

AMERICAN FARM PRODUCTS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

THE NOSE KNOWS – WHAT THE SCENT OF YOUR SILAGE TELLS YOU

Fermentation is the foundation of high-quality silage, and one of the best ways to evaluate its success is by using your nose! The smell of your silage can provide valuable insights into its quality and fermentation process.

A quick and effective fermentation is critical to preserving nutrients, reducing dry matter losses, and ensuring a stable, high-quality feed source for your herd. Achieving rapid fermentation helps prevent undesirable microbial activity, minimizes spoilage, and maximizes energy retention.





HERE'S WHAT DIFFERENT SCENTS INDICATE:

1. Mild or Little Smell – A Good Fermentation

This indicates a fermentation dominated by **lactic acid**, a low pH form of sugar that helps preserve forage and maintain high nutritional value.

2. Sweet Smell – High Alcohol & Yeast Presence

A strong sweet aroma suggests **high concentrations of alcohol** and excessive yeast levels. This silage will heat quickly at feed-out, reducing its stability and feed value.

3. Vinegar Smell – High Acetic Acid Levels

If your silage has a vinegar-like odor, it likely has **high acetic acid and low lactic acid levels**. This suggests a slow fermentation process, leading to dry matter losses and reduced efficiency.

4. Tobacco or Burnt Molasses Smell – Excessive Heating

This odor indicates that your silage has undergone excessive heating, resulting in **low energy availability and bound protein**. While cows may still eat it, the nutritional value will be significantly reduced.

5. Putrid, Rotten Smell – Butyric Acid Warning!

A rotten, putrid smell is a sign of **butyric acid** formation, which leads to decreased energy, significant dry matter losses, poor intake, and potential health problems for your herd.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Trust your nose! Recognizing these silage odors can help you detect fermentation issues early and maintain top-quality feed for your herd. Ensuring a fast and effective fermentation process is key to locking in nutrients and preventing unwanted spoilage. If you have any concerns about your silage, don't hesitate to reach out for expert advice.

For more insights and expert recommendations, feel free to contact our team. Happy harvesting!