

Pretreatment and storage of fibre crops

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In the production chains of fibre crops, conservation is an important operation in order to control the quality when the product is to be used some time after harvest. Many different methods are possible. The most usual method of conservation is drying. This can be done in the field as standing crop when delayed harvest is possible, but also after mowing in a swath. When weather conditions have been bad, also artificial drying can be required in order to reach the moisture content low enough to avoid mould growth and losses during long storage. In some cases drying can take place during storage by natural or forced ventilation. Another method for conservation, ensiling, well known for fodder crops can also be used for some fibre crops. When the moisture content is very high before or after ensiling the moisture content can be decreased to about 40 % by mechanical dewatering. Separation for instance of stems and leaves or wood and fibre or cleaning of sand and other impurities can be important in any stage of the chain. Finally various storage methods, especially for bales, will be compared.