

## HIGH-QUALITY CORN SILAGE IS VALUABLE AT ANY COST

Over the last year we've all watched feed prices climb to near-record highs. Chances are some producers may be looking for ways to lower feed costs. While looking at costs they often find themselves in a balancing act between reducing costs and increasing production, both with the hope of generating more profit.

Corn silage plays an important role in maintaining high milk production in the herd. And when producers have seen good milk prices, as they have this past year, the return on investment is easy to see. Yet, the high feed costs may cause many producers to ask if there is a point they should start taking corn out of the ration because the cost is just too high. True believers in the importance of high-quality corn silage in the ration know it's hard to replace, so instead of cutting back, they look for corn silage that provides more than just energy.

Using the right silage hybrids can provide you with additional benefits, like improved feed efficiency and the ability to include more corn silage in the TMR because of its higher forage content. These added values can't be achieved with conventional yellow dent corn silage. NutriDense®



silage hybrids have lower lignin content, providing more effective fiber in every bite. Research at the University of Missouri<sup>1</sup> recently showed that NutriDense silage can improve feed efficiency, meaning cows are eating less to produce the same amount of milk and components. In the study, cows fed NutriDense silage ate 4.5

percent less feed while maintaining similar milk production levels. This resulted in a 6 percent improvement in milk production efficiency over cows fed conventional yellow dent corn silage. NutriDense hybrids also can help you get more milk from each pound of feed. University of Kentucky research<sup>2</sup> found that NutriDense corn silage increased milk production levels when it replaced conventional silage. The study showed an increase of 2.9 pounds of 3.5% FCM for cows fed NutriDense corn silage diets. Both groups experienced similar levels of dry matter intake, which represents a 4 percent increase in milk production efficiency.

Buying quality corn silage to achieve a healthier rumen may be an expensive investment, but very few feedstuffs can provide the needed energy and effective fiber of high-quality NutriDense corn silage.



**JERRY WEIGEL**  
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**BASF**  
The Chemical Company

**NutriDense®**  
SILAGE

<sup>1</sup> Trials completed in 2005 and 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Comparisons published in 2001.

Research information available upon request from BASF Plant Science Nutrition Department.

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PHOTOS BY DARRRELL GRONEMEIER

**CANDY MAN:** Bob Wright is shifting his focus to maple confectionary sweets and other products with a higher value than syrup.

## A sweet outlook for maple candy

By **KARA LYNN DUNN**

### Key Points

- Sugarmakers are beginning to shift more to higher-profit products.
- Wright's creativity was stirred up at a maple confectionary workshop.
- More new products made from maple syrup are in the testing stage.

**A** FRESH look at maple confections has one fifth-generation producer predicting an income increase of 10% to 20% by 2009. Bob Wright uses the same maple cream-making machine that his granddad, American Maple Museum Hall of Famer Leon S. Wright Sr., used in the 1950s.

Thanks to recent hands-on training, this Franklinville, N.Y., sugarmaker has created new product lines for Wright Farms. The Cattaraugus County farmer was among more than 200 producers who attended maple confections workshops funded through a \$78,000 grant from the New York Farm Viability Institute in 2006 and 2007.

The training helped maple producers learn techniques for making consistently high-quality maple sugar, cream, candy and other treats — and boost earnings from the high-value sweets.

"Producers statewide are realizing that converting their syrup into confections can improve income four- to fivefold," says Cornell University Maple Specialist Steve Childs.

Wright adapted his existing production equipment and purchased a candy thermometer and maple sucker molds. At the workshops, he learned how to analyze and use invert sugar levels.

Testing for invert sugar helps sugarmakers match their processing technique with the type of product they want to create. For example, Childs says, "When light amber syrup tests low for invert sugar, it's more suited for making maple cream and granulated sugar.

"A syrup higher in invert sugar is better for maple taffy, suckers, meringues, marshmallow, soft drinks and slushies. The level also helps determine optimal cooking temperature per product choice."

### Shifting more from syrup

Wright's first on-farm batch of granulated sugar wasn't what he hoped for. "I over-stirred, and it was like dust. I corrected and the second batch turned out fine."

Bob and brother Rick, who runs the dairy side of Wright Farms, begin

their value-added process by collecting syrup from 7,000 taps via a tubing system in place since 2006. They use a 6-by-16-foot wood-fired evaporator and a steam-away system to produce and package 1,500 gallons of syrup in tins, plastic jugs, and fancy glass bottles; and make maple cream and block sugar.

This year, they'll double the syrup poured into value-added processing. And, they're perfecting a maple mustard, a dry rub and a maple chicken wing sauce.

Bob's wife, Joan Marie, and son Alex help with packaging and sales direct from the farm and at Western New York artisan shows. Products can also be purchased via the farm Web site at [www.wrightfarmsmapplesyrup.com](http://www.wrightfarmsmapplesyrup.com).

The Wrights wholesale to restaurants and antique shops. With an expanding line of confections and an enhanced system for developing price points, the Wrights expect to add events — and income — in 2008.

For more information on the training program, contact Childs at 607-255-1658 or e-mail him at [slc18@cornell.edu](mailto:slc18@cornell.edu).

Dunn writes from her farm in Mannsville, N.Y.

**NY farm viability INSTITUTE**

**N**YFVI is a farmer-led nonprofit that invests in innovative projects to increase the success of ag production enterprises, protect farm-based natural resources and produce measurable farm-level results. For more information, visit the Web site: [www.nyfvi.org](http://www.nyfvi.org).



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**SWEETER TREATS:** Suckers and maple sugar candies put more money in a sugarmaker's pockets than syrup.



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