

Feeding corn silage to pasture-based dairy cattle

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Our mission

Dairy Farmers of America is a milk marketing cooperative and dairy foods processor dedicated to

delivering value

to members through secure markets, competitive pricing and strong participation throughout the entire dairy chain



Our vision is what we strive for

To be America's leading dairy cooperative:

The marketer of choice.
The supplier of choice.
The employer of choice.



DFA's Farm Services



Risk Management



Farm Supplies



Grazing



Energy



Insurance



Financing



Quality pasture is still king

- **Quality, highly digestible pasture is extremely nutritious and the cheapest of all forages to produce**
- **All it requires is good grazing management and adequate feeding (NPK)**



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5

Keys to good grazing management

- **Know the ideal pre-grazing level**
- **Know the ideal post-grazing residual**
- **Know how long it takes to achieve the residual**
- **Know the stocking rate and rotation length needed to maintain a consistent offering**



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The journey starts here



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And ends here



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8

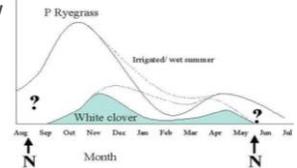
Corn silage is versatile

- It can be fed as a standalone energy supplement or as an energy forage component in partial total mixed ration (pTMR)



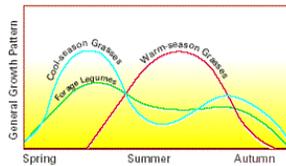
Corn silage fed alone

- The favored option in New Zealand
- Corn silage use tends to be sporadic, and is fed to:
 - Overcome feed shortages
 - Maximize pasture utilization
 - Extend lactation
 - Increase and maintain cow condition



Corn silage in the U.S.

- Most ends up as a valuable ingredient in a pTMR on pasture-based dairies
- pTMR takes up the slack when there is a reduction in dry matter intake (DMI) due to:
 - High stocking rate
 - Drought
 - Excessive cold and/or moisture
 - Heat stress
- pTMR allows consistent volume and nutritional intake to maintain or increase production



Feeding loss (shrink)

- Shrink begins from the time you open the trench, bag or pile
- Air introduced into fermented corn silage encourages yeast and mold growth
- This converts residual sugars, fermentation acids and other soluble nutrients into carbon dioxide, water and heat

Ways to minimize shrink

- Manage the feed face by using only what you need
- These are examples of incorrect management



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Well-managed faces



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From the face to the cow,
How do we get it to her?



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Feeding corn silage to the cow



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An absolute no-no

- Corn silage or pTMR should never be fed on the ground because the shrink is intolerable



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Some alternatives



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What you need to know

- **Is corn silage/pTMR is right for you?**
 - Does the scale of your operation warrant the expense (return on investment)
- **Your feed's nutritional analysis (including pasture)**
 - DM, CP, NDF, ADF, NEI
- **How much corn silage/pTMR to feed?**
 - What is the required DMI/cow daily?
 - What percentage of the daily DMI is quality pasture, and are they eating the offered amount?

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Last, but not least

- **Corn silage/pTMR can be used effectively to glean extra production from a grass/forage-based system**
 - It is not, however, a substitute for good pasture management
- **The good grazing dairy producer uses corn silage/pTMR to make up what his grass/forage platform cannot provide — not the other way around**

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Questions?



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