



*Putting knowledge to work with the people of Maine*

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September 5, 2008

To: Maine Dairy Farmers  
From: Rick Kersbergen  
Fall Forage topics

- As Corn Silage Harvest nears, make your decisions on when to chop based on whole plant moisture content. Corn silage should be harvested when the plants are at 32-34% dry matter. Most corn silages samples I see are too wet and immature. Wet silages leads to poor fermentation, leachate losses, less milk and more purchased grain.
- If you need help determining moisture content, feel free to give me a call.
- Packing. It is critical to pack each load as it arrives at the silo. Dumping 5 loads and then packing will not provide you the density necessary for good fermentation. Packing is one of the more important jobs. If you do it right in September, it rewards you throughout the year.
- Looking for cover crop seed? Reports are that winter rye seed may be in short supply this fall. Consider looking at other winter cereal grains that are just as effective. Winter wheat or winter triticales are both good options. They are also probably easier to kill in the spring. In our trials in Orono, triticale (Trical 336 and Alzo) were very good performers, while Trical 815 has not proven to be winter hardy. Winter wheat and triticale could also provide you with some nice early season forage if you want to chop it in late May.
- The earlier you plant a cover crop in September or early October, the better the stand and the more nutrients you will recover for next year. Feel free to give me a call if you want to talk about cover crops and how best to establish them.
- Don't forget to get soil samples in the fall. Collecting them before the ground freezes and storing them until January to send to the lab will save you 20% on your analysis costs with the University of Maine Analytical lab.
- Need manure record keeping books? Give me a call and I will send them out.
- Data from the corn variety trials at Misty Meadows will be available in October at [www.umext.maine.edu/Waldo/Ag](http://www.umext.maine.edu/Waldo/Ag)

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