



# About Harvest



## Harvest Timing

Correct harvest timing is important to ensure optimal yield, quality and ensiling conditions. Crops should be between 35-40% DM (the “cheesy dough” stage). This is the ideal time for natural preservation with soluble carbohydrate being utilised by bacteria for fermentation within 5 days of ensiling. Compaction is most efficient and anaerobic conditions are easily achieved during fermentation, especially with inoculant, meaning reduced losses and a high level of animal acceptability and uptake.

**Crackerjack**, **Rocket** and **DoubleTake** triticale dry matter will increase by almost 1% per day. (Barley is 1.5-2% per day) Yield will increase about 1 t/ha every 5 days. ME will increase by about 1 unit of ME every 4 days up to 40% DM. Harvesting too late can cause compaction problems, and grain drop in handling and poor utilisation by stock.

## Harvest Management

Quality and yield can be manipulated by cutting height. Trials indicate that increasing the cutting height by 10 cm on a 15 t DM/ha crop will reduce yield by 1 t and increase ME by 0.2 MJ/kg. ME of straw is 6-7, leaf 9-10 and grain 13-14.

Direct chop is preferred, leaving less dirt contamination. Wilting can increase DM percentage by up to 1% per hour in Canterbury’s hot, dry, windy conditions.

A 30-50 cm chop length to provide rumen stimulation is ideal for pit silage. It can be longer for baleage but should be kept short for sheep.