

# What is the Value of a Standing Corn Crop for Silage?

Dwight Aakre • Farm Management Specialist, NDSU Extension Service

Corn for silage sometimes is sold standing in the field, and farmers frequently ask how to determine a fair price for the standing crop. The following provides some guidelines for estimating the value of a standing corn crop.

Mature Corn – 50% Grain DM Content	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Your Figure
1. Estimate of yield per acre in tons <sup>1</sup>	3	6	9	12	
2. Percent dry matter	30	30	30	30	
3. Value of silage per acre at \$47.52 per ton <sup>2</sup> (calculations shown on Page 2)	\$ 142.56	\$285.12	\$427.68	\$ 570.24	
4. Less custom cost of making silage per acre <sup>3</sup>	\$ -40.00	\$ -43.00	\$ -46.00	\$ -48.00	
5. Less hauling to storage <sup>4</sup>	\$ -6.00	\$ -12.00	\$ -18.00	\$ -24.00	
6. Value per acre of silage in storage	\$ 96.56	\$230.12	\$363.68	\$ 498.24	<input type="text"/>
Immature Corn – 25% Grain DM Content	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Your Figure
1. Estimate of yield per acre in tons <sup>1</sup>	3	6	9	12	
2. Percent dry matter	30	30	30	30	
3. Value of silage per acre at \$31.26 per ton <sup>2</sup> (calculations shown on Page 2)	\$ 93.78	\$187.56	\$281.34	\$ 375.12	
4. Less custom cost of making silage per acre <sup>3</sup>	\$ -40.00	\$ -43.00	\$ -46.00	\$ -48.00	
5. Less hauling to storage <sup>4</sup>	\$ -6.00	\$ -12.00	\$ -18.00	\$ -24.00	
6. Value per acre of silage in storage	\$ 47.78	\$132.56	\$217.34	\$303.12	<input type="text"/>
Immature Corn – 0 % Grain DM Content	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Your Figure
1. Estimate of yield per acre in tons <sup>1</sup>	3	6	9	12	
2. Percent dry matter	30	30	30	30	
3. Value of silage per acre at \$15 per ton <sup>2</sup> (calculations shown on Page 2)	\$ 45.00	\$ 90.00	\$135.00	\$ 180.00	
4. Less custom cost of making silage per acre <sup>3</sup>	\$ -40.00	\$ -43.00	\$ -46.00	\$ -48.00	
5. Less hauling to storage <sup>4</sup>	\$ -6.00	\$ -12.00	\$ -18.00	\$ -24.00	
6. Value per acre of silage in storage	\$ -1.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 71.00	\$ 108.00	<input type="text"/>

<sup>1</sup> The following formula may be used to estimate the wet yield of a standing corn crop with 30-inch rows:

- Select a representative row and measure 17.4 feet. (For 36-inch rows, use 14.5 feet of row. For 22-inch rows, use 23.8 feet.)
- Cut at normal chopping height and weight, then multiply by 1,000 to estimate total weight per acre.
- Divide answer obtained in "b" above by 2,000 to convert to tons per acre.

<sup>2</sup> Corn silage is primarily an energy feed. The dry-matter value of silage can be compared with the local value of shelled corn and grass hay. Good-quality corn silage typically will average 50 percent corn grain by dry-matter weight.

<sup>3</sup> The average custom rate charged for field chopping only was \$46.52 per acre; the most frequent rate was \$35 per acre; the range was \$16 to \$100. We assume the rate would vary somewhat at different yields.

<sup>4</sup> Hauling charges are based on \$2 per ton

The value of the standing corn crop depends upon several variables, including yield, price of substitute feed crops, and harvesting and hauling costs. The figure on line 6 in the above examples indicates the maximum amount the buyer could afford to pay. The buyer should discount the computed price by the estimated spoilage. With this information, the parties would negotiate the price.

If you have all-risk crop insurance on your corn crop, you should check with your insurance agent before beginning chopping to determine how selling the standing corn crop will affect yield history and insurance payments if the situation warrants.

Failure to notify your insurance agent may result in forfeiture of any potential indemnity payment. If you have a potential insurance claim, your insurance company likely will require you to leave a number of rows unharvested at specified intervals across the field to be used for final appraisal. Also, selling unharvested corn results in loss of beneficial interest prior to harvest. This means you will not be eligible for any potential loan deficiency payment.

