

Corn Dry Down Results



September 24, 2026

Our CCE / WAC Team tested corn silage dry matter at the McDowell & Walker Feed Store in Delhi. We tested over 30 fields from across the region.

Samples varied from ears still in the milk stage to $\frac{3}{4}$ milk line, but ear stage was not adequate to guess dry matter (DM) content.

Knowing the DM of the crop is the best way to decide on harvest readiness, because it best predicts fermentation quality. We recommend 32 - 36% DM for bunk silos and bags, 35 - 38% DM for upright silos.

The samples tested on September 24st averaged 33% DM (3% points higher than fields sampled on 9/21) with a range of 26% DM to 39% DM. We were also able to measure starch content, which averaged 35% (2% points higher than fields sampled on 9/21) with a range between 28% and 40%.

As corn matures it will increase in starch content and increase in yield. Harvesting too early will sacrifice yield and energy content. Harvesting too late will yield poorer fermentation and lower starch digestibility.

- **no samples were past prime silage stage**
- **24% of the fields tested at or above 35%**
- **38% will reach 35% DM in the next week**
- **21% will reach 35% DM in the next 2 weeks**
- **18% are more than two weeks to 35% DM**

What if there is a frost before my corn reaches the target range?

- In a lighter frost, the leaves will quickly turn brown, and the plant will appear "dry", but remember leaves are only 10 – 15% of the total plant weight, most of the plant moisture is in the ear and stalk. Check DM to assess when to harvest. In a hard frost, stems will also be killed, and plants will dry down rapidly. Be ready to harvest as quickly as possible once you reach 32% DM.
- Frost may kill some of the normal bacteria on the plant. A research proven inoculant can assist in getting a good fermentation started.
- Harvest as quickly as possible. This lowers the risk of the plant getting too dry and potential mold growth on the ear.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Delaware County

Town	Ear Maturity	DM %	Starch %	Projected Date to 35%DM
Andes	$\frac{1}{4}$ milk line	31.5	33.5	8-Oct
Andes	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	32.5	39	4-Oct
Davenport	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	31	35	10-Oct
Davenport	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	33	35.5	2-Oct
Davenport	Milk	34	37.5	28-Sep
Davenport	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	35.5	39	Ready Now
Delhi	$\frac{1}{4}$ milk line	29.5	30	17-Oct
Delhi	E. Dent	30	31.5	15-Oct
Delhi	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	31	34	10-Oct
Delhi	E. Dent	32.5	33	4-Oct
Delhi	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	34	36	28-Sep
Halcott	Milk	26	29.5	*
Hamden	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	29.5	35.5	17-Oct
Hamden	$\frac{1}{4}$ milk line	30.5	32	12-Oct
Kortright	$\frac{1}{3}$ milk line	30.5	28.5	12-Oct
Kortright	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	31.5	35	8-Oct
Kortright	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	33	36	2-Oct
Kortright	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	33.5	37	30-Sep
Kortright	$\frac{1}{3}$ milk line	33.5	37	30-Sep
Kortright	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	34	37	28-Sep
Kortright	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	34.5	33.5	26-Sep
Kortright	E. Dent	35	38.5	Ready Now
Kortright	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	35	38.5	Ready Now
Kortright	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	36.5	40	Ready Now
Masonville	$\frac{1}{3}$ milk line	32	35	6-Oct
Masonville	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	33	38	2-Oct
Masonville	$\frac{1}{3}$ milk line	33.5	38	30-Sep
Roxbury	$\frac{1}{4}$ milk line	33	29.5	2-Oct
Roxbury	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	35	39	Ready Now
Roxbury	$\frac{1}{4}$ milk line	35.5	30.5	Ready Now
Roxbury	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	38	37	Ready Now
Stamford	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	33.5	35.5	30-Sep
Stamford	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	39	37	Ready Now
Tompkins	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	33	36.5	2-Oct
* Too immature to predict harvest date				

Although many fields are not ready to harvest, starch content appears to be higher than last year.

Remember proper length of cut, thorough kernel processing, and adequate packing are critical in making quality corn silage. We also recommend the use of inoculants, especially with dryer silage.

Corn Silage Dry Down Rates - When will my Corn Be Ready?

How to Use This Table:

Read down the column that corresponds to the % DM for your corn sample. Go down the column until you reach a shaded cell (target DM%), then read across to the left most column for that row to obtain the date that your field is predicted to reach the % DM indicated.

Storage Type	Target DM %
Bunk silos and piles	32-36
Bags	32-36
Concrete Uprights	35-38

Predicted dry down; % per day	
Early Sept	0.40
Mid Sept	0.33
Late Sept/Early Oct	0.25
Mid to Late Oct	0.20

Whole Plant DM below 28% indicates an actively growing plant that may not have begun to dry down yet, the plant can stay at this DM for several days until it "turns the corner" and begins to dry down. Usually this corresponds to ears starting to dent. Once the sample hits 28% DM, this indicates the ear is now in the dry down process.

Date	If your corn is (DM%)									
24-Sep	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
24-Sep	28.0	29.0	30.0	31.0	32.0	33.0	34.0	35.0	36.0	37.0
25-Sep	28.3	29.3	30.3	31.3	32.3	33.3	34.3	35.3	36.3	37.3
26-Sep	28.5	29.5	30.5	31.5	32.5	33.5	34.5	35.5	36.5	37.5
27-Sep	28.8	29.8	30.8	31.8	32.8	33.8	34.8	35.8	36.8	37.8
28-Sep	29.0	30.0	31.0	32.0	33.0	34.0	35.0	36.0	37.0	38.0
29-Sep	29.3	30.3	31.3	32.3	33.3	34.3	35.3	36.3	37.3	38.3
30-Sep	29.5	30.5	31.5	32.5	33.5	34.5	35.5	36.5	37.5	38.5
1-Oct	29.8	30.8	31.8	32.8	33.8	34.8	35.8	36.8	37.8	38.8
2-Oct	30.0	31.0	32.0	33.0	34.0	35.0	36.0	37.0	38.0	39.0
3-Oct	30.3	31.3	32.3	33.3	34.3	35.3	36.3	37.3	38.3	39.3
4-Oct	30.5	31.5	32.5	33.5	34.5	35.5	36.5	37.5	38.5	39.5
5-Oct	30.8	31.8	32.8	33.8	34.8	35.8	36.8	37.8	38.8	39.8
6-Oct	31.0	32.0	33.0	34.0	35.0	36.0	37.0	38.0	39.0	40.0
7-Oct	31.3	32.3	33.3	34.3	35.3	36.3	37.3	38.3	39.3	40.3
8-Oct	31.5	32.5	33.5	34.5	35.5	36.5	37.5	38.5	39.5	40.5
9-Oct	31.8	32.8	33.8	34.8	35.8	36.8	37.8	38.8	39.8	40.8
10-Oct	32.0	33.0	34.0	35.0	36.0	37.0	38.0	39.0	40.0	41.0
11-Oct	32.2	33.2	34.2	35.2	36.2	37.2	38.2	39.2	40.2	41.2
12-Oct	32.4	33.4	34.4	35.4	36.4	37.4	38.4	39.4	40.4	41.4
13-Oct	32.6	33.6	34.6	35.6	36.6	37.6	38.6	39.6	40.6	41.6
14-Oct	32.8	33.8	34.8	35.8	36.8	37.8	38.8	39.8	40.8	41.8
15-Oct	33.0	34.0	35.0	36.0	37.0	38.0	39.0	40.0	41.0	42.0
16-Oct	33.2	34.2	35.2	36.2	37.2	38.2	39.2	40.2	41.2	42.2
17-Oct	33.4	34.4	35.4	36.4	37.4	38.4	39.4	40.4	41.4	42.4
18-Oct	33.6	34.6	35.6	36.6	37.6	38.6	39.6	40.6	41.6	42.6
19-Oct	33.8	34.8	35.8	36.8	37.8	38.8	39.8	40.8	41.8	42.8
20-Oct	34.0	35.0	36.0	37.0	38.0	39.0	40.0	41.0	42.0	43.0
21-Oct	34.2	35.2	36.2	37.2	38.2	39.2	40.2	41.2	42.2	43.2
22-Oct	34.4	35.4	36.4	37.4	38.4	39.4	40.4	41.4	42.4	43.4
23-Oct	34.6	35.6	36.6	37.6	38.6	39.6	40.6	41.6	42.6	43.6
24-Oct	34.8	35.8	36.8	37.8	38.8	39.8	40.8	41.8	42.8	43.8
25-Oct	35.0	36.0	37.0	38.0	39.0	40.0	41.0	42.0	43.0	44.0
26-Oct	35.2	36.2	37.2	38.2	39.2	40.2	41.2	42.2	43.2	44.2
27-Oct	35.4	36.4	37.4	38.4	39.4	40.4	41.4	42.4	43.4	44.4
28-Oct	35.6	36.6	37.6	38.6	39.6	40.6	41.6	42.6	43.6	44.6
29-Oct	35.8	36.8	37.8	38.8	39.8	40.8	41.8	42.8	43.8	44.8
30-Oct	36.0	37.0	38.0	39.0	40.0	41.0	42.0	43.0	44.0	45.0
31-Oct	36.2	37.2	38.2	39.2	40.2	41.2	42.2	43.2	44.2	45.2

