

Focus on Forage

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Segregate quality feeds

Did you have two corn-planting seasons this year – one early and one late with a gap in between? If you did, you will have fields that vary widely in their maturity for quality corn silage.

As fields are harvested plan to segregate the more mature fields from those that are barely mature enough to chop (that is, lower starch content and lower whole plant dry matter).

We may have the opportunity to wait for a week or two part way through chopping to give the less mature fields a chance to add valuable starch. Remember starch content in those fields will go up 0.5-1.0% starch per day that you wait.

Consider using this gap to chop late-planted fields that are just not going to reach maturity.

With the immature grain from these fields, this corn can make good lower energy forage for heifers and dry cows. Remember, **do not process** this low dry matter crop – we do not need to create sloppage. Store separately from mature crop silage.

If some corn is still standing after a heavy frost this could be chopped and fed out to the dry cows as long as you store it separately.

Our next **Focus on Forage** will deal with harvest order and estimating whole plant dry matter.