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Corn silage results now open to all

COCHRANVILLE, Pa.—Just before the start of the PDMP Issue Forum on Farm Safety Nov. 6, Dave Hileman, PDMP corn silage research project chair, and Greg Roth, project liaison, Penn State University, presented the 2008 project results.

The annual project is conducted by PDMP in partnership with Penn State's crop and soils science department and FORAGEdata, the developer of the system that turns the data into meaningful information. Results were also introduced in more detail at the annual Penn State Dairy Nutrition Conference Nov. 12-13.

A feature story about the corn silage project and its cooperators appeared on the PDMP page in the September 12 edition of *Farmshine*.

The big news for this year is that PDMP has decided to make it possible for any producer to use the results to improve their own farm operations. Using a web-based system located at www.pdmp.org (click on PDMP Silage Research), a producer is able to select the sort criteria he wants to use to compare hybrids from different companies on an equal scale.

Producers simply select the hybrid maturity group they want to evaluate, provide basic information about their herd and feeding regimen, then select the characteristic most important to them in choosing a silage hybrid. Sort criteria include milk per ton, milk per acre and lignin/NDF ratio.

The unbiased, comprehensive information presented in this powerful FORAGEdata application, give producers a unique look at the performance of silage hybrids with the characteristics they need.

The long-term objectives of the project are to influence the decisions of seed companies back through the chain of influence to the plant-breeding decisions, in order to promote the development of highly digestible, true forage hybrids as a priority of the commercial seed industry. The number of hybrids in the project has grown from 42 in 2002 to 131 in 2008.

Unleashing this decision-making tool demonstrates PDMP's leadership in providing progressive opportunities that help dairies become stronger and increase the long-term viability of the industry here. In short: PDMP is all about dairymen helping each other do better.

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