

August 2009 Service Bulletin

Corn Silage:

To predict a likely harvest date for corn silage, make note of when the field is 50% in tassel, and count ahead 65 days. In Southwest Ontario, that is often close to the 3rd week of September. Weather does play a role, as wet conditions delay maturity and dry conditions can hasten it. However, the most important factor is whole plant moisture, with the optimum range depending on storage type being:

Piles, bags, and bunkers, 68 – 70%, tower silos 64 - 67%, and decreasing by 2% for each 10 feet above 60 foot silo height, and finally oxygen limiting 58 to 62%.



Forage Summary:

First cut forage summaries indicate better overall quality for 2009 as compared to 2008. While the average protein was lower for both first cut hay and haylage, all other critical parameters showed an improvement in 2009.

The average fibre values for both ADF and NDF were lower and average NDFD values were higher. Most significantly, ADF-Cp (bound protein) and lignin values were lower. Some producers were able to complete second cut harvest prior to mid July. The quality of these samples was high. One notable difference between the second cut samples received to date this year compared to the second cut samples from last year, involves calcium and potassium values. In 2008, the majority of second cut samples exhibited calcium values that were higher than potassium values. This year, few have exhibited this trend.

Poor weather during the last half of July has delayed the completion of second cut.

Wheat Harvest:

Post wheat harvest is an ideal time to invest in soil testing that will provide useful information towards nutrient management decisions. In a typical corn-soy-wheat rotation, fields in wheat stubble offer ample time to soil sample and consider fertility needs for the following year's corn crop. Where pH is a concern, application and



incorporation of lime can also be done. Sampling wheat ground is a sound routine to maintain a regular 3 year interval between soil tests.

Soil testing identifies fields most in need of additional nutrients, or conversely, show which fields test high enough that rates of P and K can be reduced without affecting yield potential. Where manure is available, testing it for its nutrient content allows application rates to be calculated to optimize its benefit.

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