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Maximum Feeding Value Preserved With Haylage

Low moisture grass silage, properly made, is becoming widely recognized as the surest way to reduce harvesting and storage losses and to preserve maximum feed value, says Dr. John W. Bratzler, professor of animal nutrition at The Pennsylvania State University.

Such low moisture grass silage, known as haylage, makes it much easier to "beat the weather" than does field-cured baled hay, Dr. Bratzler states. For example, a shower or two doesn't ruin haylage like it does

hay that is ready to bale. After the rain has disappeared from the forage and the desired moisture content is reached, chopping for haylage can begin.

Haylage is generally superior to baled hay in feeding value as shown by studies at Penn State's Agricultural Experiment Station and in other states. Dr. Bratzler and associates find haylage allows for greater flexibility in harvesting than field-cured hay to be baled. This means haylage can be processed at the most favorable stage of maturity.

trucks are a "must" in chopping haylage, Dr. Bratzler reports. When forages are chopped at 40 to 60 per cent moisture, leaves tend to blow and considerable losses in feeding value can result. The silo should be filled as rapidly as possible to prevent spoilage, the haylage on top should not be exposed more than 18 hours without being covered with at least a foot of fresh green forage.

In filling the silo, a mechanical distributor will keep the haylage level, will make it pack more tightly, will prevent materials of different densities from separating, and will avoid hard cores directly in line with blower blast. All haylage stored in conventional silos should be capped with a durable plastic cover weighted down.

Harvesting forage as haylage eliminates some of the hardest work on the farm and also reduces labor requirements substantially, Dr. Bratzler points out. Mowers, forage harvesters, power-unloading wagons, blowers, silo unloaders, and automatic feeding systems handle the forage crop from the field to feedlot — practically untouched by human hands. Tightly covered wagons or

Food Shopping Tip

Be sure meat, milk, butter, margarine, fish, cheese, and eggs are refrigerated and that sealed packages are in good condition, says Harold Neigh, Penn State extension consumer, such as firm fresh vegetables and fruits and solid frozen foods.

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