

Forage Facts



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Special points of interest:

- Hay contest submissions now being accepted for 2005 Tri-State Contest
- Update on hay moisture and heating
- Proper hay sampling techniques
- Beware of bermudagrass leaf spot and rust
- TN/GA Bermudagrass Management Workshop Scheduled

2005 Tri-State Hay Contest Accepting Entries

County Extension Agents and Forage Specialists from the Land Grant Universities in Alabama, Florida and Georgia in conjunction with the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition have organized the 2005 Tri-State Hay Show. For a testing fee of \$10, hay producers have an opportunity to gain information about the quality of hay they produce and compete for recognition as the top hay producer in a three state area. The first part of the contest involves the forage quality competition and the second portion will involve educational seminars on hay and forage quality to be held during the Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie Georgia.

The forage quality contest will be comprised of six categories that cover each of the main forage groups harvested in the Southeastern United States. Both dry hay and baleage entries will be accepted this year due to

demand for silage entries in last year's contest.

Categories are (1) warm season perennial grass hay (i.e. bermudagrass) (2) Perennial peanut and alfalfa hay, (3) cool season perennial grass hay (i.e. tall fescue or orchardgrass), (4) mixed and annual grass hay (i.e. clover/ryegrass; millet etc.) (5) grass baleage and (6) legume baleage.

Hay will be judged based on a Relative Forage Quality (RFQ) index, which takes into account crude protein, energy and fiber digestibility. The contest is open to any hay producer in Alabama, Florida or Georgia. Hay display and analysis samples, testing fees and an entry form must be submitted through the local county agent office and mailed to the Feed Testing Lab at UGA by Monday September 19th.

For more information on the hay contest visit:

<http://www.georgiaforages.com>



Hay testing is an important management tool for predicting performance of animals during winter months.

Wet Hay Decreases Quality and Poses Fire Hazard

Wet spring conditions across most of Georgia have caused some hay to be baled with excessive moisture present. Large round bales should contain no more than 18% moisture at baling and small square bales should not exceed 20% moisture. If you suspect that hay has been baled too wet, use a moisture and/or temperature probe

to monitor bales. Moisture probes are not 100% accurate, so they should be used to determine ranges of moisture not absolute values. Multiple probe readings should be taken within and among bales with most attention placed on the extreme measurements. Hay under 120 degrees is considered safe. Protein breakdown begins to

occur at 120 degrees and caramelization begins around 140 degrees. There is potential for combustion between 150 and 180 degrees. Monitor bale temperature over time. Temperature often peaks 7-10 days after baling, but may occur as late as 3 weeks post baling. If in doubt, store hay outside. Source: S. Forages.



Proper sampling and analysis of hay lots will feed supplies to be paired to appropriate animal physiological stage

Properly Sampling Hay Lots

Most hay tests predict the feeding value of multiple tons of hay using a only a tablespoon of ground forage. Because of this, it is critical to get an accurate representative hay sample so that test results are meaningful. Most errors in hay testing occur when samples are collected in the field, not in the laboratory itself. Below are a few tips to ensure accurate hay sampling.

Identify a sample lot. A lot is defined as hay taken from a single field, in the same cutting,

at the same maturity, in the same environmental conditions (i.e. all rained on, none rained on etc.) and under the same storage conditions.

Take samples from approximately 20 bales at various locations in the lot. Select random bales and, if at all possible, use a hay probe to take cores of the bales. Many county agent offices have hay probes available for loan.

Core bales so that a cross section of the windrow is taken. On round bales this will be on

curved edges toward the center of the bale, on square bales cores will be taken on the “butt” end of each bale. If using a drill-powered probe, run at a slow speed to keep heat damage to a minimum.

Seal the pooled core samples from each lot in a plastic bag and mail to the forage testing lab for analysis. Do not allow samples to heat or mold (especially critical for high moisture bale-age samples).

Wet, humid weather and suboptimal fertility conditions greatly increase risk of leaf spot infections.

Bermudagrass Leaf Spot Infections May be a Problem this Fall

Wet weather, improper irrigation scheduling, susceptible varieties, low soil potash levels and improper harvest timing can increase the potential for a hay field to become infected with *Helminthosporium* or *Puccinia*— diseases commonly known as leaf spot. These diseases are characterized by small reddish lesions on leaf tissue that give the pasture or hayfield a “bronzed” look (see photo at right). These diseases

decrease forage production and hay yields and also negatively impact animal acceptance and forage quality. There are no legal, effective, or economical fungicides available for control of these diseases in forages. A scripted Powerpoint presentation and new Extension bulletin are now available for download at the Georgia Forages website for county delivery.



Bermudagrass acreage is increasing in northern areas of Georgia.

TN/GA Bermudagrass Management Workshop Scheduled

Bermudagrass acreage is rapidly expanding in northwest Georgia and southeastern Tennessee. Much of this production is to supply the growing horse hay market, but some acres are devoted to grazing during the “summer slump” of tall fescue production. The UGA Forage Team in cooperation with the University of Tennessee will host a bermudagrass management school in the Chattanooga area on the evenings of August 23-25, 2005. This work-

shop will focus on bermudagrass management in northern areas of adaptation. Each evening session will last for approximately three hours. The first two nights of the school will be classroom oriented and will cover variety selection, establishment, fertilization, harvest management, weed control and overseeding of bermudagrass fields. Instruction for the third evening will take place in a local producer’s field. Soil sampling, forage testing,

and general hands-on management will be covered during this session. For more information, contact Norman Edwards, Walker county GA Extension Agent (706-638-2548) or Ray Burden, Hamilton county TN Extension agent (423-855-6113). An agenda with more detailed information will also be posted at www.georgiaforages.com as it becomes available.