

Are weed seeds spread along roadsides from cartage of chopped maize for silage?

Trevor James and Claire Dowsett

AgResearch, Private Bag 3123, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand

(trevor.james@agresearch.co.nz)

Summary Maize silage has become an integral component of the New Zealand dairy industry and is commonly used to maintain higher milk production. Some of the maize is grown on-farm but the majority is produced off-farm and trucked, freshly chopped, to the on-farm silage pits for ensilation and storage. Some of these maize crops are very weedy and many rural residents have reported material blowing off the trucks as they travelled from crop to farm. In this study we collected samples of the chopped maize from the trucks before they left the crop site and examined them for weed seeds. Four of the trucks collected maize

from the headlands and four from the interior areas of the crop. When sampling the trucks all the loose material from the outside of the truck was collected and weighed and five separate samples were collected from the top of the load. Results show that there was more residual material on the outside of the headland trucks compared to the interior trucks and there were more seeds kg^{-1} maize in the headland trucks. More than 600 weed seeds of 13 weed species were found per kg of maize silage on the outside of the trucks loaded with material from the headland areas.