

# Balanced ensilage

**Jens Andersen does not believe in hocus-pocus but the effect of lactic acid bacteria in the ensilage has surprised him.**

Should one use ensiling remedies or not?

Jens Andersen asked himself this question when he found that his grass ensilage did not keep for very long – especially not in the summer.

Jens Andersen produces meat cattle on Falster, Denmark, where he has 40 Limousine dam and grows about 50 hectare of land. For a meat cattle producer, the price of the feed the cattle is eating is the most important parameter in the economic equation.

- Obviously, it is very annoying when a 750 kg round bale of grass ensilage only keeps for four to five days during the summer, he says. That is the time when we have the fewest animals to feed so there has been a large amount of waste during the years. The ensilage starts rotting very quickly and is not at all suitable as fodder.

Over the summer Jens Andersen only has 15-20 steers to feed.

## Looking for a solution

To solve the problem, Jens Andersen tried to feed the animals with hay, even of good quality, but he had to realise that the steers stopped growing on this ration.

- Somewhere I read about biological ensiling remedies that would be able to conserve the ensilage. And why not try them? I chose a product named Animal Biosa, which primarily consists of lactic acid bacteria, says Jens Andersen.

As a great surprise, the product could actually deliver what it had promised. Even in the summer, an opened round bale of ensilage can keep for between 10-15 days before it goes bad. Exactly the time the animals need to finish it. The ensilage is so good that he has decided to feed the animals exclusively with wrap-grass.

- I am doing this in spite of all the warnings that have been put out against it, says Jens Andersen. Because I can ascertain that my calves thrive and reach the weight at the right time.

## Fewer liver abscesses than before

Jens Andersen has further discovered that his animals have remarkably fewer liver abscesses than before and he credits his feed strategy for this fact.

- Normally, I do not fall for all kinds of hocus-pocus, says Jens Andersen. But on the other hand the remedy sounded so appealing because it only contained lactic acid bacteria and a lot of herbs that apparently furthers the belly's healthiness. And I must admit, it seems to be true.

Jens Andersen experiences that the animals eat the ensilage with pleasure and satisfaction. Further, he has recognised that the decomposition in the belly is more effective now than before the ensilage was treated.

- The animal's faeces are much more crumbled than before and we do not find undigested hay and straw anymore, says Jens Andersen. Even the people from the tractor station have noticed it. It takes less time to treat the manure before it is spread on the fields. And this of course is also an expenditure cut, which abundantly covers the expenses for buying the product. Jens Andersen has come to the conclusion that lactic acid bacteria surely are beneficial the whole way through. First, regarding the ensilage, which reaches a higher

quality and then in the animals belly. Finally, on the fields where the soil benefits from the fact that the manure already is composting when it is brought out.

### **It is sprayed onto the grass**

The treatment is carried out through spraying the remedy onto the freshly cut grass just before it is raked together and pressed.

- I simply fill a sprayer with the remedy and spray it directly after it has been cut in swaths, says Jens Andersen. I set the dosage a bit higher than recommended as it is a biological remedy and I rather want to give too much than too little. The remedy is to be activated before it is used and this takes five days. So one needs to be a little more careful in the planning process if this solution is used.

Besides, Jens Andersen has also started to use the remedy on the straw bedding in the stable. Again, the lactic acid bacteria have the effect that the bedding keeps fresh longer than before.