

# ENSURING MAIZE STABILITY WILL BE VITAL THIS SEASON



Making the most of maize will be crucial for achieving sufficient high quality forage this winter. Controlling aerobic instability and the consequent loss of forage quality and quantity will be vital if the full potential of maize is to be exploited.

“Forage stocks are under pressure due to the reduced grass growth. Even if we see a return to normal weather conditions, it will be at least four to six weeks before third or fourth cuts will be taken,” said Biotol’s technical manager Roy Eastlake.

“Although the warm weather should encourage a good maize crop, we are getting to the point where if we don’t see significant rain soon there is a possibility crops will start to tassel. If this occurs yields will be reduced, adding to the pressure on forage stocks”

Mr Eastlake stresses that maize requires the best harvest and clamp management. While it is a forage that will ferment readily, it is extremely susceptible to aerobic spoilage, the costs of which is significant. Roy calculates that waste silage costs £15.55/tonne, so for a 500 tonne clamp with a typical clamp wastage rate of 15%, the bill would be £7,775.

“A tonne of fresh weight at 35% DM and 11.2 ME MJ/kg DM would supply 3920MJ, enough to produce 753 litres. A 15% waste rate would equate to 113 litres of lost milk. Producing this milk from concentrates would require an additional 51kg of concentrates, which would cost over £11 per tonne of wasted silage.”

To minimise losses Mr Eastlake recommends treating maize with a crop and specific inoculant such as Biotol Maizecool to increase aerobic stability when the clamp is opened.

“The investment in inoculant should be seen as a proven way to safeguard forage quality and help ensure sufficient forage for the winter,” Mr Eastlake concludes.

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