

# Weekly Article

4-20-2021

## Do's and Don'ts When Making Great Bailage

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. Here we go, up the hill on the roller coaster ride. With temperatures dipping into the upper 20's and reports of close to 4.5 inches of snow last week, this week will feature much warmer temperatures reaching the upper 70's and even 80°! I have been making my rounds and keeping a close eye on a lot of out forages and small grain crops like wheat for cold damage. I believe most of our broadleaf forages and legumes (alfalfa and clover) came out of the cold unsaved. I have noticed a light burning effect to the orchard grass and tall fescue in the pasture but unsure if this will have a direct effect on yield. With the warmer temps in the forecast and soil temperatures on the rise many livestock producers are currently grazing pastures and even getting hay equipment greased up and ready to go. A growing trend in hay production is to make wet bailage and today I just want to go over some do's and don'ts when it comes to making wet bailage or bailed silage.

Making Wet Bailage can be a great way to produce and preserve outstanding quality forage on the farm. With wet spring weather and an ever-narrowing window of opportunities to make proper dry hay while capturing top quality levels, making hay at high moisture and narrow our harvest window to 3 days or less. Harvesting forages at the proper maturity is critical in producing top quality hay. Many will argue that you lose yield, at the end of the day cattle will eat less good quality hay and waist less when preserved in plastic. Storage loss, and dry matter loss is much lower in wet bailage due to being able to harvest the plant before it completely matures. However, if done incorrectly results can be very disappointing, here are some simple Do's and Don'ts when it comes to making wet bailage.

- Do- Mow in wider windrows, when mowing the hay make sure to mow early in the morning or late in the evening and widen you windrow to allow for more air and sunlight to reach the plant.
- Do use good quality plastic at a minimum of 6 layers (my experience the more plastic the better).
- Do bale tight and even sized bales.
- Do know your moisture levels, moisture levels should be between 55-60%.
- Don't – Rush the process, mowing more hay that can be baled and wrapped in a day will lead to spoilage. Wrapping forage within 6 hours of baling is critical.
- Don't skimp on plastic.
- Don't bale too wet, moisture levels above 60% can lead to rotting and inadequate fermentation, potently creating botulism issues.

- Don't line wrapped bales along trees or wood lines, this will increase the chances of plastic being torn by wildlife and tree branches.

Some other details to go over:

- USDA FSA will open a sign-up period for CFAP #2 Assistance program for Livestock, row crop, and specialty crop producers effected by the Coronavirus pandemic. Call (937) 544 -2033 for assistance.
- 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.
- May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021- Feeder Calf, Sheep, and Goat Tag in 8:00am to 12:00pm located at the Adams County Fairgrounds.
- Adams County Farmers Market Opens May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 located on the Courthouse Square.
- July 15<sup>th</sup> is the set deadline to report acreage planted to spring crops such as corn, soybeans, oats, alfalfa, tomatoes, potatoes and more. Contact the FSA Office to report once crops are planted.

From the field

- Soil Temperatures are hovering around 54-55 °F
- Spring tillage is full speed ahead.
- Winter wheat is in growth phase Feeks 6-7.
- Spring Herbicide burndown is taking place.
- Marestail is about 2 inches tall, burndown needs to be done sooner than later.
- Reports of back cutworm moths in northern and western portion of the state.
- Apple and other fruit trees are in full bloom.
- Alfalfa Weevil increasing in population (early harvest can help slow spread).

