



FARM SERVICES LTD.

# NEWSLETTER

**June 2022**

## How to make the most of your silage.

With first cut soon approaching it is a good time to review the important factors in making the best quality silages. While some factors are uncontrollable, there are several key factors that can be controlled through proper management. These include harvest at proper maturity and dry matter (DM), proper chop length, use of appropriate inoculant, effective packing, and fast effective sealing.

Grass and small grain forages mature very quickly. Once they start to head out quality is quickly lost. It is therefore important to pay close attention to how fields are maturing. Small grains grown as a protein crop should be harvested at the boot or flag stage. Keeping in mind that if you are double cropping, plants like rye will start absorbing a significant amount of ground moisture once they go past the flag stage. Alfalfa should be harvested once there is about 10% of the field in bloom. Since alfalfa is often mixed with grass it is important to look at the composition of the field. In colder conditions, the grass will often mature faster than the alfalfa. Only when grass represents more than 50% of the stand, should the stand be harvested based on the maturity of the grass to ensure good quality.

Fermentation relies on bacterial use of plant sugars and we want to minimize the amount of sugar lost after cutting. Grasses and legumes will lose significantly more sugar overnight, so try to pick sunny, low humidity days with a bit of a breeze to cut forages and avoid having forages lay out overnight. Butyric acid is higher on low DM forages as well as forages left out overnight. Leaving the mowed forages in wide swaths will allow for faster drying times. Dry matter plays a significant role in fermentation, as well as packing of forages. It is imperative that we avoid chopping forages below 30% DM as this will result in excessive amounts of butyric acid. Also avoid DM over 60% since this will result in slowed fermentation and excessive heat, resulting in caramelized or under fermented feed that stay unstable all year. Ideally forages should be chopped at 40% DM with bunkers able to go as low as 35% DM and Harvestore silos as high as 60%DM.

Alfalfa regrows from the crown and can be mowed at 2 inches, whereas grasses require the nutrients in the stalks to regrow and should be mowed at 4 inches to ensure a good second crop. Chop length is important in preventing sorting, proper packing and fermentation, and rumen health. For grass and legume forages, recommended chop length is between 1/4-3/8 of an inch. Having your advisor do a Penn state at the beginning of harvesting is the most effective way to ensure proper chop length. If unsure, stick with longer 3/8 cut length as insufficient effective fiber will result in struggles with maintaining components. Merging windrows is a good way to ensure the harvester is constantly fed at capacity; this will result in a much more consistent chop length.

Even if all the before mentioned steps are done correctly, but the forages are not stored properly it will ultimately result in poor quality and performance. It is recommended to line the sides of bunker silos to avoid water seeping in from the sides. Packing density is a result of tractor weight and filling rate. There is no such thing as too packed, and the objective should be to get to a packing density of more than 15lbs/f<sup>3</sup>. When dealing with ag-bags it is important to minimize air pockets and be mindful of the extra processing that bagging will cause to the forage. Feel free to contact one of your B&L reps to discuss your harvesting plan.

**Stephan Botha, M.Sc.**     *Sales and Nutrition Representative for Wallenstein Feed*



**A reminder that our store/office will be closed Friday, July 1st for Canada Day.**

**Please have any feed orders in early to avoid delay in delivery.**

*It's fly season again...*

Check out our selection of products available:

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**KONK SPRAY & DISVAP AEROSOL SPRAY**

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**Sticky Roll Fly Tape**  
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**Sticky Roll Fly Tape**  
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**Sticky Roll Fly Tape**  
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**Mr Sticky Fly Ribbon**

Sticky Roll™ effectively catches, controls and eliminates flies because it's based on their natural habits. Flies follow the warm updrafts in rooms and barns, seeking a resting place near the ceiling. They become entrapped in Sticky Roll, then become an irresistible attractant to other flies. No baits, toxins, or pheromones are necessary. Soon the tape is black with dead flies. When a length of tape is full, crank it up, flies and all onto the disposable take-up reel. Fresh tape is rolled out at the same time, ready to grab more flies.

## *It's fly season again...*



**MinLic® Altosid** supplement is fortified with Altosid® an insect growth regulator to prevent the emergence of adult horn flies from manure of treated cattle which offers the most effective and convenient way to control these flies in cattle. It is specially formulated to enrich the diet with essential minerals without the added cost of supplemental protein.

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Garlic Essence added to the popular free-choice pasture mineral is an easy and effective way to also control flies on pasture. Ask about volume discounts.



### **Steel Base with Cover**

Heavy duty 48" base with 24" Dia. rubber tub



### **Poly Feeder with Cover**

3 Compartments, Tip proof, weather resistant, 30" Dia. tub

Ask Matt for pricing and details on the in-stock mineral feeders. Other mineral feeders available by special order. Call Matt at 519-379-3500