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Silage Corn – Hybrid Selection Considerations

Picking a corn hybrid to grow for silage can be a daunting task. There are several factors to be considered that differ from simply looking at yield and moisture, as we would tend to do with grain corn. This newsletter focuses on things to consider when picking a corn silage hybrid for your operation.

The PRIDE Seeds corn silage lineup is very robust, looking through our product guide you may have noticed that we refer to certain hybrids as Effective Digestible Fibre (EDF) or Effective Dual Purpose (EDP). Here are some tips on how to differentiate between the two and narrow down what will fulfill your operation's needs.

SILAGE-SPECIFIC HYBRIDS

Effective Digestible Fibre (EDF) hybrids offer the advantage of high digestibility and palatability for improved feeding efficiency. These EDF hybrids are more commonly called silage-specific hybrids, as they have been bred with a unique set of characteristics for corn silage production exclusively.

Unique characteristics of EDF hybrids:

- Top end yield for maturity group
- Wide harvest window slow whole plant dry down allowing for more flexibility at harvest
- Flint-dent kernel type on a white cob
- Large plant structure
- High digestibility and palatability for improved feeding efficiency

Identifying EDF/ Silage Specific Hybrids

- "AS": will start the hybrid name
- "10": will be the first two numbers in the hybrid name; "10 series"
- "EDF": will be the last three letters of the hybrid name
- EDF Hybrids in Commercial Line-up: o AS1017RR EDF & AS1018G2 RIB EDF
 - o AS1027RR EDF & AS1028G2 RIB EDF o AS1047RR FDF
 - o A4705HMRR*
- * A4705HMRR is a silage specific product but named prior to the implementation of the AS naming system.





DUAL PURPOSE HYBRIDS

Effective Dual Purpose (EDP) hybrids tend to have higher energy and silage quality compared to an EDF product, as well as it has the flexibility to be used as a grain or a high moisture hybrid depending on operational needs. These hybrids have been bred for grain production, but through the Total Ration Solutions (TRS) evaluation system, it is determined that they will also make a good corn silage hybrid. EDP hybrids are commonly called dual purpose hybrids.

Characteristics of EDP Hybrids:

- High grain production = more energy
- Dent genetics on a red cob
- Flexibility at harvest fill the bunk and combine the rest
- Narrow harvest window vs. an EDP hybrid, needs to be monitored closer for harvest timing as they are bred to dry down quickly

Identifying EDP/ Dual Purpose Hybrids

- "A": will start the hybrid name –
 "A-series"
 - Not all A-series hybrids will be a good dual purpose hybrid option.
 Some hybrids are only a fit for grain production and not silage production.
- EDP hybrids in the commercial line-up o A3979G2 RIB
 - o A3993G2 RIB
 - o A4414RR
 - o A4646G2 RIB
 - o A4939G2 RIB
 - o A5225G2 RIB
 - o A5432G2 RIB



Not all products are dual purpose hybrids. There are products that were bred for grain production and that is what they are exclusively used for. There will be instances when PRIDE Seeds Market Development Agronomists make recommendations outside of EDF and EDP products for silage production based on results from field scale trials, maturity area or producer practices and land type.



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THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN HELP DETERMINE WHICH HYBRIDS TO CHOOSE TO ACHIEVE THE MAXIMUM CORN SILAGE PRODUCTION:

1. What is your end use?

When it come to corn silage, there is not a one size fits all for every operation. There may be certain hybrids that will be a better fit for a dairy operation over a beef operation and vice versa. If you're looking for flexibility at harvest, a dual purpose (EDP) may be a better fit, but if you're concerned about whole plant dry-down a silage specific (EDF) hybrid may make more sense.

2. What is your maturity region?

Choose hybrids that are the correct maturity for the region in which they will be grown. This is key for producing high quality silage or grazing corn. Growing a hybrid that is too short for the season can negatively impact yield, while choosing a hybrid that is too long for the season can result in poor quality and/or difficulty harvesting. For silage, it is recommended to grow a hybrid that is 150-200 CHUs higher than the rated heat units in your area. Better yet, try to choose an early, mid, and late season hybrid to spread out risk and harvest. This will also help ensure proper silage harvest timing on your operation (62-68% whole plant moisture).

3. How do the hybrids perform?

Now that you have the list narrowed down by end use and maturity zone, you can look closer at the data surrounding a shorter hybrid list. Seed companies spend time, effort and research dollars working with plot cooperators to provide producers with local plot data. Using plot data can assist in the decision-making process. This is an opportunity to see local trial data and take a closer look at yield, fibre digestibility, starch levels, total digestible nutrients, milk, and beef production per acre. To determine good quality feed, some quick parameters that we generally want to see are:

- a. High yield
- b. High digestibility
- c. Low fiber levels
- d. High starch

4. What agronomic characteristics are important in a hybrid?

This could be plant characteristics like standability, plant health and early season vigour. This also includes insect and herbicide traits offered. We are starting to see more of a need for these types of traits across Western Canada. Often there are charts and tables in product guides that can help breakdown plant characteristics and trait offerings and allow for better comparison between hybrids.

Reach out to your local PRIDE Seeds Agronomist or CANTERRA SEEDS territory manager for a hybrid recommendation or to explore the different options for your area.

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