

## FORAGE FOCUS 2019

Conference and Trade Show

**December 5, 2019 - Stratford Rotary Complex**

**LIVE STREAMING TO REMOTE LOCATIONS IS AVAILABLE**

**Details: [ontarioforagecouncil.com](http://ontarioforagecouncil.com)**

**Keynote Speaker:**

**Joe Lawrence, Dairy Forage Systems Specialist,  
Department of Animals Science, Cornell University**

**Call 1-877-892-8663 to register  
\$50 registration fee includes hot lunch  
Visa or MasterCard accepted by phone**

**Pre-registration is required by December 3, 2019**

**Registrations will be accepted at the door, but may not include lunch**

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# A Message from the President Terry Nuhn



The summer has flown by quickly and we are now approaching the fall harvest season. The very slow start to spring created many challenges for forage growers. The cool and wet weather was persistent well into June, making for a delayed first cut. This led to lower nutrient content in the early feed that was harvested.

However, the positive side of the cool start was it really helped increase the volume of grass in first cut. This helped to bulk up volumes for most growers, especially in the areas most affected by alfalfa winter kill. In general, first cut volumes were strong in most regions of the province.

Second and third cuttings varied a great deal throughout the province. The hot, humid and dry conditions impacted yield for most producers. The timeliness of rain after cutting was the biggest determining factor in the volume. The feed quality tended to improve as the season progressed.

The past 12 month cycle has put a great deal of added stress on the forage crop. We have experienced all the major weather related stresses you could encounter over that time frame. That puts a greater emphasis on crop and field management.

Be sure to give added attention to your forage program this fall to set you up for a successful 2020 season.

I would like to thank our host farms and host counties for excellent Forage Expos again this summer. The OFC appreciates all the hard work and effort from the many volunteers that help to make these events a success.

The OFC will be hosting the Forage Focus this December in Stratford. We moved to the Stratford location last year for the added technical advantages of live streaming the event to more remote locations. Ontario is a large province and this helps us put on the highest quality program while still reaching the largest number of people. Please contact the OFC for more details about a Live Feed in your region.

I would invite everyone to stay in contact with the OFC for our Profitable Pastures meeting in March and the Milk Maker Forage Competition held at the CDX.

Enjoy the fall weather and I wish everyone an excellent harvest!

Terry Nuhn

President OFC

## Hay/Straw to Buy/Sell?

The Ontario Forage Council offers two options for marketing your hay/straw:

1. The Ontario Hay Listings website is a FREE self service tool that enables buyers/sellers of hay/straw to list and search available or needed hay/straw. OFC recognizes that not all producers have access to Internet services, so we will post your ad on your behalf. Please have your ad details ready when calling.
2. The Ontario Hay Marketing Forum is a group of Ontario hay producers and marketers provide quality forages for domestic and International markets. A full line of forage products are available in packages that meet your needs: large square bales, small square bales, round bales, cubes/pellets.

For more information: 1-877-892-8663 or [www.ontarioforagecouncil.com](http://www.ontarioforagecouncil.com)

## Forage Information Resources:

Ontario Forage Council <http://www.ontarioforagecouncil.com>

Ontario Hay Listings <http://ontariohaylistings.ca>

Beef Cattle Research Council <http://www.beefresearch.ca>

Field Crop News <http://fieldcropnews.com>

Forages and Pastures - OMAFRA <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/field/forages.html>

Canadian Forage and Grassland Association <http://www.canadianfga.com>

Forage Beef [http://www.foragebeef.ca/app33/foragebeef/index\\_body.jsp](http://www.foragebeef.ca/app33/foragebeef/index_body.jsp)

# OFC Manager's Report

By Ray Robertson-Manager, Ontario Forage Council



It seems that as we start into September, we are instantly reminded that Fall is fast upon us, and one must ask, "Were has the summer gone so quickly?" Weather patterns are certainly changing, and without a doubt, 2019 has been like no other year, and will be remembered for the cold wet spring and many farmers

commenting about so many unplanted acres, and revising their planting plans many times throughout the season. But it has been truly amazing how the most crops have advanced so well after looking so sickly from those meager beginnings. Farmers have once again demonstrated their amazing ability to adapt to adverse conditions.

From a forage perspective in June, one could hardly make bad hay, and some producers were commenting on some of the heaviest yields they had cut in many years. But that all changed as we got into the second cut, as drought conditions hit many areas of the province.

The Ontario Forage Council has experienced a very busy summer. We celebrated our fourteenth anniversary of the Ontario Forage Expo and held events in Western and Eastern Ontario. We partnered with Perth County and Victoria County Soil & Crop Improvement Associations in the respective areas, and as always, we truly appreciate the hospitality and leadership that both counties and host farms provided. Again, from a weather perspective, we had our challenges in Victoria county, being forced to delay the event a couple of weeks due to growing conditions in that area. The support from the leading forage machinery companies and agri business in the regions was sincerely valued and will be recognized on the OFC website for several months into 2020.

Plans for the Ontario Forage Focus 2019 are being finalized. The event is scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2019 in Stratford. The keynote speaker will be Joe Lawrence from Cornell University in New York. Joe Lawrence is an outstanding forage speaker and highly sought for his practical extension skills and his reputation among the farm community. The conference will be live streamed to several other

locations in eastern and northern Ontario. Please stay tuned for the final list of speakers and full details at [www.ontarioforagecouncil.com](http://www.ontarioforagecouncil.com).

OFC continues to partner with the Canadian Dairy XPO (CDX) for the 7th "Milk Maker Forage Competition" in Stratford. There was an increase in entries this year and the booth location provided excellent visibility at the XPO in early April 2019. Attendance at the CDX in 2019 was over 15,000, so a great opportunity to showcase the Ontario and Canadian forage industry. The 2020 dates for the CDX is April 1st & 2nd. For more information or an application for the Milk Maker Competition, please visit the OFC website - [www.ontarioforagecouncil.com](http://www.ontarioforagecouncil.com) or phone 1-877-892-8663 / 519-986-1484.

The Ontario Hay Marketing Forum continues to be an important element of OFC. They have often been described as the "All Star Team" within the forage industry. They are a highly reputable group and have proven to be a good marketing arm for forages in Ontario and beyond. The Ontario Hay Marketing Forum is the first entity we think of when referring producers to a hay supplier. The Hay Marketing Forum is an excellent marketing tool, that gives hay producers constant exposure to a broad clientele for a low cost.

The Ontario Hay Listings site is continually providing information with hay / straw wanted or for sale. This is a free service and producers are invited to visit and make good use of the site. ([www.ontariohaylistings.ca](http://www.ontariohaylistings.ca)) With the potential shortage of hay and straw this year, this site will be most useful, and producers are encouraged to make the maximum use of it.

The Ontario Forage Council co-sponsors the Annual Ontario Mapleseed Pasture Award for both sheep and beef producers. Organizations or individuals are encouraged to submit nominations. Please check our website for the dates and prize details. [www.ontarioforagecouncil.com](http://www.ontarioforagecouncil.com)

Companies with a keen interest in the many elements of the forage industry are encouraged to join the Ontario Forage Council. Please feel free to contact us if you would like a membership application form or have further questions.



## We need your feedback!

OFC is gathering information to develop a service to link livestock producers with cash crop producers for grazing and manure opportunities and we want your thoughts! Use the QR code to connect to the survey!



## Save the dates!

January 3 - January 9,  
2020

## LIVESTREAMING AVAILABLE

[greybrucefarmersweek.ca](http://greybrucefarmersweek.ca)



# Get a Jump on Early Spring Forage

By Christine O'Reilly - OMAFRA Forage and Grazing Specialist

Cereals, soybeans, and silage corn are all being harvested, or will be soon! That bare ground provides an opportunity to boost forage inventories by double cropping with a winter cereal, while getting all the benefits of a cover crop in the rotation.

Why use winter cereals as forage?

## **It's a cover crop that makes money the year it is**

**grown.** If you have livestock, forage generates the meat or milk that leads to a paycheck. If you don't have livestock, ask some neighbours to see if someone is interested in buying your standing cereal crop. Most cover crop benefits come from the roots, not the top growth, so there's an opportunity to sell the forage without compromising on soil health.

## **They have higher yield potential than spring cereals.**

Provided there is enough forage on hand to feed livestock all winter, this strategy can produce more forage per acre than planting spring cereals in late summer or early fall. Research by Dr. Bill Deen and colleagues shows that oats will yield around 2.3 tonnes of dry matter (DM) per hectare (ha), while fall rye can yield 3.0 tonnes DM/ha.

**Winter cereals are ready for forage harvest before the next crop is planted.** The time when forage supplies are tightest is when winter cereals are ready to cut. This provides a home-grown boost to feed inventories when hay prices are strongest.

## **They are ready to be grazed before perennial**

**pastures.** If the infrastructure is available, grazing winter cereals in the early spring provides a longer rest for perennial pastures. Conventional wisdom says turning livestock out to pasture a day too early in the spring costs three days of grazing in the fall. Maximize your pasture's yield potential by grazing a winter cereal until the perennial grasses have 3-4 fully developed leaves, then switch the livestock over.

Fall rye is the most commonly used winter cereal for forage in Ontario. It is the most winter hardy and the earliest maturing species. Fall rye can be sown after silage corn harvest on well-drained soils. Winter wheat is more palatable than rye, but by the time it reaches flag-leaf to early boot stage, crop options to follow it are limited. Triticale is a hybrid of rye and wheat. It is ready to harvest 7-14 days later than rye. Seed can be difficult to source in Ontario, so it is often the most expensive winter cereal.

[Winter barley seems to consistently winter kill in](#)

[southern Ontario and is therefore may not be a good choice for a forage double crop.](#)

How to get the most out of forage winter cereals:

**Fertilize the crop.** Unlike a cover crop, forages need to be fed to reach their potential. Incorporating manure ahead of planting a winter cereal is a great way to use manure nutrients. Where no manure is available, apply P and K as a starter as per the soil test, and 55 kg N/ha (50 lbs/acre) in the spring at green-up.

**Use a forage seeding rate.** Cover crop recommendations are often too light to produce good forage crops. Winter cereals should be planted at 110 kg/ha (100 lbs/acre). Seed at 3-4 cm (1.25-1.5 in.) depth to reduce heaving.

**Plant them early.** Tom Kilcer's research in New York state suggests that there is a 20-30% increase in forage yield if fall rye and winter triticale are planted 10-14 days before the optimum winter wheat planting date. This gives the crop plenty of time to tiller in the fall. More tillers generate more stems, and provide a higher forage yield overall. If double-cropping winter cereals for forage is going to be a staple in the crop rotation, producers should consider a shorter season silage corn or soybean to enable timely planting of the cereal.

**Harvest at flag-leaf to boot stage for maximum feed value.** Digestible fibre and crude protein contents are highest before the crop starts to head out. Nutritional quality declines quickly once the heads emerge, though triticale seems to retain quality a little better than rye. This early harvest window enables timely planting of the following crop.

In situations where there is enough forage available for winter feeding, winter cereals can be a great way to boost forage inventories in the spring. They yield higher than fall-planted spring cereals, are ready to harvest earlier in the spring than any other forage and provide all the benefits of a cover crop.

Sources:

Brown, C. (ed.) 2017. Publication 811: Agronomy Guide for Field Crops. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs. Queen's Printer for Ontario. Toronto.

Kilcer, T. April 2018. The new crop on the block. Hoard's Dairyman. Available from: <https://hoards.com/article-22964-the-new-crop-on-the-block.html>

Landry, E., Janovicek, K., Lee, E.A., and Deen, W. 2018.

Winter cereal cover crops for spring forage in temperate climates. *Agronomy Journal*. 111(1): 217-223.

Wand, C. 2018. The “long game” of creating more forage after row crops – fall rye. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, Virtual Beef. 15(58). Available from: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/beef/news/vbn0718a1.htm>

## Nitrates in Silage

By Christine O'Reilly - OMAFRA Forage and Grazing Specialist

Fast-growing crops can accumulate nitrates under dry weather conditions. This is most common in corn, but sorghums, sudangrass, millets, cereals, and Italian ryegrass can all accumulate high levels of nitrates and potentially cause nitrate poisoning in livestock.

### Why are high nitrate levels a problem?

Nitrates (NO<sub>3</sub>-N) are converted to nitrites (NO<sub>2</sub>-N) in the rumen. Normally, the nitrites are quickly converted to ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>-N) by rumen bacteria and is absorbed into the blood stream to be excreted with urine. When there are high levels of nitrates in the feed, the rumen microbes cannot keep up with nitrite production. The nitrites form methemoglobin in the blood, which reduces oxygen-carrying capacity. Signs of acute nitrate poisoning in animals include staggering, vomiting, laboured breathing, blue-grey mucous membranes, and death (typically within three hours). Chronic nitrate poisoning often appears as reduced weight gain, early-stage abortions, and premature births.

Nitrogen oxide gases (NO, NO<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>) can form from the breakdown of nitrates during ensiling. High-nitrate forages can lead to greater releases which can quickly reach lethal levels. Nitrogen oxide gases are heavier than air, may be reddish or yellow-brown in colour, and have a bleach-like smell. Nitrogen oxide gases will accumulate in low-lying places, such as around the base of a silo or in the feed room below a tower. When ensiling forage that may have high nitrate concentrations, do not enter the silo for at least three weeks after harvest. If you must enter the silo to level or cover the silage, do it immediately after filling and leave the blower running while anyone is in the silo.

### Which growing conditions elevate nitrates in crops?

There are several factors that are known to increase the risk of high nitrates in fast-growing crops and weeds:

High soil nitrogen fertility. This could be from fertilizers, manure applications, legume plow-down crops or winter-killed alfalfa.

Hail, frost, or prolonged cloudy weather. Under these conditions plant roots are taking up nitrates, but the leaves are unable to turn those nitrates into amino

acids fast enough to prevent accumulation.

Periods of dry weather followed by a rain. Nitrates move with soil water into the roots, so a flush of water after a dry spell will move lots of nitrogen into the plant. It takes 5-7 days for the crop to metabolize all that nitrate, so concentrations are highest during the first week after the rain event.

While the above conditions are good general guidelines, growing conditions in 2019 have added some complexity to the crop nitrate puzzle. In fields where smearing and compaction at planting have affected root development, the crop may experience moisture stress even under normal levels of precipitation. Fields showing symptoms of moisture stress may be at risk of accumulating nitrates following a rain that revives them.

### What can producers do to manage nitrates?

Proper fermentation can reduce nitrate levels by 25-65%. It is important that the crop is at the correct moisture level for the silo being used (Table 1). If the crop is too wet or too dry it will not ferment properly, and the nitrate concentration will remain high. Baleage is generally too dry to ferment completely, so do not expect baleage to reduce nitrate levels as much as ensiling. Nitrate levels are stable in dry hay; if they are high at harvest, they will always be high.

Type of Silo	% Moisture Content	% Dry Matter Content
Horizontal (bunker) silo	65 to 70 per cent	30 to 45 per cent
Bag silo	65 to 70 per cent	30 to 45 per cent
Tower silo	62 to 67 per cent	33 to 38 per cent
Oxygen-limiting tower silo	55 to 60 per cent	40 to 45 per cent
Baleage	50 to 60 per cent	40 to 45 per cent

Table 1. Correct moisture content for silage crops.

Nitrates accumulate most in the lower parts of the plant, so raising the cut height is commonly recommended to lower nitrate levels in the feed. However, if forage inventories are a concern, a better approach is to harvest at the normal cut height, allow the crop to ferment for at least 3-5 weeks, and then conduct a lab test for feed nitrates so it can be diluted if needed before feeding. Guidelines to interpret forage nitrate lab results are in Table 2 below.

Testing the forage is the only way to know whether the level of nitrates may pose a problem. Most laboratories that conduct feed and forage analysis offer a nitrates test. Be sure the sample is

representative of the feed, and it should be frozen to keep the nitrate levels from changing between the farm and the lab. The test results may report nitrates in a few different ways: as nitrate (NO<sub>3</sub>) or as nitrate-nitrogen (NO<sub>3</sub>-N). These measurements may be expressed as a percentage or in parts per million (ppm).

	NO <sub>3</sub> -N (ppm)	NO <sub>3</sub> (%)
Generally safe	<350	0.15
Generally safe for non-pregnant livestock. Limit to 50% of total ration for bred animals.	350-1130	0.15-0.5
Limit to 25-50% of ration for non-pregnant livestock. DO NOT FEED TO PREGNANT ANIMALS.	1130-2260	0.5-1.0
DO NOT FEED.	>2260	>1.0

Adapted from Glunk et al. 2015

Table 2. Guidelines for forage nitrate levels on a dry matter basis in cattle rations

To reduce the risk of acute nitrate poisoning, feed animals several meals a day, rather than one large one. Livestock fed once a day tend to eat a very large meal when the feed arrives; if the ration is high in nitrates, there is a large spike in their methemoglobin levels about eight hours later. Feeding twice a day results in ruminants eating smaller meals, and a smaller methemoglobin spike four hours after each meal.

**Sources**


Bagg, J. 2012. Potential nitrate poisoning and silo gas when using corn damaged by dry weather for

silage, green chop or grazing. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs. Available from: [http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/dairy/facts/info\\_beware.htm](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/dairy/facts/info_beware.htm)

Glunk, E., Oslen-Rutz, K., King, M., Wichman, D., Jones, C. 2015. Nitrate Toxicity of Montana Forages. Montana State University Extension. Available from: <http://animalrange.montana.edu/documents/extension/nitoxmt.pdf>

Yaremicio, B. 1991. Nitrate poisoning and feeding nitrate feeds to livestock. Alberta Department of Agriculture and Forestry. Available from: [https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/](https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/)

Weather Summary							
Location	July 24 - 30, 2019	Temperature (°C)		Rainfall (mm)	Heat Units CHU	Total Since May 1	
		Max	Min			Precip	CHU
Outdoor Farm Show	2019	27.2	15.9	11.6	162.8	331.8	1799.3
	30 Yr. Avg.	26.1	14.8	24.9	152.1	252.1	1840.5
Chatham	2019	28.7	17.6	31.0	173.5	257.6	1984.9
	30 Yr. Avg.	27.0	16.4	20.7	162.2	229.5	1997.4
Elora	2019	27.2	14.6	6.6	154.8	217.2	1657.7
	30 Yr. Avg.	25.7	14.0	23.1	147.2	247.8	1750.1
Hamilton	2019	30.3	20.1	0.0	183.7	78.4	1839.6
	30 Yr. Avg.	26.3	15.5	21.0	156.3	233.6	1860.5
London	2019	27.2	17.1	15.8	169.3	308.6	1871.9
	30 Yr. Avg.	26.2	15.0	24.0	153.3	250.9	1862.1
Mount Forest	2019	26.5	15.3	0.0	159.1	401.6	1634.3
	30 Yr. Avg.	25.2	13.7	21.3	144.4	248.1	1696.5
Ottawa	2019	28.6	17.3	13.7	171.2	220.3	1755.1
	30 Yr. Avg.	26.3	15.0	19.9	153.4	257.2	1845.6
Peterborough	2019	28.3	15.4	8.0	161.0	239.9	1646.5
	30 Yr. Avg.	25.7	14.3	17.6	148.5	235.0	1739.2
Trenton	2019	27.7	13.4	0.5	150.0	262.8	1731.0
	30 Yr. Avg.	25.9	14.5	16.9	150.3	231.3	1765.5
Windsor	2019	29.1	19.2	10.4	182.4	199.4	2060.4
	30 Yr. Avg.	27.4	16.4	19.4	162.6	225.4	2011.5


 Table Updated Daily at [www.weatherinnovations.com/weeklyweather.cfm](http://www.weatherinnovations.com/weeklyweather.cfm)  
 This Report includes data from WIN and Environment Canada

## Milk Maker Forage Competition - Get your entries in!



The Ontario Forage Council (OFC) & Canadian Forage & Grassland Association (CFGAs), are pleased to deliver the 2020 Annual Milk Maker Forage Competition!

The entry deadline for the 2020 competition is January 17, 2020. Entries received after the deadline will not be accepted. Forms and entry rules can be found on the OFC website under Programs/Milk Maker Forage Competition. Seed companies/dairy organizations can support and encourage their customers/members to participate for a chance to become the Milk Maker Forage Champ - an annual status.

**Prizes will be awarded as follows:**

- 1st Place - \$500**
- 2nd Place - \$200**
- 3rd Place - \$100**

Classes include alfalfa hay, grass hay, 1st & 2nd cut hay silage, corn silage, and BMR corn silage. Producers are invited to submit samples for lab and visual analysis.

**\*Attention seed/preservative/inoculant companies!** This is an excellent opportunity to showcase your products. For each winning MMFC entry, we will publish the name of the seed/preservative/inoculant used on each sample. The more entries you encourage, the better your chances of earning bragging rights for the success of the winning sample(s).

# Register now for 10<sup>th</sup> annual CFGA conference

Take advantage of early bird registration

The Canadian Forage and Grassland Association's 10th annual conference, Canadian Forage Production School, Eastern Edition, set for Nov. 12 to 15 in Moncton, N.B., will give the nation's farmers tools, information, advice, tips and tricks to make the most of their forage and grassland management and production.

The conference leads off with a pre-conference tour on Tuesday, Nov. 12. The tour departs from Moncton and will visit the 223-hectare Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Farm in Nappan, N.S. to look at research on cover crops, late-season grazing and bale grazing. The pre-conference tour will return to New Brunswick for stops at Wesselius Holstein Farms' rotary dairy parlour before proceeding to Dwayne and Becky Perry's award-winning dairy farm, Perry Hill Farms.

The technical working group also meets Nov. 12 as researchers gather to share knowledge on outcomes of their recent studies on forage and grasslands.

During the main event, Dr. Dan Undersander, expert on forage production, grazing, hay, haylage and silage making and Professor emeritus, agronomy at the College of Agricultural and Life Science, University of Wisconsin, will focus on the topics of harvesting for quality, mowing and drying, chopping and ensiling.

Other featured topics include a focus on corn. Speakers include Chuck Belanger of Maizex Seed Inc. speaking on the topic of corn fertility, Colin

Brown of Corteva Agriscience discussing planting and Eric Richter of Syngenta diving into the subject of corn weed control.

Karen Haugen-Kozyra of Viresco Solutions will explain and explore the soil carbon in forage management during the conference as well. Haugen-Kozyra will reiterate the significant carbon sequestration benefits of perennial forage crops.

The export forage sector is on the schedule during the conference, with regions throughout Canada bringing their experience to the Moncton event to let farmers in eastern Canada know about the opportunities that exist for them as well. Among the topics on the agenda, the Peace Region Forage Seed Association will talk about how they've become a global powerhouse in forage seed export, and the Ontario Hay Marketing Co-Operative will discuss rotation options for export forage from Eastern Canada.

The Canadian forage export industry will also be the focus on Friday, Nov. 15 when industry leaders gather to discuss the latest concerns and events in their industry, as well as explore new opportunities.

To register, or for more information, visit the 2019 CFGA Conference Website ([www.canadianfga.ca/conference](http://www.canadianfga.ca/conference)). You can also stay up to date on the CFGA Facebook Page (search Canadian Forage and Grassland Association) as well as CFGA's Twitter account (@CFGACPF).



## Attention BEEF and SHEEP Producers!!

The Beef Farmers of Ontario, the Ontario Sheep marketing Agency, Mapleseed, and the Ontario Forage Council, invite you to nominate a deserving producer for the **Mapleseed Pasture Award**. This is an excellent opportunity to recognize individual producers who are doing an outstanding job of pasture management. The Mapleseed Pasture Awards are also a way of encouraging producers to implement pasture management strategies that maximize production per acre.

For each category, Mapleseed contributes a cash award of \$500 to the winner, \$250 to cover their accommodation to attend the BFO/OSMA AGM. The winner of each category will also be invited to share a presentation about their operation at their respective commodity AGM.

Additional to these prizes and recognition, each winner will receive a 25kg bag of their choice of a Mapleseed Forage Mix.

Sheep Application Deadline: **September 14, 2019**

Beef Application Deadline: **November 29, 2019**

For questions, please contact:

Ray Robertson [ray@ontarioforagecouncil.com](mailto:ray@ontarioforagecouncil.com)

Visit [www.ontarioforagecouncil.com](http://www.ontarioforagecouncil.com) for information and applications!



# Advice for collecting feed samples

By Ron Piett, A&L Canada

Starting with piles, and bunkers—due to some unfortunate mishaps, I am a firm believer in avoiding sampling the face manually. If you have ever seen (or heard) a face of silage fall, it changes one's attitude quickly. My recommendation is to sample after facing the bunker—before adding to the mixer. Usually the pile after facing is much lower and you can easily collect a representative sample.

- Silos are not as convenient (maybe) but can often be sampled as forages are added to the mixer from a conveyer. We have two locations in our facility from which we can sample as the mixer is filling, and again get a representative sample by taking handfuls at various times during feed making process.
- Silage tubes can be sampled as piles or as baled forages—i.e. probed, remembering to patch the holes.
- Bales, wet or dry, wrapped or not are best sampled with a forage probe. There are several types and sizes, and preference is individualistic.
- Probing from the butt end of square bales or contoured side of round bales, take cores from a number of bales, combining lots, cuttings or fields together.
- Ziplock bags or feed bags supplied by labs provide very good shipping containers.

- Place enough material in the bag (two thirds full) fold over and squeeze out air, and seal. Depending on what analyses are required, more than one bag may be necessary.
- LABEL CLEARLY—with client's name, farm name, crop (cutting) and analysis required.
- If a paper tag is used instead of a submission form—God forbid—don't put the paper in the bag of silage.
- TMRs are most easily sampled immediately after delivery. Take a handful by digging down into the pile, scooping into a clean pail. I take 6-10 samples along the feed bunk. Mix well and place enough in the sample bag as required. I have used this procedure to run TMR mixer validations and it works for me.

I have tried to make this as simple and painless as possible in hope that sampling and testing is done more frequently. We could get into sampling fresh or fermented, trying to sample the whole crop at one time, but my advice is to sample what you are feeding now, and if something changes noticeably, sample again. If nothing seems to change, sample again in a month or two anyway.

**The Ontario Forage Council thanks the  
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food  
and Rural Affairs  
for their continued support!**



#### Disclaimer Statement

The information contained herein is provided as a public service with the understanding that Ontario Forage Council makes no warranties, either expressed or implied, concerning the accuracy, completeness, reliability, or suitability of the information.



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## GOLD MEMBERS

**A & L Canada Laboratories**

**Beef Farmers of Ontario**

**Dairy Farmers of Ontario**

**Corteva Agriscience™,  
Agriculture Division of DowDuPont**

**Kubota Canada**

**Ontario Forage Processor**

**Sheep Farmers of Ontario**

## CORPORATE MEMBERS

**Can Grow Crop Solutions Inc.**

**DLF PICKSEED**

**Great Lakes Agra Corporation**

**GROWMARK**

**International Stock Food**

**Liquid Feeds International**

**Mapleseed**

**Marcrest Manufacturing**

**Nuhn Forage Inc.**

**OSCIA**

**OVSGA**

**Pestell Minerals & Ingredients**

**ProRich Seeds**

**Quality Seeds Ltd.**

**Semican**

**SGS Canada Inc.**

**Silo-King Forage Treatment**

**Speare Seeds**

**University of Guelph**