

Tip of the Month – January 2019

Make the most of good silage

It's been another special year for harvesting. After a very good first cut, most dairy farmers were not able to get much from second cut. Most of this was of less quantity and quality with a lot of stalk and containing less nutritional energy because of the drought.

The corn was also different this year. Some farmers got a very good harvest while others were stuck with too little amount and containing too little starch. On top of that, during feeding it seems very hard to keep cold.

What does your roughage stock look like and how many months of good quality supply do you have for your cows?

If that's considerably less than the supply you need during the winterperiod, then it is crucial to take measures to stretch the duration of your supply.

We don't want to have to think about the possibility of good cows eating poor quality roughage.

Some example measures you can take: Give non-lactating cows and young cattle other feed (Dry cows could get **hammered** straw).

Give the lowest producing cows, in a production group, different roughage, perhaps.

Or, strictly select the bottom end of the herd and dry off cows on time (or earlier).

Correct the ration with by-products as well, both on quantity and type of supplementation. This year, this will be a special field of interest.

Consult with your advisor on these issues. Don't just take the quality or quantity of silage for what it is. S/he will also experience new situations this year and can tailor solutions to your specific region.