



Judging Silage

Stage of Maturity

- Cereal silage – harvested at or before mid-dough stage at 60-65% moisture
- Field peas – harvested between flat pod and full pod and wilted to 55 – 65% moisture
- Legumes – harvested at pre-bloom stage – 40 –50% leaves, less than 5% foreign material at 60% moisture
- Legume/grass mix – legumes harvested at early bloom with 35-45% leaves, more than 50% leaves in grasses, less than 5-10% foreign material at 60% moisture

Grain Content

- Grain content determines nutritional value
- As much grain as possible is desirable
- Grain formation reduces moisture content of plant

Colour

- Bright, light green yellow or green brown depending upon material ensiled
- Discolouration indicates loss of feed value from heating or rotting
- Dark brown or black colour indicates heating

Odour/Smell

- Lactic acid (sour milk) odour
- Strong butyric acid (rancid butter or fat, putrid) smell indicates sign of severe spoilage
- Tobacco smell - indicates high temperatures during fermentation
- Acetic smell – vinegar smell, result of poor fermentation
- Propionic smell – sharp, sting the nose, smell is a result of poor fermentation

Texture

- Firm with softer material not easily rubbed from fibre

Impurities

- Weeds lower the feeding value of silage.

Source: *Silage Manual – Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development – Agdex 120/52-2*

Sections of the Judging Fact Sheets were adapted from the Alberta 4-H Judging Project Guide with the permission of the Alberta 4-H Council.

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