

10 Points for Top Quality Balage

1. Cut at the right stage of maturity – young leafy pasture with less than 10% seed head emergence will have much higher energy and protein levels than mature, stemmy grass and is easier to pack into a well consolidated bale
2. For dry or stemmy crops, chopping will help ensure the bale is really well consolidated
3. Add silage inoculant to all crops for improved fermentation, reduced DM losses, less risk of mould and better animal performance
4. Bales should be well consolidated (tightly packed) to exclude as much air as possible, minimising the opportunity for moulds and yeasts to grow
5. Bales should be wrapped as soon as possible after baling, but if they are on a sharp stubble field they should be moved prior to wrapping
6. High quality wrap should be used, with at least 6 layers of wrap
7. Bales should be stored in a safe, accessible location where there is reduced risk of pest damage
8. Bale stacks should be surrounded with stock proof fencing and appropriate rat baiting stations, and where bird damage is a problem, netting can be used to protect bale stacks
9. Bales should be unwrapped and put out just prior to feeding as balage will deteriorate with time once exposed to air
10. Any mouldy material should be discarded as moulds can produce mycotoxins which may affect performance including fertility

If you follow these ten points you can be sure that you're feeding out the best possible balage you can from the crop you're harvesting.