

LOOKING AFTER YOUR POPCORN IN THE CINEMA

1. Storage

Popping corn should be stored in dry conditions, off concrete floors, preferably on pallets or shelves and out of direct contact with sunlight.

Ideally the temperature in your storage area should be that of a cool winter's day (10C) and the humidity should be between 55%-65%, a normal summer's day. A cool room/refrigerator is OK but due to the low relative humidity you have to be wary about drying out the corn.

Have a look at how certain foods dry out in your fridge at home when you don't cover them with glad wrap. The same will apply to corn if not used and left for lengthy periods.

It is also important how you store your corn immediately prior to popping. Try to keep it away from those hot areas near your popper and make sure that all corn is completely used in the storage bin near your popper before topping up with fresh corn. Don't just pour new corn in over the old corn.

Our experience shows that the major determining factors of why corn will not pop perfectly is the moisture content and insects (not moths but grain beetles) and this is directly related to how corn is stored.

It's not difficult to keep corn fresh when Management is organised.

2. Rotation

This is the other most important thing that should concern every manager. If corn is not rotated, it can begin to dry out (as above) OR it can become susceptible to infestation.

Popping corn is a natural product and can be contaminated by insects, grass seeds or bits of mud that look like small stones. Farmers are aware of this and the corn is fumigated in the silo (eliminating insects) before being graded and sorted (eliminating foreign matter) and then packed into bags for distribution.

However insects can get through this security net and I'm sure there are many people who have watched in amazement at moths fluttering inside sealed packets of peanuts or muesli. To avoid this, corn should be used within 30 days of delivery – you shouldn't give any eggs a chance to hatch or give any local moths a chance to lay eggs on corn that sits idly in your storeroom.

If you do get an infestation or wish to know how to guard against one please refer to the 'Movietime Good Housekeeping Guide'. This will show you low cost ways of protecting your corn.

3. Supplier Safeguards

All corn is now packed at the farm when ordered. This means that corn will not sit around waiting for infestation by vermin or insects. Deliveries will be despatched immediately from warehouses.

The growers will stencil the batch number & date of packaging on every bag packed and this will allow them to cross-reference all relevant information about this bag of corn. They will know where it was grown, in which silo it was stored, when it was harvested, the date it was packed and which transport company was used to deliver it. They will also know when it arrived at the warehouse.

We record when we received the corn, when it was sent out, to which cinema and by which transport company. We will continue to fumigate our factory on a weekly basis and religiously rotate our corn.

4. The Cinema

If the growers get their end of this supply chain right then it leaves the rest to the cinema. Our growers have indicated that they will guarantee corn that has been despatched promptly and where this stock is rotated but they will be less than enthusiastic about old stock with different batch numbers and delivery dates.

The reasoning is that infestation will normally occur in the older corn and spread to the newer corn. And I have seen stock in cinemas belonging to all the major companies with corn of varying dates. The worst one had 11 different batch numbers spanning 6 months of deliveries in their stock of 25 bags. And they received their corn once a week.

5. What happens if you have problems with your corn?

If we are informed of weevils or poor expansion at one site then we would expect it to be the same at every site. It should be a simple matter of ringing round and exchanging stock. If however there is only a problem at that one site then I think the cinema should check to see if it is a local issue.

Needless to say, we will always continue to assist wherever we can and do everything in our power to keep cinemas popping.

**ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS STORE YOUR CORN CORRECTLY,
ROTATE YOUR STOCK, & FOLLOW THE MOVIE TIME GOOD
HOUSEKEEPING GUIDE!!**

For our part, the growers have guaranteed their corn against infestation and adulteration and we will do everything in our power to deliver it that way to your cinema.

The rest is up to you.