

10 Points for Top Quality Maize Silage

1. Plan stacks so the face is not too wide – you should go back through the stack at least 30cm per day when feeding out
2. Cut at the right stage of maturity – 2/3 milkline and 33-35% dry matter (DM) is a good guideline
3. Chop short for better compaction – 10-15mm theoretical chop length is good, and use a kernel processor for drier, more mature crops, to crack all grains and ensure cows can digest the starch inside
4. Add silage inoculant to all maize 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!
7. Seal really well as soon as the stack is finished – delaying sealing will increase DM losses and silage will heat more quickly at feed out
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 maize silage you can from the crop you're harvesting.