



More milk

While keeping control of costs is an important part of a profitable dairy farm system, keeping production up is also important because it dilutes fixed costs (e.g. labour and debt servicing). Maize silage can be used to increase milk production throughout the season by:

Improving cow condition

Meeting cow condition score targets of 5.5 for first and second calvers or 5.0 for mature cows is a fundamental driver of production and profit. Cows that are in better condition at calving produce more milk and cycle faster, meaning improved reproductive performance and a tighter calving spread. The energy in maize silage is used 20% more efficiently than the energy in autumn pasture for gaining condition.

Extending lactation

Feed maize silage in the autumn to get more days in milk or use it to fill the feed deficit created by earlier calving. The latter can be particularly effective in summer-dry regions as more of the milk production can be achieved pre-Christmas.

Improving animal health

Lush, rapidly growing pasture contains excessive levels of potassium which can increase the incidence of milk fever. The problem is usually greater on paddocks which have a history of effluent application. Growing maize utilises excess soil potassium, whilst feeding high rates of maize silage (a low potassium feed) to dry cows can help reduce milk fever risk.

Filling feed deficits

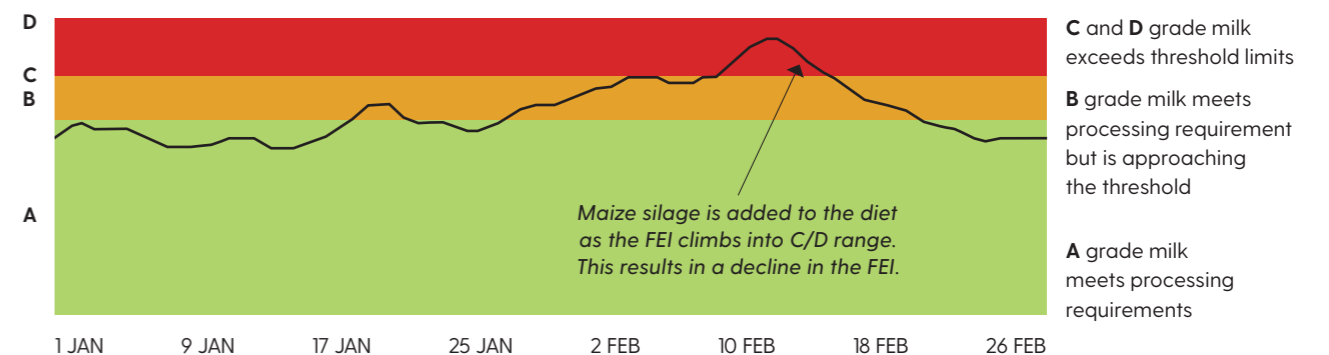
Maize silage can be used to fill feed deficits caused by below-average pasture growth rates. Whether the weather is too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry, you can rely on maize silage to provide cost-effective, quality drymatter.

Maize is free from the fungal spores that cause facial eczema and is the ideal carrier for zinc as well as macro-minerals such as magnesium, calcium, phosphorus and sodium.

Maintaining consistent milk quality

Maize silage is a locally grown forage that contains the perfect balance of fibre and carbohydrate to maintain rumen health. Milk produced from maize silage is consistently high in quality unlike milk produced from PKE, which can have a negative impact on Fonterra's Fat Evaluation Index (FEI) and milk returns.

Figure 5: Typical summer FEI graph showing penalties associated with high PKE feeding rates



The penalties for a C grade are two demerits and 10% deduction per collection day while a D grade penalty is four demerits and 20% deduction per collection day.

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References

1. Densley et al, 2006. Maize silage and winter crop options to maximise drymatter and energy for NZ dairy systems. Proceedings of the NZ Grassland Association 68:193-197. **2.** Clark et al. 2010. Inter-paddock annual dry matter yield variability for dairy farms in the Waikato region of New Zealand. New Zealand Journal of Agricultural Research 53: 187-191. **3.** Pioneer[®] brand maize silage 2020-21 **4.** NZX PKE spot prices **5.** DairyNZ Milksolids Response see <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/feed/supplements/milksolids-response-to-supplements/> **6.** Williams et al. 2010. Using maize silage to reduce the impact of dairy farm systems on water use and quality in New Zealand: A review. Proceedings of the 4th Australasian Science Symposium **7.** Waikato Regional Council. Applying effluent to land. <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/Community/Your-community/For-Farmers/Effluent-management/Applying-effluent-to-land/> **8.** <https://www.pioneer.co.nz/maize-silage/product-information/silage-technical-insights/fertiliser-application-for-maize-crops.html> **9.** Ledgard, 2006. Nitrogen management – why is it important and what can we do about it? Pp22-31 In Proceedings of the 2006 Dairy3 Conference **4.**