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SOLUTIONS

Bradford County Extension County Fact Sheet

Farm Notes 7

How to Take a Hay Sample

Issue #7 by Tim Wilson, Bradford County Extension

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Why should you test your hay?

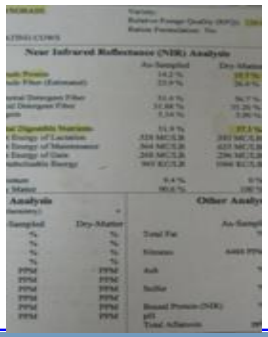
You can gain valuable information from a simple hay test that can help you balance the nutrition on your livestock. Hay is not just filler without value. By taking a hay sample and having it tested you can learn the crude protein, TDN, nitrate level as well as ADF and NDF depending on the lab you use. Knowing these values you can balance your animal's diet appropriately without over or under providing its nutritional needs. Follow the steps below to collect a random hay sample for analysis.

1. When collecting samples, only take hay from bales that were cut at the sample time. If you have multiple cuttings in your barn, collect separate samples for each cutting.

2. When testing hay that is rolled in round bails, remove the outer crust to avoid collecting material that would be discarded by the animal.

3. Using a hay probe, drill into the bale at a perpendicular angle. For each cutting collect 10 to 15 samples and mix it into a 1 gallon bag.

4. Decide which lab to use; follow their submission procedure and include payment.



5. Results should be available in 1 to 2 weeks and can include information such as crude protein, TDN, nitrates as well as many other valuable, measurable parameters.

If you don't have your hay tested, chances are you are spending more money than you should, not making as much as you could and are probably shorting your livestock and/or your customers.

Additional information related to forage testing can be found on the University of Florida's EDIS site at:

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/aa192

Or at the following YouTube Site:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPoPBBQl2yw

Contact the Bradford County Extension Office (904 – 966 – 6224) if you would like assistance interpreting test results or for help balancing your animals ration.

Bradford County Extension
2266 North Temple Avenue
904-966-6299 or http://bradford.ifas.ufl.edu/

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