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**OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this study was to describe current corn silage management practices in California’s Central Valley dairies.

**METHODS**

In summer 2009, a feed management survey was mailed to dairy producers in Tulare, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin counties; the first, third and seventh largest dairy counties in California, respectively. Producers received an envelope containing an invitation letter to participate in the study, a one-page survey, and a pre-paid return envelope. Response rate was 16.9% (120/710). Herd size ranged from 160 to 6,600 cows (median=950).

**RESULTS**

**Storing Corn Silage**

Silage in California was more frequently stored in piles (85.0%) versus bunkers.

**Mycotoxins**

A total of 25.0% of dairies suspected mycotoxins in 2008. Top surface spoiled forage was discarded by 70.4% of dairies suspecting mycotoxins, and by 55.8% of those that did not suspect mycotoxins.

**Dry Matter Determination**

Corn silage dry matter (DM) was conducted at least once a month in 52.3% of dairies. Only 8.3% of dairies determined DM weekly, or more often. Most dairies delegated DM determination to an outside nutrition consultant (86.6%).

**Silage Additives**

Bacterial inoculants of various types were used in 54.0% of corn silages.

**Spoil Forage on Silage Surface**

Top surface spoiled forage was discarded by 70.4% of dairies suspecting mycotoxins, and by 55.8% of those that did not suspect mycotoxins.

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