

## “Ask the Vet/Ask the Nutritionist”

### “How do you determine the right time to harvest corn silage and how long should I wait before feeding this year’s silage?”

The proper timing of harvesting corn silage is of the utmost importance. If corn silage is harvested when it is too wet, it can grow mold and/or clostridia and there is a greater chance that butyric acid will form leading to dry matter loss, poor feed quality and decreased feed intake. Harvesting corn silage when it is too dry will cause poor packing in the storage structure, poor fermentation and possible heating in the bunk. All of these factors can lead to an increased dry matter loss during fermentation, spoilage and poor bunk life. Dry corn silage is also less digestible. Harvesting corn silage at just the right time will produce high quality silage which will result in optimum animal performance. Factors to consider when harvesting corn silage include:

**1. Harvest time.** Visual observations of the silking date, kernel milk line and dent are useful tools to determine appropriate harvest time. Make note of the silking date. Wait 4 weeks and assess corn for milk line and dent. Once kernels show dent and the milk line is between 1/2 and 2/3, take samples to determine the moisture content. Moisture content can be determined by sending samples to an accredited lab or testing on the farm using a Koster tester. Ideal moisture content for corn silage harvest is:

- 65-70% for horizontal bunker silos
- 60-68% for bag silos
- 62-67% for tower silos

**2. Use of An Inoculant.** Using the inoculant, Inoc-u-Lock™, will help preserve the quality of the forage you harvest. There will be less dry matter loss, less protein degradation, and improved face quality resulting in better quality feed. For more information on this cost effective approach please refer to page 80 in our 2016 catalog or visit our website at [www.crystalcreeknatural.com](http://www.crystalcreeknatural.com).

**3. Time to fill.** Silos should be filled and packed as quickly as possible to retain the quality of the forage and reduce the exposure to air.

**4. Sealing and covering.** Make sure to seal or cover the silo in a timely manner.

**5. Feeding rate.** To help maintain corn silage quality, make sure you keep feeding ahead of the face by feeding the proper amount for that storage structure.

Protect your hard work and silage investment by calling Crystal Creek® with any questions regarding the harvesting of your silage or which silage inoculant to use. Making the smart choice to use Inoc-u-Lock™ will help ensure the quality of your harvest.

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Livestock Nutritionist

Please submit your animal health or nutrition questions in writing to:



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