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Strategies to Harvest and Store High Moisture Corn as Snaplage

Utilizing your corn crop as snaplage can help increase nutrient value and reduce field losses allowing you to get the most out of your crop. There are key guidelines to follow in order to maximize the nutritional value of snaplage as a feedstuff.

What is Snaplage?

Snaplage is high moisture corn harvested by a silage chopper with a snapper head attached and typically consists of corn grain, cob, husk, and some upper parts of the plant. High moisture corn is more commonly harvested as shelled (HMSC) or ear corn (HMEC), which are both harvested with a combine and processed prior to ensiling. High moisture ear corn includes portions of the cob. Snaplage is slightly lower in energy, but has a higher level of fiber compared to other corn based feedstuffs (table below).

Nutritional value of corn based feedstuffs from AAMPS.

Ingredient	DM, %	CP, % DM	NDF, % DM	Starch, % DM	NFCd, % of NFC	NEL, Mcal/lb
10 - Dry Corn	88	9.4	9.5	73.0	77.2	0.9015
11 - HMSC	70	9.9	10.3	66.8	85.1	0.9413
34 -HMEC	70	9.0	21.0	58.4	86.6	0.9049
234 - Snaplage	59	8.1	24.0	58.4	86.6	0.8366

Why Harvest Snaplage?

We have recently seen an extremely volatile commodity market. While corn prices are relatively lower than last year we have experienced rapid price increases in the past so it is important to have options. Harvesting your corn as snaplage can offer an alternative to feeding dry corn resulting in reduced field losses, decreased drying/processing costs, and allows for earlier harvest.

When to Harvest?

The recommendation is to harvest as soon as the kernel is mature (i.e. at black layer stage) with a moisture of 34 - 36% and the entire ear around 35 – 45% moisture, preferably 40% moisture. It is important to harvest at the correct moisture. If the crop becomes too dry there can be a decrease in starch digestibility, poor fermentation, and greater spoilage/storage loss. Cob digestibility also decreases rapidly as the crop matures.

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Tips to Harvesting/Storing

Using the correct settings when harvesting/storing can lead to a high quality feedstuff.

Processing Recommendations

- Prefer fine tooth rolls (i.e. 5-7 teeth/ inch) set at 2mm
- Roll differential set as high as possible
- Use shortest chopping length
- Utilizing a re-cutter screen should be considered

Storing Recommendations

- Similar to storing corn silage
- 30 or more lbs DM/cu ft packed density (bunker storage)
- 3-6 inch min. feed out rate (bunker storage)
- Inoculants should be considered (be sure to research which is best for your situation)

Snaplage Challenges

As with processing other feedstuffs, each has their own unique challenges.

Some key things to consider with snaplage

- More storage required
- Fewer marketing options
- Feeding a highly fermentable starch source can be difficult in high corn silage diets
- Nutrient variability (similar challenges as corn silage)
- Mycotoxin loads can be high

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