UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

August 2018

Let Whole Plant Moisture Guide Your Corn Silage Harvest!

The best lactation performance by dairy cows has been shown to occur when corn silage is harvested at 65-70 percent moisture. This range of whole plant moisture also works well for achieving good packing and silage fermentation in horizontal silos. Determining whole plant moisture prior to harvest is one management practice to ensure high quality forages.

Fond du Lac County dairy farmers and corn silage growers will have an opportunity to test standing corn for whole plant moisture to guide them when to harvest corn silage at the optimal moisture.

Fond du Lac County Forage Council Corn Silage Dry Down Days
10 am to 12 noon | Country Visions Cooperative | 457 W 11st Street, Fond du Lac

Tuesday, August 28	Tuesday, September 4	Tuesday, September 11
Next day results via UW-Marshfield Forage & Soils Lab	Same day results with on-site moisture test with Dairyland Labs	Next day results via UW-Marshfield Forage & Soils Lab

Details:

- No fee
- Cut 4 to 5 stalks at chopper height, representative of the field, from inside the field, avoiding field border and headland effects
- Samples should be taken the morning of the dry down day to reduce moisture loss
- Drop off samples between 10 am and 12 noon at Country Visions Cooperative on the dates listed above
- Provide the following information with samples: name; city/town; contact info; hybrid variety and relative maturity; and planting date

Thank you to the following businesses for their financial support:
Country Visions Coop | CP Feeds | Monsanto (Dekalb Seeds) | Syngenta (NK Seeds)
Dow AgroSciences (Mycogen Seeds) | Winfield United (Croplan Seeds)
Oakfield Elevator

Results available at http://fyi.uwex.edu/fdlag/fdl-ag-corn-silage

UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

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Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed. Please do so as early as possible prior to the program or activity so that proper arrangements can be made.

Make Sure Your Kernel Processor is Doing Its Job

For cows to digest starch in corn efficiently, the kernels in chopped and processed whole-plant corn must be broken into small particles. With today's high-producing animals, kernels must be processed into smaller particles for dairy cattle to get adequate starch utilization given the short duration feed resides in the rumen.

The right time to determine adequacy of kernel processing is at time of harvest when harvester adjustments can be made to correct inadequate processing. However, it can be difficult to see how well kernels are processed when they are mixed with the stover fraction of the plant. A water separation technique has been developed that can be used in the field or at the silo to separate the stover and kernel fractions (Savoie et al., 2004). This simple technique exploits differences in buoyancy between the kernels and stover. Simply put, when placed into a water bath, stover floats and kernels sink.

The method is simple, requires very little equipment, and can be done in the field or at the silo:

- **Step 1:** Fill a dishpan or 5-gallon pail ¾ full of water or a 5-gal. pail about ½ full.
- **Step 2:** Collect two to three representative handfuls of processed crop and place in water.
- **Step 3:** Gently agitate for a minute material to help separate kernels from stover mat.
- **Step 4:** Skim the floating stover from the water. This can be done by hand or by using a strainer.
- **Step 5:** The water will be quite murky and kernels difficult to see, but they will be at the bottom of the container. To see kernels, carefully drain water from container.
- **Step 6:** The kernels can be poured onto a cloth or heavy-duty paper towel and water squeezed from the kernels. The kernels can then be spread out for inspection and evaluation of the degree of processing.

The process works well under most crop conditions and can even be used to evaluate ensiled corn silage.

Very green corn and very wet corn silage can be more challenging to separate so consider these alternatives:

- When the crop is very green, dark green leaves will sink with the kernels. These leaves can be separated by hand after step 5 above.
- Ensiled material, especially if ensiled at high moisture, will not separate well. Thoroughly drying sample in an oven promotes better separation.
- If after draining water from the container (Step 5 above) there is too much stover with the kernels, add some water back to the container, swirl the contents and quickly drain off water. This second iteration helps remove remaining stover.

The presence of many whole-kernels is a clear indication processing level is insufficient. If there are almost no whole kernels, but many are simply nicked, cracked or broken, then processing level may be considered barely adequate. Properly processed materials should have almost no whole- or cracked-kernels.

Figure 1. Chopped whole-plant corn placed into water.

Figure 2. Gently agitating material to help the kernels sink to the bottom of the container.

Figure 3. Skimming and removing the floating stover.

Figure 4. Carefully draining the water so only the kernels remain in the container.

Figure 5. Example of separated stover and kernel fractions using the water separation technique.

Pricing Wet Corn? UW-Extension Has An App For That!

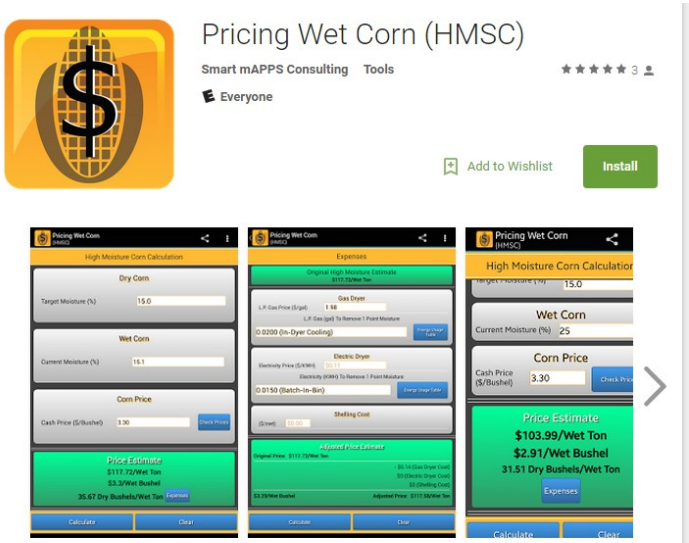
It will soon be that time of year when Fond du Lac County dairy and beef producers and corn growers explore their options of buying and selling high moisture shell corn (HMSC).

To help farmers better evaluate their options, the University of Wisconsin-Extension has developed a Smartphone app to provide a simple way to help estimate the market value of HMSC based on three main variable-dry moisture corn, current corn moisture and price per bushel.

The HMSC$ app is free and available for Android smart phones and tablets on the Google Play store by searching for "HMSC" or go to: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.smartmapps.corncalculator&hl=en

Farmers can use this app to help determine value for wet shell corn when compared with dry shell corn price – a link to current elevator dry corn bid prices is built into the app. The equivalent wet price is then calculated and displayed in both price per ton and price per bushel.

Additional costs for drying and/or shelling can be evaluated under the expense tab. The app also features the ability to email the results directly to others.



Pricing Wet Corn (HMSC)…an Android tablet or smartphone application to help price wet shelled corn compared with a dry shell corn price equivalent ($/ton & $/bu). For field pricing, additional harvesting and/or drying cost must also be deducted. Buyers and sellers assume all responsibility for final pricing, including any quality adjustment.

Fond du Lac County
227 ADMINISTRATION/EXTENSION BUILDING
400 UNIVERSITY DRIVE
FOND DU LAC WI, 54935

Don't miss corn silage dry down days!

Mark Your Calendars for Up Coming Agricultural Events

August 2018

23 Th Fond du Lac County Holstein Twilight Meeting
Felten Farms, Ron & Nancy Felten Family
N5200 Hackbarth Rd, St. Cloud
4 pm Open Barn | 6 pm Complimentary Dinner
8 pm Program: Kim Bremmer, Ag Inspirations

28 Tu Fond du Lac County Forage Council Corn Silage Dry Down
10 am to 12 noon | Country Visions Coop, Fond du Lac

September 2018

4 Tu Fond du Lac County Forage Council Corn Silage Dry Down
10 am to 12 noon | Country Visions Coop, Fond du Lac

11 Tu Fond du Lac County Forage Council Corn Silage Dry Down
10 am to 12 noon | Country Visions Coop, Fond du Lac

14 F UW-Extension Farm Management Update for Ag Professionals
10 am to 3 pm | Liberty Hall, Kimberly

For additional dates and information, visit http://fyi.uwex.edu/fdlag/calendar