



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

# Buying and Selling Corn Silage: What's A Fair Price?

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**Base price at 65% moisture**..... \$\_\_\_\_\_ / ton

Option #1... 8-10 x\* price of shell corn...\$5.50 x 9 = **\$49.50 / ton**

\*Range depends on yield and which party pays for harvest

Option #2...cost + return...\$750/a ÷ 20 ton/a + 10% = **\$41.25 / ton**

**Adjusted price for moisture** (see table below).....\$\_\_\_\_\_ / ton

Base Price (\$ / ton as fed) at 65% moisture						
% Moisture	\$40	\$44	\$48	\$52	\$56	\$60
71 %	\$33.14	\$36.46	\$39.77	\$43.09	\$46.40	\$49.71
69 %	\$35.43	\$38.97	\$42.51	\$46.06	\$49.60	\$53.14
67 %	\$37.71	\$41.49	\$45.26	\$49.03	\$52.80	\$56.57
65 %	\$40.00	\$44.00	\$48.00	\$52.00	\$56.00	\$60.00
63 %	\$42.29	\$46.51	\$50.74	\$54.97	\$59.20	\$63.43
61 %	\$44.57	\$49.03	\$53.49	\$57.94	\$62.40	\$66.86
59 %	\$46.86	\$51.54	\$56.23	\$60.91	\$65.60	\$70.29

**Quality adjustment factor for maturity**..... x \_\_\_\_\_ %

*(Darby and Lauer, 2002)*

... pre-tassel = **90%**

... silk = **80%**

... soft dough = **85%**

... early dent = **90%**

... 1/2 kernel milk line = **100%**

... black layer = **90%**

**Adjusted price for moisture and quality**..... = \$\_\_\_\_\_ / ton

## Estimating Corn Silage Yield

Historically, formulas based on corn plant height and corn grain yield have been used to estimate silage yield. Current data using these methods on modern hybrids is lacking, making the accuracy of these methods unknown.

(over)

## Sample Weight Method

A more accurate way to estimate yields is to weigh the corn plants from a portion of an acre in several representative spots of the field. When using this method, cut at the height you intend to chop at. To do this, determine row width, then cut corn plants in one row for a certain length according to row width in the following table:

Row Length	Row Width
69.70 ft.	15"
52.27 ft.	20"
47.52 ft.	22"
34.85 ft.	30"
29.04 ft.	36"
27.51 ft.	38"
26.14 ft.	40"

Next, weigh the amount of whole corn plant material cut in pounds. Divide the pounds harvested by 4. That's the estimated as fed tons produced per acre. Factoring in moisture adjustments can also increase accuracy. Follow this method for several areas and average the results.

For example – If the row width was 30" and 34.85 ft. or row was cut and weighed 64 lbs., this field would yield 16 tons of corn silage /acre (64 divided by 4 = 16 tons).

Weighing loads is the most accurate measurement of yield. To obtain actual tons harvested, weigh each load. If you know the upright silo size, how many feet of silage was put up and what the moisture was, charts can be used to estimate tons based on the silo's capacity. Dividing stored tons by acres harvested will give you yield per acre. Estimates can be made for silage bags and bunkers, but bear in mind packing density varies in these structures and by operator, creating a wider margin of error in estimates.

Determining if buyer or seller is responsible for harvest costs is an additional consideration. If the buyer is responsible for harvesting, their costs should be credited towards the final price. If you are unsure of harvest costs, custom rate guides can be used as a starting point for negotiations.

	\$ / Acre	\$ / Hour	\$ / Ton
Chop Only	\$165.71	\$481.80	\$5.57
Chop/Haul/Fill	N/A	\$629.45	\$9.00
Bagging	N/A	N/A	\$5.18
Blower	N/A	\$30.50	N/A

[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Wisconsin/Publications/WI-CRate20.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Wisconsin/Publications/WI-CRate20.pdf)

For a more in-depth analysis, including value of stover and/or nutrient removal, go to the UW Madison Division of Extension Corn Silage Pricing Aid webpage (Excel, Android App, Apple App): <https://cropsandsoils.extension.wisc.edu/articles/tools-for-pricing-standing-corn-silage/>