Pellet Masters standard advice for making pellets.

(Not all pellet mills are the same; some of this information may not be accurate)

There are several items that will make it much easier to make pellets:

1. Ensure that the bolt holding the roller carriage to the shaft is snugly tight.
2. Condition the die using a mixture of sand, oil, and dry distiller grain for at least 30 minutes until the inside of the dies holes are smooth and shiny before using your pellet mill the very first time. This will polish away the microscopic machining marks on the inside of the die holes. The polishing mixture should be about five pounds (two gallons) of dry distiller grain or oats, about three pounds of sand (one quart), and two to three cups of any used oil mixed to make a gritty porridge.
3. The material should be ground to particle size 1/4" or less before entering the pellet mill with a 6 mm die (or 1/8" particle size for a 3 mm die)
4. The material should be about 15% moisture before entering the pellet mill. The optimal moisture will vary with the material.
5. When starting the pellet mill use a softer material like dry distiller grain for a few minutes while the pellet die heats up to operating temperature. Then slowly, just in small amounts, add your material to begin making pellets. When everything is running smoothly then you can experiment with adding material more quickly. This is where an auger comes in handy.

It is easier to start with material slightly too moist rather than too dry. Material that is too dry can more easily clog the die. If the pellets come out soft then the material is too moist. When the pellet forms little wings the moisture is close, but still too moist. If you put the moist pellets through again they will lose moisture and increase in temperature. When you get close to correct conditions the load on the pellet mill will increase, the temperature of the pellets will increase, and the pellets will be hard and shiny.

When you are finished making pellets for the day, we recommend running distiller grain for a few minutes so that there will be soft material in the die. This will make it easier to start up the next time.

Please experiment with softer material like dry distiller grain with a 6 mm die before running more difficult material or a smaller die. To start with a new material we recommend feeding material only up to just one third to one half ways up the rollers. Often this is optimal when feeding automatically. For some materials you may be able to fill the hopper. If your material is too dry and the pellets stop coming you may be able to restart them by squirting a small amount of water directly on the rollers or by adding some distiller grain or cracked corn. If they still are not coming out after 45-90 seconds or so the die is jammed. Do not continue to run the pellet mill. You can clear the die by drilling out the holes.

Please give a shot of grease into the flush grease fitting on the end of each roller and also to the zerk fitting on the neck of the pellet mill every few hours that you run the pellet mill.

If this sounds confusing please don't worry. It's a bit like riding a bicycle. At first every attempt seems to result in a crash. When you find the technique then you can ride joyfully for hours.