

Short Corn Hybrids Makes Better Silage

At less than 7 ft. tall, short corn hybrids stand up better to wind and are less likely to suffer green snap, while producing higher yields (Vol. 47, No. 3). Progressive Dairy Solutions consultant John Goeser reports that Italian on-farm research suggests that short corn hybrids make better silage as well as grain.

"I've been impressed with the Italian data," says Goeser. "It was done independent of seed companies. I haven't seen any negatives."

Goeser has been in discussions with Andrea Bellingeri, a fellow independent consultant in northern Italy. In Italy, the short-stature corn championed by Stine and Bayer (Preceon Smart Corn System) in the U.S. is referred to as brachytic dwarf corn.

Purdue University researchers found that short-stature hybrids averaged 67 in., compared with 86 in., with average ear heights of 22 in. versus 37 in. At the same time, the average above-ground total plant biomass was roughly the same at the R1 growth stage.

"The reduced heights of short-stature hybrids are typically realized in the stacked internode spacing below the ear," reported Dan Quinn, Purdue Extension corn specialist, and his graduate research assistant, Erick Oliva. "In addition, short-stature hybrids maintained similar leaf number and exhibited a wider stem diameter and a wider ear leaf diameter than full-stature hybrids."

Goeser notes that it's the shortened internodes, without reducing leaf number, in the naturally occurring br2 mutation that matter for silage. The improved standability and leaf-to-stem ratio are both linked to silage

quality and harvest management.

Goeser points out that leaf tissue is more digestible than stalk; however, grain is even more digestible, so yield is vital as well. Replicated field trials conducted by Bellingeri's clients compared dwarf corn with conventional corn. He and his team collected yield and quality data (total digestible nutrient or TDN yield per acre). The plots were conducted over a three-year period.

Goeser worked with Bellingeri to focus on TDN, starch, digestibility and dry matter yield. The results were very impressive. The br2 hybrids yielded an estimated 1.5 metric tons more TDN per hectare (2.5 acres). This translates into 220 to 264 lbs. more milk per acre.

"This was staggering to see as we pursue options to yield more digestible calories per acre with silage," says Goeser. "Results were fairly stable across the three growing seasons."

Goeser notes that a Michigan State University feeding study found short corn outperforming both conventional and BMR (brown midrib) hybrids across multiple measures. However, the study was small and had limited replication.

"More replications are needed on a field-level basis, like the Italian dairy producers have done," says Goeser.

Bellingeri reviewed the earlier FARM SHOW article on Stine short corn hybrids and found many parallels with what his clients observed in their fields.

"The points on higher plant populations, improved standability, and narrower row spacing resonate strongly with what we

are seeing in northern Italy with short-stature hybrids, especially when the target is silage rather than grain," says Bellingeri.

Bayer began introducing the Preceon system to select growers through their Groundbreakers trials in Europe and the U.S. in 2023. Goeser reports that this year, Bayer is seeking dairies to plant 40 to 80 acres of the short-corn hybrids for silage and to enroll in their dairy management records program.

"I've advised my dairy producer clients to get into the program to gain experience with the short-stature corn," says Goeser. "The Preceon team is recommending 5,000 to 10,000 higher seed populations. How to manage this corn for silage is still being determined."

Goeser expects Bayer and others to explore biotech options for short corn in the future. The current genetics rely on the naturally occurring dwarf mutation.

"Biotech corn for silage has previously made a splash, generated a lot of interest,



Comparison of distance between ground and first ear in short stature (left) and conventional (right).

and then shortfalls have created a bad taste," says Goeser. "With this program, Preceon appears to be trying to manage publicity and gain experience."

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Grain Cart Updates For Safety And Efficiency

Demco Products recently launched Harvest Vision, a grain cart accessory package.

"It's the result of direct customer feedback we've received over the years with the most requested enhancements to our lineup," says Demco Product Marketing Specialist Elijah Vande Griend. "It's designed to help grain cart operators work safely, efficiently and confidently."

Harvest Vision integrates these upgrades into a single solution available on all 2026 Demco dual-auger models and the 1000 and 1500 single-auger models.

The centerpiece of the package is Demco's new 4-way directional unloading spout. Previously limited to a 180-degree range, the spout now offers operators full 4-directional control, providing greater precision and flexibility.

Visibility and safety are significantly enhanced by the package's advanced lighting system. Harvest Vision delivers side and rear marker lights that span the cart, greatly improving nighttime visibility. Four high-intensity (1,200-lumen) work lights are strategically positioned at the front and rear corners and can be controlled with a wireless remote.

Factory-installed cameras, including one on the auger to monitor grain flow into wagons or trailers and a backup camera, improve maneuverability. The CabCAM™ HD Quad Camera System supports up to four color views simultaneously and is built with heavy-duty construction to handle tough field conditions. The unique camera system also offers infrared capability for wide-angle night vision.

A 5-pt. scale system with a side display uses five weigh bars on the axle for accurate weighing and record-keeping. The system's standout feature is ISOBUS compatibility, enabling seamless integration with the trac-



Previously limited to a 180-degree range, the spout now offers operators full 4-directional control, providing greater precision and flexibility.

tor's in-cab monitor, a unique advantage for operators who want all their readouts in one place.

Rounding out the package is Demco's Bull-Pull hitch, designed for a tighter, more stable connection that reduces jerking under heavy loads. It's simple to install and offers a clear improvement over standard pintle hitches, making transport smoother and safer.

"Our main focus is to bring these upgrades to the market together as a customer-focused safety and visibility solution, but also the evolution of this for 2026," Griend explains.

Harvest Vision is pre-installed on new Demco grain carts from the Boyden, Iowa, factory and is available through Demco's dealer network across North America. Customers can currently choose the complete package or individual components. The 4-way directional spout will become a standard feature across all models starting in 2026.

For pricing and additional details, Griend urges customers to visit Demco's website and consult the Harvest Catalog.

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Frame attaches to a 2-in. receiver hitch on any ATV, UTV or truck, converting ordinary spot sprayers into 30-ft. wide boomless sprayers.

Boomless Sprayer Attachment Transforms Spot Sprayers

In May 2025, Cale Giddens launched Plot Blaster, a self-designed boomless spray attachment. He initially hoped to sell about 150 units in the first year. Instead, his South Georgia-based company has far exceeded those projections, selling between 800 and 900 units.

The Plot Blaster spray attachment is simple and adaptable, compatible with any 12-volt spot sprayer.

"Rather than relying on a traditional boom or building your own, which can be cumbersome and costly, the Plot Blaster is a boomless nozzle, so you can just take your sprayer handgun and hook the hose directly to the Plot Blaster," Giddens says. "The frame plugs into a 2-in. receiver hitch on any ATV, UTV or truck and instantly helps convert ordinary spot sprayers into 30-ft. wide boomless sprayers."

With a collapsible design and all necessary components included, users can easily upgrade their existing tanks.

Durability is a key feature, with sprayer bodies crafted from corrosion-resistant aluminum and stainless-steel hardware to ensure longevity in harsh environments. The nozzle, featuring a 1/4-in. MPT fitting, can be swapped with various brass tips to accommodate flow rates from 1 to 7 gpm.

Adjustability is another standout feature. The nozzle's height can be adjusted on the

fly, allowing users to control spray width from a narrow 10 to 12 ft. to a wide 30 to 32 ft., thanks to its slotted vertical boom and easy-to-secure carriage bolts and wingnuts.

For specialized tasks, bolt-on modifications enable directional spraying along fence rows and ditch banks, producing a left-hand pattern with a 16-ft. swath. Additional tank mounts and quick-connect kits make switching between implements seamless, while secure mounting options ensure stability on ATVs or in truck beds.

Giddens originally designed the Plot Blaster for food plot and landowner herbicide applications, but it's also used for insecticide spraying, fertilizer application, forestry, turf care, and even golf course maintenance.

"It serves a much wider audience than I originally anticipated," Giddens says.

Priced at \$310, it stands out from competitors whose sprayers often start at several thousand dollars.

Giddens' goal was clear.

"I wanted to take a spot sprayer someone already had and, instead of having to rig up a bunch of PVC or weld up a boom, you could just plug this one in to work with a wide range of pumps."

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