

Corn Dry Down Results



September 30, 2026

Corn silage harvest is in progress and our CCE / WAC Team tested corn silage dry matter at the Stamford Farmers Coop Store in Stamford, Tuesday September 29th. We tested

20 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 averaged 30% DM with a range of 25% DM to 34.5% DM. We were also able to measure starch content, which averaged 33.5% with a range between 28.5% and 39%. Several fields sampled on 9/24 and again on 9/30 were about the same DM but did increase slightly in starch content. There is significant risk that more immature corn may get frosted before it reaches harvestable DM.

- **no samples were past prime silage stage**
- **none of the fields tested at or above 35% DM**
- **15% will reach 35% DM in the next week**
- **2% will reach 35% DM in the next 2 weeks**
- **75% are more than two weeks to 35% DM**

Weather plays a huge role in plant dry-down, and for corn to progress to higher DM, the ears need to continue to mature and add starch. As days get shorter and the temperature cools, dry-down per day gets slower.

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.

Corn leaf diseases are becoming more prevalent as the season drags on. Several samples showed severe infection, and leaves were beginning to die and turn brown. These fields may be a challenge, since without healthy leaves the plant will struggle to mature the ears, but the leaves and stalk may become pre-maturely dry.



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.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Delaware County

Town	Ear Maturity	DM %	Starch %	Projected Date to 35%DM
Davenport	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	27.5	30	*
Franklin	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	33.5	37.5	5-Oct
Franklin	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	34.5	37	1-Oct
Gilboa	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	29	32.5	26-Oct
Kortright	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	29.5	35	24-Oct
Kortright	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	30	32	21-Oct
Kortright	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	30	33	21-Oct
Kortright	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	30.5	37	19-Oct
Kortright	$\frac{3}{4}$ milk line	32	39	11-Oct
Middletown	E. Dent	25.5	30.5	*
Middletown	$\frac{1}{3}$ milk line	27	30	*
Roxbury	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	31	32	16-Oct
Roxbury	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	32	36.5	11-Oct
Roxbury	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	34	32.5	3-Oct
Stamford	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	29.5	34	24-Oct
Stamford	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	30.5	34	19-Oct
Summit	$\frac{2}{3}$ milk line	29	31.5	26-Oct
Summit	$\frac{1}{2}$ milk line	30	34	21-Oct
Walton	E. Dent	24.5	29	*
Walton	Milk	26.5	28.5	*
* Too immature to predict harvest date				

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.

Corn Silage Dry Down Rates – When Will My Corn Be Ready?

Cornell Cooperative Extension Delaware County

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

