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At least a half-dozen factors affect silage packing density, which makes it tough to improve silage bulk density and thereby sustain silage quality.

California researchers Dr. Noelia Silva-del-Rio and Jennifer Heguy suggest:

- Adjust the forage delivery rate by having the appropriate number and size of choppers to match the machines doing the packing. Also, ensure that the trucks deliver forage at a constant rate to avoid amounts of forage arriving that overwhelm the packing tractor(s);
- Consider adding another tractor if there is enough space at the packing area; and
- Improve packing tractor efficiency by checking that the packing tractors are constantly driving on the pile rather than merely pushing feed and waiting for the next load to arrive. Also, ensure that drivers compact the entire surface, paying special attention to the upper half of the pile where densities tend to be less than optimal.

These researchers are studying “critical control points” of corn silage management in California’s Central Valley in order to improve education and outreach to dairy producers

(<https://asas.confex.com/asas/jam2014/webprogram/Paper7971.html>).

Take Away Tip:

Silage packing: Critical control points



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