# **Agronomy Profile**



# **Drying Immature Corn**

### **Overview**

Early frost at harvest can lead to high or uneven moisture, low test weights and increased foreign material, resulting in lower-quality grain that may not store as well. Careful planning and management of drying and storage can help maintain yield when early frost hits.

## What you should know

- Uneven grain moisture levels are likely after early frost, so check every load coming in from the field. Drying levels should be 15% for short-term storage, 14% for storage until spring and 13% for long-term storage. If moisture levels are extremely high, growers with livestock should consider using a portion of their acres for silage or high-moisture corn.
- The stage of development determines how to handle immature corn:
  - Corn frozen in milk stage will have low yield potential, so the best option for handling may be green chopping or ensiling.
  - Corn in the dough stage when frozen may have low yields and test weights, but high moisture levels. Field drydown can require 4-9 days, but ears will eventually reach an acceptable moisture level.
  - Immature corn frozen in both dough and dent stages can be dried artificially using low to medium temperatures.

### **Action steps**

- Consider drying options: Natural field drying is the best way to preserve and increase test weights. Leave corn in the field as long as losses from lodging aren't a threat. Keep artificial drying temperatures low, because high temperatures will increase test-weight losses and kernel damage. Immature corn will require longer drying time.
- 2. **Ensure proper storage:** Adequately cool and aerate grain after drying. Temperatures in the range of 20–30°F will minimize storage problems. Check bins frequently to detect potential problems early.



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- Early frost at harvest can result in lowerquality grain that may not store as well.
- Careful management is needed to dry corn properly to maintain as much quality as possible.
- Evaluate the best drying options and ensure proper storage.

#### **NOTES:**

#### For more information, contact:



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