

Weekly Article

10-25-2021

Is Your Hay Providing All Your Animal's Needs?

Hello, my Name is Richard Purdin with OSU Extension, Ag and Natural Resource Educator and Community Development Educator for Adams County. I hope to better inform local producers and the public of the latest news in the world of agriculture. As we enter the last week of October mother nature is throwing another wet and soggy week at us. Last week was a very productive week for farmers, with dryer and less humid weather many crops were able to be harvested. Looking at the weather forecast for the last week of October, harvest will probably be delayed once again. As I conducted my routine drive across the county, I estimate that 40% of the soybeans have been harvested and only about 20% of the corn has been harvested. I don't believe we have received any real frost yet in the county, but it will be coming soon. The forecast for the first week of November looks to have multiple overnight temperatures in the mid 30's. With frost fast approaching it is a good time to take note of the Johnsongrass patches in the pasture and wrap of the grazing and harvesting of Sudan or Sorghum Sudan grass forages due to the risk of prussic acid poisoning. Speaking of forages, October is also a great month to get forages tested in preparation for winter feeding programs. Today I want to discuss weaned calf nutrition and if the hay you are feeding them is truly meeting their needs.

Weaning time is here once again and the air is filled with bawling calves just dying to get one last drink of their mother's milk. This is by far the most stressful event in a calf's life (it should be), so making sure that recently weaned calf is receiving the adequate amounts of nutrients and minerals is critical. Many producers are looking at the current price of corn and other grains that are commonly used as supplements and are getting a big dose of sticker shock. With higher corn and soybean prices and hay yields coming in above average, producers might be thinking about just depending on hay for feed. The question is, will the hay being fed meet the animals overall nutritional needs? The best way to find out is get the hay analyzed for its nutritional value. After the hay is analyzed and you have the results the next step is to use the numbers to form a good ration here are some important things to consider:

- **Grass Hay vs Legume-** Grass hay usually has less protein, higher Acid Detergent fiber, and contains fewer essential nutrients than Legume or legume/grass mixed hay.
- **Calcium is critical-** Unless you are growing pure stands of Alfalfa calcium is going to be supplemented. Most grass species have low amounts of

calcium, somewhere in the range of .20 to .30 ppm. A 400-500lb calf needs somewhere between .45-.50ppm.

- **How much hay do I need?** - To truly know this answer you need to know roughly how much your calves are weighing. A 500lb calf will intake roughly 12lbs of dry matter intake, this is about 2.5% of their body weight. So, let's say you have 10 calves weighing 500lbs x 12lbs dry matter intake = 120lbs of dry matter hay (keyword **dry matter**). Let's say you were able to get your hay harvested somewhat dry at 20% moisture this would = 2.4lbs of additional weight – $12 + 2.4 = 14.4\text{lbs}$ x 10 = 144lbs of actual hay/day x 3 months or 90 days of backgrounding = 12,960lbs/1000lb round bale = 13 round bales. Remember as the calf grows intake increases so always account for more hay than estimated.

Some other details to go over

- Milkweed pod collection taking place now through the month of October at the Adam County Soil and Water Conservation service, call (937) 544-2033 Ext.4
- November 20th – NAP Deadline for 2022, NAP provides financial assistance to non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of crop, or prevention of planting due to weather extremes. Call the local FSA office for details at (937)544-2033
- Annual OCA Replacement Female Sale- November 26, 2021, 6:00pm at the Muskingum Livestock Auction Co.

From the field

- Soybean harvest is about 40% complete.
- Corn harvest about 20 % complete slightly lower than normal test weight and poor standability.
- Vomitoxin issues might become a concern as corn stands in the field longer.
- Cover crops are still being planted.
- Potash and lime applications being made
- Manure application being made.
- High demand for calves weighing 500-600lb calves preconditioned and ready to go on feed.