



AVOID COSTLY MAIZE LOSSES THIS AUTUMN BY CAREFUL MANAGEMENT

With maize silage, it is not uncommon to see 15% losses from field to feeding and with higher costs across the board this winter, these losses will prove even more costly. Maintaining quality in the feed clamp should therefore be a priority.

A challenging crop

Maize can be a particularly challenging silage crop as it is susceptible to the growth of mycotoxin producing moulds and spoilage yeasts which can lead to significant losses, meaning producers must pay particular attention from harvest to feeding.

As a starting point, the crop needs to be harvested at the right time.

Wait for the lower leaves to start drying off and for the milk line to be one third up the kernel before cutting.

When cutting maize, the cutter head should be at least 15-20 cm high or above the second node of the plant.

This is because nitrogen accumulates in the bottom third of the plant and if cut too low there is an increased risk of higher nitrates in the ensiled crop.

Cutting the plant higher will also reduce the risk of soil contamination which will help to reduce the likelihood of ensiling issues and the presence of spoilage microbes. Aim for a chop length of 1-2cm.

Maize can spoil rapidly when the face is open if it is not ensiled correctly. Using a maize specific inoculant such as Magniva Platinum Maize can help preserve silage quality through until feed out.

Oxygen in the clamp

Maize can be more difficult to compact than grass silage, meaning there's more potential for residual oxygen in the clamp. When the clamp is opened, oxygen will penetrate faster, reactivating the yeasts, leading to aerobic spoilage and waste.

Magniva's unique combination of heterofermentative bacteria means the crop is more likely to be aerobically stable, enabling the clamp to be opened earlier with less chance of heating once it is opened. This will increase the feed value and reduce waste, meaning more and better quality silage is available to feed.



When sheeting the clamp, pack the crop as tightly as possible and cover it with an oxygen barrier clingfilm, as this will follow the contours on the top of the clamp, reducing the air pockets formed on the top layer. It should then be covered with a black sheet, followed by bird proof green netting, before additional weight is placed on top on the clamp.

To avoid spoilage at feed out, only open the clamp enough to allow a minimum of one pass across the face in 3-5 days.

