

# Safely Making Fermented Feeds

**Larry Roth, Technical Services Nutritionist, Provimi/Promote®**

When one thinks of “safely making fermented feeds,” first thoughts might concern moisture levels, packing densities or mold levels in the forages to be stored as related to feed safety. Let’s stop for a moment to consider the human safety element in chopping, hauling, packing, and feeding forages. Haylage and silage chopping is often conducted at a frantic pace, and quick short-cuts or miscalculations could cost missed work time or even a human life. Reducing work and human loss is more important than reducing dry matter loss of the feed.

1. Minimize the number of people on-foot around areas where silage wagons or trucks will be passing or pack tractors moving. A person on-foot will be on the losing end of contact with a truck hauling silage.
2. Have workers wear high-visibility vests in silage filling areas, especially if working at night. Wearing a high-visibility vest not only makes the wearer more visible to others, it also installs a safety attitude in the person.
3. Packing slopes on bunkers and piles should not exceed a 3:1 ratio to help reduce the risk of roll-overs.
4. Roll-over protection and seat belts are as important for pack tractors as for off-road vehicles.
5. Be cautious when multiple push and pack tractors are on the silage pile. The use of high-capacity choppers and delivery of large volumes of forage to the pile sometimes increase the need for more tractors to achieve proper packing density. A drive-over pile which looks like an ant-pile due to tractor activity could be a likely spot for a collision.
6. Match the silage face height to the silage facer reach. Silage faces higher than the facer reach will result in overhangs and avalanches.
7. When covering or placing tires on the silage, always face toward the wall to avoid falling backwards over the edge. Always know where you are on the pile.
8. Always be careful when walking at the base of or at the top of the silage face. Avalanches don’t occur just in Rockies.

Reviewing safety procedures and tips with workers before haylage and silage season will improve the quality of the workplace and reduce work losses. Let’s make this a safe forage season.