

# Focus on Forage

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

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## Processing the crop

- Setting the machine – One chopper settings we can change is the roll gap. Often we start at 2mm or less. This usually decreases as the crop dries down in order to process all the corn kernels. We may not have a choice of roll differential but 40 percent or higher is desirable. Remember, too, that rolls wear and might need to be replaced.

Why these settings? Our goal is to have zero whole kernels in the processed crop. Recall the reason we want to avoid whole kernels of corn is digestibility of the grain. Whole kernels of corn that end up on the alley floor did not contribute anything to the cow.

- Checking the processed crop – Murphy’s Law is that if anything go wrong, it will! Don’t let Murphy win when chopping your crop.

The best management practice is to have a “designated” checker. That’s right. Just like the “designated driver” at a party, you have a “designated checker” for harvest time.

For most reliable results, the “designated checker” needs to be collecting samples throughout the harvest day. Some farms pick a person that is at the bunk. Other farms pick a person driving one of the transport trucks.

The person checking the crop should not find any whole kernels of corn. That is correct – zero, zip, nada.

It works best to have agreed in advance how the “checker” will communicate his/her findings to the person responsible for chopping.

Our next **Focus on Forage** will deal with pushing up at the bunk.

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