

Winter Hay Needs for Your Livestock

Unfortunately, most people I have talked with have been feeding hay for a while now. Do you have enough hay to get through winter? If you are looking to buy hay the time is likely now as hay prices should continue to rise throughout the winter months. When buying any volume of hay having a forage analysis should be non-negotiable as not all hay is worth the asking price. Knowing the nutrient content of a lot of hay is the only guaranteed way to know the value of the forage that is being purchased. When thinking about how much hay you will need through the winter, we must figure out how many days we plan to feed hay. As we are into November already, running the calculation of around Thanksgiving until April, we have about a 120-day feeding period. The spring can be unpredictable as with any weather patterns.

Each species of livestock has a specific voluntary intake or an amount of feed and hay we expect them to consume in a day. For most grazing animals that number is between 1.5-5% of their body weight. This number varies depending on age, sex, pregnancy, quality of forage, and weather conditions.

- Goats- 2-6%
- Sheep 2-5%
- Beef Cattle 1.5-3%
- Dairy Cattle 3-4.5%
- Horses 1.5-3%

Now the weight of our animals comes into play with our calculations. For beef cattle, we will assume a daily intake of 2.5% of their body weight. If you have 15 mature brood cows at 1,200lbs, 1 bull at 2,000lbs, and 5 weaned replacement heifers at 500lbs, you will need the following:

$(1,200\text{lbs} \times 2.5\text{lbs}/100\text{lb BW} \times 15 \text{ cows}) = 450 \text{ lbs. for the cows}$

$(2000\text{lbs} \times 2.5\text{lbs}/100\text{lbs BW} \times 1 \text{ bull}) = 50 \text{ lbs. for the bull}$

$(500\text{lbs} \times 2.5\text{lbs}/100\text{lbs} \times 5) = 62.5 \text{ lbs. for the calves.}$

In total, we expect to feed 562.5 lbs. of dry hay (0% moisture or dry matter basis) per day.

This calculation is on a dry matter basis, which basically removes all the water from the forage. Hay is typically around 85% dry matter, meaning 15% of the weight of the hay comes from water. In this case, when we account for the water, our 562.5 lbs. of dry matter hay is 662 lbs. of hay as we feed it.

If we multiply 120 days by our daily as-fed feeding rate, 662 lbs., we need 79,440 lbs. of hay to feed through the winter. To account for storage and feeding loss (assuming barn stored and fed with a hay ring), we can increase this amount by 15%, giving us a total of 91,356 lbs.

Now that we've calculated the amount of hay we need, let's put it into perspective. You will need approximately 92 round bales at 1,000lbs each to supply enough forage to our cattle through the winter. It's important to note that the only way to know the weight of your round bales is to weigh them. Not all bales are equal when it comes to weight.

Let's say you want to calculate the rate for one horse. 1 horse at 1100 lbs. x 2% body weight = 22 lbs. of hay per day

22 lbs. x 120 feeding days = 2640 lbs. of hay. To add the water weight back at 15% would be 3036 lbs. of hay per horse. If your facility has a 10% waste for your hay, $3036 \times .10 = 3340$ lbs. of hay

Feeding 40 lb. square bales would mean you need $3340/40 = 84$ bales per horse.

Keep in mind that the dry matter intake for your livestock will vary by age, hay quality, other feed sources, pregnancy, weather conditions, and many more factors. You can adjust the waste percentage depending on your facility's average. If you need help calculating the hay needs for your livestock feel free to contact the extension office.

Upcoming Events & Reminders

A HUGE THANK YOU to all of those who came out to support the chicken & noodle dinner for the Adams County Junior Fair Small Animal and Horse Programs. Your support is highly appreciated. Thank you to all of those who helped make the dinner a success.

2023 Beginner & Small Farm College for Adams, Brown, Highland, and Clermont Counties is a college designed to help landowners examine ways to increase profits on their small acreage properties. This is open to all new or aspiring farmers, rural landowners, and farm families looking for new ideas. Registration is limited to the first 50 participants. The cost to register is \$100 for the first person and \$75 for each additional person. These series of courses will be from 6:00-9:00 pm on November 30th, December 7th, December 14th, and December 21st. This is a great opportunity to develop realistic expectations for your farm. For further information, please contact your local extension office. Adams County can be reached at 937-544-2339 or stoneking.24@osu.edu

Certified Livestock Manager Webinar- December 4th from 10:00-11:30 am. The topic is Biosecurity Measures: Rodent Control and Animal Mortalities. This webinar provides credit for certified livestock managers as well as certified crop advisors. To register please visit go.osu.edu/CLM or contact birt.32@osu.edu with any questions. This is a great opportunity if rodent control or disposing of animal mortalities is a topic of concern on your farm, no matter the scale.

Registration is now live for the Basics of Grain Marketing Workshop (in-person) on February 8 & 9, 2024, in Marysville, OH. This workshop is sponsored by grower checkoff funds supported by the Ohio Soybean Council and Ohio Corn & Wheat via the OSUE Farm Financial Management & Policy Institute (FFMPI). Space is limited to 35, and costs \$100 per person. Ohio growers are the target to be in the seats at the workshop.