

drier at 64-67% moisture seems to be the best. Research has always shown that corn silage put up at a moisture content of 60% or less leads to reduced starch and fiber digestion with poor performance in cows. If for whatever reason, corn is put up this dry, be sure you either chop finer, or have the corn processed.

What is the best length to chop my corn? Regardless of silo type, the general recommendation for chop length with a conventional harvester (no processor) is 3/8" theoretical length of cut (TLC). This can vary between 1/4" and 1/2", depending on moisture content, hybrid, and harvester. For example, silage chopped at less than 65% moisture may need to be chopped at 1/4" TLC, wet (greater than 70% moisture) or immature corn may benefit from a TLC of 1/2", and BMR corn should not be chopped less than 1/2" TLC. The general premise is that we are trying to strike a happy balance between rumen health and effective fiber (not too short) and good packing with optimal fermentation (not too long).

Processed corn needs to be chopped longer at a TLC of 3/4". You might think about increasing TLC to 7/8" if corn is wetter than say 68-70% moisture. If you are having your corn processed, there are a couple of things you can do to see if things are going right. The first is to simply place a quart of chopped silage in a container of water. This separates the kernels

from the plant particles, since corn sinks. Examine the kernels to be sure that over 95% of them are broken, but not destroyed. The second is to use the Penn State particle separator to assess chop length. With 3/4" TLC corn silage, particles will distribute with 10-20% in the top, 40-70% (and all corn kernels) in the middle, and less than 30% in the bottom pan. Give the office a call if you would like one of us to come out to see how processing is going.