

## Weekly Article

# Is There Enough Hay in The Barn?

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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 the year 2020 comes to a close, the weather has been a roller coaster ride with 50° temperature and 4+ inches of snow. As they say if you do not like the weather in southern Ohio just wait, it will change!

Just as Ohio's weather is always changing, the world of Agriculture is also changing in many ways. On the other hand, there is something that remains the same and that is, cattle eat hay and as the weather changes from warm to cold the amount of hay consumed will increase. As many producers know 2020 was another challenging year for making hay. Average hay yields were down from 2019 production and 2019 total production was less than 2018 production. With that said coming off two years of low yields and poor quality has created a shortage of hay on the farm and in auction barn. If you are taking inventory of hay on your farm and it looks like you are going to be short before the grass begins to grow, here are a few things to consider.

- Remove some mouths from the table. Go through the herd and cull unproductive animals, lost a calf, broken down udder, poor temperament, and open (unbred) are good reasons to cull.
- Buy more hay, this is an option that needs to be considered sooner rather than later. Current auction prices for hay across Ohio shows small square bales= \$4.50 -\$5.30 a bale, large round bales = \$45-\$90/bale or \$200 -\$300/ton. I suspect price trends will continue higher as winter lingers on!
- Add grain to the ration. Corn and other supplements can be 70-90% digestible compared to most grass hay being around 50-60% digestible. One rule of thumb when feeding corn is not to exceed 0.3% of the animal's body weight. Brood cows weighing 1200lbs will consume 1.5% of their body weight in feed, this could be fresh grass, hay, or grain. Supplementing grain will help reduce the amount of hay consumed during winter feeding while maintaining body condition.
- Manage the mud. Cattle will burn more energy if they are walking in deep mud or surrounded by a poor environment. Non pregnant 1200 lb. cows require 8.5 mcal/net energy a day to maintain body weight, a 1200lb pregnant cow requires 14 Mal/net energy. Cows walking in mud 9-12 inches deep will need an

additional 1.8 mcals/net energy a day, in short you will need to feed more hay or grain to maintain the cows body weight.

Some other details to go over:

- The OSU Extension Office will be closed to the public and OSU Extension staff will be teleworking from home starting December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 to January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021. If you need assistance you can still contact us at (937) 544-2339
- 2021 Fertilizer/Pesticide Private Applicators in person course is planned for March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Cherry Fork Community Center (gym) 5:00pm – 9:00pm. If you need recertified, you should get an invitation in the mail. (due to covid19 date is tentative and susceptible to change)
- 2021 GAP recertification training will be available to producers online or through the mail. The online training course will begin January 11<sup>th</sup> and run to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. For more details or question please call the office at (937) 544 2339.
- For producers who still have not yet elected a 2021 crop safety net program Agriculture Risk Coverage or Price Loss Coverage there is a recording of the webinar explaining the programs go to <https://farmoffice.osu.edu/events/archived-videos>. The deadline to sign up for a program will be March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- January 4<sup>th</sup> General CRP signup begins, and CRP Grasslands signup will begin March 15<sup>th</sup>,2021 and conclude April 23<sup>rd</sup>,2021 contact the farm service agency for assistance in signing up for these programs.
- OSU Extension Beef Team announces the 2021 Ohio State Extension virtual Beef School beginning January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021. There will be 6 evenings starting at 6pm and ending at 8pm via webinar, go to [https://osu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_N\\_CtcKYwQB2I60Afug10aA](https://osu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_N_CtcKYwQB2I60Afug10aA) to register.
- OSU Specialty crops team will be presenting a seasonal High tunnel and Season Extension school beginning January 12<sup>th</sup>, there will be 6 1-hour webinar training covering 12 different topics related to using seasonal high tunnels to extend the growing season on vegetable and other specialty crops. Register at : <https://go.osu.edu/high-tunnel-school-21>