

Focus on Forage

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Pushing up at the bunk

Balancing the rate of harvest with push-up capacity is no easy task. Recall that our goal is to not only harvest the crop but also to store it to retain the best possible quality.

This should be easy. On one hand, we want to keep the chopping going at full capacity. That is, having a truck under the chopper spout all the time. On the other hand, we want to maintain layering at the bunk thin enough to permit excellent packing for each layer.

Goal?

With adequate packing capacity at the bunk, research suggests that a **maximum of 5 inches per layer** will allow good exclusion of air from the chopped crop.

Best management practice suggests avoiding “catch up” when pushing up. That is, when trucks are waiting to dump, the solution is not to push up in layers of 8, 10 or even 12 inches. These layers will not pack well enough to exclude air properly – result is spoiled feed.

A better solution is to do a better job of balancing harvest and push-up ahead of time. Bring in an extra tractor or two ASAP.

Our next **Focus on Forage** will deal with packing rules.