

LIST, RICHARD R.¹ * and BRIAN J. GROULX². ¹Michigan Sugar Company, 2600 S. Euclid Avenue, Bay City, MI 48706 and ²Michigan Sugar Company, Agricultural Research Center, 1459 S. Valley Center Drive, Bay City, MI 48706. **Covering field piles in Michigan.**

ABSTRACT

In 2014, approximately 24,000 tons of sugarbeets were covered and left in eleven different fields the first and second weeks of November. The covering was a special fabric that allows for moisture to escape but keeps rain and snow from entering the piles. The field piles were about 25' wide at the base, 10' high and varied in length from 300' to 2000'. Each linear foot of length in the pile has approximately 2.5 tons of sugarbeets. As the piles were being built in November, weighed bags of sugarbeets were placed on top of the piles and in the center of the piles to monitor potential shrink. Field piles were recovered in mid-December. On the top surface of the pile, shrink measured 12.2% whereas inside the pile, shrink was only 1.3%. Sugars and RWST were also compared. Sugars decreased from 19.65% at harvest to 18.95% in December. RWST dropped from 301.2# in November to 283.3# in December. Michigan Sugar Company plans to cover 25,000 tons this coming fall and if our research shows this to be a positive way for our Co-op to store sugarbeets, 200,000 to 300,000 tons of covered field piled sugarbeets could be possible in the future. Some of our concerns and issues that need to be addressed after our research is completed will be 1) who will pay for the covering and uncovering of the field piles 2) how and when will sugars (tare samples) be taken 3) will there be a premium paid to the growers for storing sugarbeets in this manner.