

10 Points for Top Quality Grass Silage

1. Select a good free draining site for stacks, where there is no risk of effluent entering a watercourse, and prepare the base well – a concrete base is ideal
2. 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 with full seed head emergence
3. Chop drier crops shorter for better compaction – 40-60mm theoretical chop length is good
4. Add silage inoculant to all grass crops for improved fermentation, reduced DM losses and better animal performance
5. Ensure the stack is well consolidated - you should not be able to push your fingers into the face further than just beyond your finger nails
6. Cover and lightly weight stacks overnight when taking several days to fill (unless there is a howling gale) and do not roll the surface the next morning until the first load of fresh grass has been spread over it
7. Seal really well as soon as practical once the stack is finished – any delay in sealing will increase DM losses and surface spoilage
8. Tyres should be touching all over the stack – effort spent doing this is well repaid in reduced losses and better quality silage to feed out
9. Keep the stack face tight and tidy when feeding out – clean up any spilt material at the foot of the face each day
10. Discard any mouldy or badly spoiled silage – feeding this to stock can reduce silage digestibility and cause health problems.

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