

Filling the Silo

The blower is the machine almost exclusively used for filling the silo. A difficulty with this machine is that the ensilage is not properly mixed. The heavier parts, including the grain, are thrown against the opposite wall and the lighter parts fall at the side nearest the opening. It is necessary to have two or three men in the silo to mix the ensilage and tramp it, to prevent uneven settling and to exclude the air. If the silo is to be filled with green feed especially it will be necessary to tramp it well, when filling, to exclude the air, as the oat stem, unlike the corn stalk, is hollow and light and will not pack so well of its own weight. It should likewise be well tramped for four or five days after being filled, in order to save waste of ensilage in the first foot or so at the top. If it is too ripe or dry, water should be added while the ensilage is being put in, or it will burn and become useless. Water may be applied either in the silo or it may be applied with a sprinkler on the feed table as the feed passes into the blower.

Method of Using Ensilage

Ensilage is a combination of roughage and succulent feed. The succulence and flavor of properly cured ensilage make it a relishing feed. This quality makes it an advantage to mix it with other feeds. Cut feed or chaff may be mixed with it, and if the silage is sour or over-acid from being cut too green the addition of cut feed is necessary. Sour ensilage alone may cause cattle to scour. The chop that is fed should be mixed with the ensilage also. Finely ground chop is not easily regurgitated as it forms a pasty mass when bolted alone. When it is mixed with ensilage the digestive process is more complete. Cattle may be fed from thirty to forty pounds daily, and young animals in proportion to their weight. Sheep can use from two to four pounds daily, but in-lamb ewes should not get more than two pounds. Spoiled or mouldy ensilage should not be fed. It is dangerous for stock and should be thrown out. The use of ensilage is not limited to the winter feeding season. On dairy farms in Eastern Canada a supply is commonly held over in the spring to sustain the milk flow over dry, mid-summer pasture.

When feeding ensilage in warm weather a couple of inches should be removed from the top each day, otherwise the surface exposed to the air will begin to spoil if allowed to remain longer. It is advisable to build two small silos rather than one very large one. It is not advisable to build under twenty-four feet in height, as there is sometimes not enough pressure to make good ensilage, thirty feet being better than twenty-four.