



Seven ways to reduce forage requirements in the barn

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If the estimate of [stocks and requirements](#) reveals a shortage of forage for the coming year, it is possible not only to increase stocks through solutions [in the field](#), but also to adapt herd management in the barn accordingly.



Here are strategies to help you to reduce forage requirements on your farm:

1. Increase the Fat Test

- It will require less animals to fill the quota
- Look into the possibility of using additives

2. Perform Milk Production Planning and Quickly Sell Animals that You No Longer Need

- Problem cows
- Non-pregnant cows (especially those with below average production)
- Less productive cows

3. Evaluate Your Replacement Animal Needs

- Carefully select the heifers that you should keep
- Breed as early as possible
- Sell surplus heifers

4. Analyze the Nutritive Value of your Forages

- Optimize the use of your forages
- Target which forages will be fed to dry cows, heifers and different milking cow groups

5. Minimize Ration Waste

- Monitor forage dry matter
- Be precise when preparing rations
- Reuse refusals for the heifers

6. Reduce Forage Proportions in the Ration

For this strategy, it is important to validate your ration with an advisor to avoid acidosis. You can replace the forages using a greater proportion of the following feeds. Which ones you choose will depend, among other things, on market prices:

- Corn silage (up to 70% of the ration)
 - Depends on the quality of forages
- Cereals (up to 50% of the ration)
 - Analyze for mycotoxin levels
- Corn-grain
 - 1 kg of corn-grain = 2 kg of hay
- Straw (up to 33% of the ration)
 - Analyze for nutritive value
 - Watch out for sorting
 - Oat straw is the most nourishing, followed by barley, soybean and wheat straw
- Forage Soybeans
- By-products (e.g. distillers' grains, soy hulls, oat hulls, cottonseed, wheat midds, beet pulp, etc.)
- More fibrous commercial grains

7. Ration Certain Animal's Feeds During the Day

- To a maximum of 90%
- Only for the heifers and the first dry-off group

Be sure to [contact our advisors](#) – they are there to help you to make the best choices for your business. You can also read about our [possible solutions in the field](#).



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