

Silage Digest



➤ MAXIMISING SILAGE QUALITY

ISSUE
N°1

Best practice for applicators, inoculant storage and filling and compaction

Silage season is almost here again and whilst we cannot control the weather, we can maximise the quality of silage and control or improve profits on farm.

Weather gives us optimal DM, sugar and quality of fresh forage. Good growing seasons followed by hot, dry, slightly breezy weather, are perfect for rapid wilting but hot weather has various negative impacts:



➤ ON CROPS

- Grass is more prone to Clostridia when ensiled at temperatures above 107°F (McDonald *et al*, 1966).
- Corn has higher acetic and ammonia concentrations when ensiled in hotter temperatures (Adesogan, 2003).

➤ ON INOCULANTS

- Inoculants can die in their packets if allowed to heat.
- Inoculants can die once hydrated in hot weather.

Using inoculants will control fermentation, maximise nutrient and digestibility maintenance; reduce dry matter losses, protein loss and energy loss. In order to help inoculants maximise milk potential, these simple steps should be followed.

➤ CLEANING APPLICATORS

The tank, filters, tubes and nozzles will all need cleaning with hypochlorite and then flushing through with clean water to ensure that the inoculant will flow through at the desired rate and that you are not applying spoilage organisms and toxin to the first 50 tons of silage.

➤ INOCULANT STORAGE

It is good practice to keep your inoculant cool once it is hydrated. Ice blocks or frozen soda bottles in the applicator tanks act like an air conditioner for the bacteria. Work by Mulrooney and Kung (2008) shows the benefits of keeping the bacteria cool.

➤ FILLING AND COMPACTION

Irrespective of the weather, once you start cutting the forage the race is on to get it into the bunker, to get it well compacted, well sheeted and well weighted down. The faster you achieve this the more dry matter, nutrients, energy and digestibility you maintain. The faster the time between cutting and final fermentation the greater the 'milk potential' you have.



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Summary

Simple steps to help your inoculant maximise milk potential:

- CLEAN YOUR APPLICATOR
- KEEP THE SACHETS OF INOCULANT COOL <30°C <85°F
- USE AN INSULATED TANK ON YOUR LOW VOLUME APPLICATOR
- USE ICE BLOCKS IN LARGE APPLICATOR TANKS
- FILL THE BUNKER QUICKLY
- COMPACT WELL, SHEET WELL, WEIGHT WELL