



MAIZE STOVER STORAGE AND CONSERVATION

AIM: TO TEACH FARMERS HOW TO MAKE BEST USE OF MAIZE STOVERS IN THEIR DAIRY COW FEEDING PLAN.

What is maize stover?

- ✓ Maize stover is the maize stalks and leaves left after cobs have been harvested.
- ✓ There is lots of stover soon after harvest, but it is wasted easily when left in the field.

Why conserve stover?

- ✓ Dry stovers are not very tasty for cattle.
- ✓ Cattle find long stovers difficult to eat and often waste a lot. They prefer the leaves, so will eat these first and often leave the stems.
- ✓ Turning stovers into silage makes it easier for cattle to eat, improves the digestibility of the stovers and reduces feed wastage.
- ✓ It's also a good way to reduce your feeding costs – using a waste product that you would normally burn or throw away!

Turning stover into a better food - silage

- ✓ One lima of good maize stover can produce 1 to 2 ton of stover silage.
- ✓ This should be enough to provide the maintenance requirements for 1 cow for 5 to 8 months, e.g. **8kg stover silage + 5kg Kapeta nsofu leaves.**
- ✓ See *fact sheet F01Amm, F01A mo and F01B for Stover silage recipes.*
- ✓ See *fact sheet F06 and F06A for annual feeding plans.*

Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Natural pasture		Supplement natural pastures (now low feeding value) with green crops such as Napier, maize or sorghum. Silage could also be used if in store from last years' production.					Silage (or hay) produced during the wet season will now be the only available fodder on farm for dairy cows as the natural pastures now are of no nutritious value.				
		60 days									

Harvesting stover

- At harvest there is 30 – 35% water content in the stovers. This helps to keep the stovers flexible and prevent them from breaking.
- Over time, as the stovers dry out, the leaves (best part) break off.
- ! It is recommended to **make stover silage directly after harvesting the maize cobs.**
- If you can't make the silage straight away, then safely store the stovers until you have time to make the silage.

Tips for stover storage if you can't make silage straight away

- Correct storage of stover is important to help you make the best use of it.
- Stover can be eaten or damaged by animals or termites. If it becomes too dry it breaks.

PRACTICAL FARM ADVICE F10



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We suggest storing maize stover:

- ✓ On a raised platform to prevent **termites** from attacking the stover during storage.
- ✓ Under a shade. This helps to maintain some moisture content which improves the quality of stover and any stover silage you make.



REMEMBER to:

- ! Prevent animals accessing the stover storage platform and eating the stover;
- ! Reduce costs by making the storage shed and platform from local materials (e.g. bamboos);
- ! Protect the stover from rain.



Cattle eating untreated stovers – lots of wastage, not very palatable (tasty)!



Chopping stovers makes them easier to eat



Turning stovers into silage – a good feed for the dry season!

Making the best use of maize stover as a cattle feed

- Maize stover provides roughage, but due to its poor digestibility cows cannot eat enough to meet their nutritional needs.
- Use stover for cows with low energy needs such as those on dry, or empty.
- Provide additional feeds, e.g. silage to other animals. Remember to provide concentrates to cows in the first 3 months of lactation. *See fact sheet F06.*
- Chopping stover and putting it in a feed trough reduces wastage.
- Adding molasses improves palatability (taste).
- Turning stovers into silage makes it easier for cattle to eat, improves the digestibility of the stovers and reduces feed wastage. You can make stover silage in a drum, pit or specialised strong bag.

REMEMBER to put back nutrients into the soil in the maize field. E.g. by using manure.

ZDTP is focused on supporting dairy farmers to improve their productivity, milk quality and linkages to urban markets. The views expressed in this publication are those of the implementers of the programme and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Zealand Government. For further information, please contact ZDTP on zdtpinfo@primeconsultants.net. Follow us on www.zambiadairy.com, Facebook (facebook.com/zambiadairy/) and Twitter (@DairyZambia).