

SOUTH DAKOTA - On-Farm Moisture Testing & Monitoring

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Photo 1



Photo 2

Photos courtesy Taylor Grussing, South Dakota State University -Extension Cow/Calf Field Specialist.

Knowing the dry matter (DM) content of feedstuffs is critically important. Diet formulation and animal requirements are based on daily DM intake; deviations from expected values can dramatically affect results. This is particularly important with higher moisture feedstuffs, but moisture variation can affect most feedstuffs, especially when exposed to changing environmental conditions. Getting the moisture content wrong can lead to serious errors in DM intake and can negatively affect performance, cost, or both. Feed ingredients should be monitored frequently. Using on-farm techniques provides faster feedback, allowing for any necessary ration changes. The most common methods are a microwave or Koster Moisture Tester (Photo 1) – both start with a known as-fed feed weight and then remove moisture. Dried samples are weighed and process repeated until the change in sample weights becomes ≤ 2 grams (Photo 2). A more detailed explanation of these procedures can be found at igrow.org/livestock/beef/silage-moisture-testing-tips/.