Forages for Dry Cows

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Main Forage Options for Dry Cows in Upper Midwest

- Legume Silage
- Grass Silage
- Small-Grain Silage
- Corn Silage
- Hay
Legume Silage

- Potential Advantages
  - Moderate Moisture
  - Moderate NEI
  - Moderate Fill Factor
  - Minimal Sorting

- Potential Limitations
  - High Moisture
  - High CP
  - High DIP
  - Moderate/High SIP
  - High K
  - High DCAD
  - High Ca
Grass Silage

Potential Advantages
- Moderate Moisture
- Low/Moderate CP
- Moderate NEI
- Moderate/High Fill Factor
- Moderate Sorting
- Low Ca
- Low/Moderate K
- Low/Moderate DCAD

Potential Limitations
- High Moisture
- Moderate/High DIP
- Moderate/High SIP
- High K
- High DCAD

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Small-Grain Silage

Potential Advantages
- Moderate Moisture
- Low/Moderate CP
- Moderate NE\textit{L}
- Moderate/High Fill Factor
- Moderate Sorting
- Low Ca
- Moderate K
- Moderate DCAD

Potential Limitations
- High Moisture
- Moderate/High DIP
- Moderate/High SIP
- High K
- High DCAD
- Poor Bunk Stability

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Corn Silage

- Potential Advantages
  - Low CP, DIP, SIP
  - Low/Moderate Sorting
  - Low Ca
  - Low K
  - Low DCAD

- Potential Limitations
  - High Moisture
  - High Acidity
  - High NEI
  - High Starch
  - Low Fill Factor/eNDF
  - High Sorting
  - Poor Bunk Stability
Hay

- Potential Advantages
  - Low Moisture
  - Low/Moderate CP
  - Low SIP
  - Moderate NEI
  - High Fill Factor/eNDF
  - Low/Moderate Ca
  - Low/Moderate K
  - Low/Moderate DCAD

- Potential Limitations
  - High CP
  - Moderate/High DIP
  - High Ca
  - High K
  - High DCAD
  - High Sorting
General Comments

- There is no single perfect forage for dry cows
- Inclusion of corn silage in the forage program reduces CP, DIP, SIP, Ca, K, DCAD
- Limit corn silage to < 50% of forage DM, because of moisture, acidity, NEI, fill factor, and bunk stability issues
- K and DCAD limitations of grass and small grain silages can be reduced through management of soil fertility
General Comments

- Hay-crop silage should have 20% to 25% of particles on top screen of PSU shaker box
- 5 lb. per cow of long or coarsely chopped hay may aide dry cows by reducing ration moisture content and increasing fill factor/eNDF
- Sorting problems may be a concern at higher feeding rates of hay
General Comments

- Hay for dry cows should be selected to minimize CP, K, and DCAD limitations
- Forages for dry cows should be highly palatable
- Clostridial or butyric acid silages should not be fed to dry cows
- Forages for dry cows should be free of molds and mycotoxins