fact Sheet
August, 2013 (Revised)**

Considerations for Working with Immature Corn Silage

Dr. L. E. Chase
Department of Animal Science
Cornell University

In some parts of New York, the 2013 corn crop may not reach normal maturity. There may be small ears, poor grain fill or even no ears on the corn plant at the time of harvest. We have seen this same situation in previous years. The following points may be helpful as you work with immature corn that will be harvested for corn silage.

Nutrient composition – Immature corn will usually be wet (<25-30% DM), higher in crude protein, higher in fiber, higher in sugar and lower in starch than “normal” corn silage. However, energy value may be 85-95% of the energy value of normal corn silage. Remember that corn silage is really grass forage with an ear attached. In the early growth stages, the plant can be a highly digestible source of fiber since lignin (as % of the total fiber) will often be lower than in mature corn silage. The energy in immature corn silage is mainly from the digestible plant rather than the grain. In 2000, we sampled some immature corn at the Cornell T&R Center. Most of this was in the dough stage and had starch levels between 5 and 20%. Normal corn silage is 25-40% starch. The predicted energy values for these samples were 80-95% of normal maturity corn silage.

Harvesting considerations – The biggest challenge is the moisture content of immature corn silage. It is not uncommon for these plants to be < 30% DM when they are ready to harvest. Key points to think about are:

- If at all possible, wait until whole plant dry matter is > 32-34% dry matter. Harvesting wetter increases runoff from the silage and makes it difficult to get a good fermentation.
- Store any immature corn silage in a separate storage facility if possible.
- Take some samples during harvest and have them analyzed to provide a base of information on the nutrient content of the crop.
- Check chopper settings and particle size of the material coming out of the chopper. If using the Penn State box, target 10-20% on the top screen and < 40% in the pan. This may require increasing length of cut.
- Since ear and kernel development is poor, kernel processing is probably not needed.
- Follow normal silage management practices of filling fast, packing and covering the top with plastic or the new oxygen limiting silage covers.
- Immature corn silage should be high in sugar content to provide readily available carbohydrates to support fermentation. However, it may be lower in the normal bacterial population coming into the silo from the corn plant. The addition of a lactic acid based inoculant may be beneficial to stimulate fermentation.
- If possible, give the silo 3-4 months after filling before beginning to feed the silage out.

Forage analysis – Since there can be many factors that influence the nutrient composition of immature corn silage; an actual analysis of your specific corn silage is needed. This information can be used in both determining the price of this silage and also in balancing rations. A wet chemistry analysis may be better than NIR since calibrations for normal corn silage may not fit with immature silages. You may want to discuss this with the forage laboratory. Make sure that starch, NDF digestibility and a fermentation analysis are included.

Yield – Yield will be highly variable and difficult to estimate. Dr. Greg Roth at Penn State suggests that silage yield for corn plants without ears or poorly pollinated ears may be 1 ton of wet silage yield (70% moisture) for each foot of plant height. An older study at Cornell by Dr. Bill Cox indicated that silage yields at the dough stage were 65 to 70% of yields at the milk line stage. In the same study, yields at the silk stage were 40 to 45% of those obtained at the milk line stage.

Economic value - The actual price will depend on a combination of yield, nutrient composition and dry matter

content. Dr. Bill Weiss at Ohio State indicates that immature corn silage is worth about 85% of the economic value of normal corn silage at the same dry matter content. This is based on a number of runs over the years using the Sesame program. A major factor influencing the final price is adjusting for differences in dry matter content. The following example indicates how this pricing approach can be used to determine the value at the time of feeding:

Value of “normal” corn silage = \$70/ton (35% DM)

Value of immature corn silage = $\$70 * 0.85 = \59.50 (still assumes 35% DM)

If actual dry matter is 27%, then the adjusted price = 45.90/ton

$(27/35 * \$59.50)$

If you want to “estimate” the value of the standing crop, use 70% of the adjusted price. This would be \$41.65 in this example.

Feeding considerations – Work with your nutritionist to determine the best way to use this silage on your farm. In some cases, it might be logical to use the immature corn silage for specific groups of cows or heifers. This will depend primarily on the nutrient profile, dry matter content and fermentation characteristics. It might be best to limit the use of this silage in rations for close-up dry cows and fresh cows if possible. Immature corn silage will often have higher acetic acid content after fermentation. This may decrease dry matter intake. The addition of sodium bicarbonate added to the ration at 0.75% of total ration dry matter may help intake. This is about 6 – 10 ounces per cow depending on the level of dry matter intake.

Summary –

Immature corn silage will vary both in nutrient composition and dry matter content. Typically, it will be higher in crude protein, NDF and sugar but lower in starch than “normal” corn silage.

Dry matter content will usually be low (<30% DM) in immature corn plants. Ensiling wet corn silage can result in unusual fermentations and the resulting silage may cause decreased dry matter intake when fed to cows.

Try to hold off on harvest until whole plant dry matter is > 32-34%.

Forage analysis is essential to characterize the immature corn silage on your farm and determine how it can best be used in dairy rations.

The energy value will probably range from 80-95% of normal corn silage.

The economic value will be about 85% of normal corn silage before adjusting for dry matter content.