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PROTECT SILAGE WITH PLASTIC

Many of you are chopping or about to chop silage. You will invest time and money to store good feed for your livestock. However, when you start to feed your silage you may find that the top couple feet has an off color, smells bad, or has spoiled.

After silage has been chopped and piled and packed correctly, it still can be damaged seriously by air and moisture slowly penetrating the outer 3 to 4 feet. Animals often eat less when fed moldy silage and can even experience health problems due to mycotoxins. Good, well-eared silage can lose over 20 percent of its feed value from fermentation and spoilage under normal conditions. Silage made from corn with little or no grain might have even greater losses. This loss can be cut in half, or even less, if silage is covered well by a sheet of plastic.

Cover freshly chopped silage with black plastic immediately after you finish filling the trench, bunker, or pile. Then cover the plastic with something to help hold it down. Old tires are readily available and do a good job of keeping the plastic from blowing away. But tires only keep the plastic in contact with the silage directly under the tire. In between the tires, air can circulate and cause some spoilage. An even better choice would be a solid cover, something like freshly chopped forage or weeds. Then, the entire surface of silage will be fully protected.

You go to a lot of time and expense to make good silage. Isn't it worth it to spend just a little bit more to protect that investment? Cover silage with plastic – it's worth it.

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