

Triticale for Silage and Hay

Triticale is a highly versatile silage and hay that can meet a wide range of livestock needs. For outstanding quality, the optimum harvest stage is at flag leaf or boot, prior to head emergence. Total digestibility and fiber digestibility are exceptionally high at this stage. Typical digestibility as measured by 30 hr In Vitro True Digestibility is 83% for superior triticale varieties prior to heading, compared to representative averages of 80% for corn silage, and 78% for alfalfa hay. (Note: ADF, NDF, and estimates of TDN and NEL based on them, can be very misleading for cereal forages.)

Triticale forage can be an excellent source of digestible fiber that is vital for ruminant health and productivity. Protein content at boot stage will vary depending on fertility, moisture, and other growing conditions, but generally will range between 12 and 19%.

For feeding animals that do not need maximum protein and digestibility, delaying harvest can increase yield significantly. Forage yield at the soft dough stage of development can be double the yield at boot stage, but protein can drop below 10%.

Some grain-rich varieties can provide both high yield and high quality at dough stage.

In university research, the highest yielding forage triticales have been shown to produce up to 5 tons of dry matter per acre in boot stage, and 10 tons per acre in soft dough. Forage yield can differ significantly among varieties and production conditions, but the best varieties of triticale typically yield significantly more than wheat, barley, oats, or rye.