

David Dugan  
OSU Extension Educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Adams/Brown/Highland Counties  
Ohio Valley Extension Education Research Area

## **Extending Your Hay Supply**

As I have traveled throughout the 3 counties in recent days I have noticed several bales of hay that have been set out for livestock. Not just set out there in case they decide to eat it, but livestock gathered around the hay eating in most cases.

The lack of rain in late summer and early fall impacted the grass growth to the point that many producers have started feeding hay much earlier that they may have wanted to. In some cases, farmers have reported that their hay harvested throughout the summer was less than normal so feeding early could be a problem. Last winter was a pretty tough winter and there may not be much hay left over from last year.

If the thought has crossed your mind that your hay supply might be a little short you may want to plan now. At this point allowing livestock to feed on corn stalks may be an option. A few years ago, there were many rolls of corn stalks rolled up for feed and/or bedding. The feed quality is not high for corn stalks alone, but when livestock can pick over a field they have access to some missed grain and possibly other forages around the edges of the fields and waterways. The cost of rolling bales is not cheap, and from some that I have talked to who baled many rolls of cornstalks a couple of years ago stated that is a little rough on the baler, too.

While rolls of cornstalks might not be high quality feed alone they might help extend your hay especially if they are part of a ration. There are many choices that you may be able to buy to add nutritional value including corn, dry distiller's grain, corn gluten pellets, soybean meal and others. Most of these feed stuffs are loaded with energy and/or protein to improve the quality of the ration.

As we move to the colder temperatures for the coming months we need to be thinking about keeping energy levels high in the feed available to livestock. Cold wind, cold rain and especially the combination of the two greatly increase the energy needs for livestock. While it is unfortunate for grain farmers with the current low prices for grain, it is an opportunity for livestock producers. With corn around \$3 per bushel on the day before Election Day, if you have storage, this is an opportunity to stretch your hay supply. Feeding just a couple of pounds of whole shelled corn per head per day will make an impact.

Discuss with your feed supplier the options of buying tons of other feed stuffs to last your throughout the winter. Some may offer that as an option. By-product feeds like DDG's, Soybean Hull Pellets, and Corn Gluten Pellets have higher protein levels than corn alone. Depending on what animals you are feeding, the energy and protein levels will differ, but by feeding some of these feeds alone or in combination will reduce the amount of energy and protein livestock need from hay.

If my memory is correct, this year much of the hay in our area was harvested a little later than normal. The later the first cutting was harvested the chances are pretty good that the quality is less than good. So, even if you have plenty of hay, you may not have plenty of feed. Test your hay to know for sure. This can be done for about \$20. If you test your hay you will have a better idea of how good, or poor your hay may be and can then adjust with other feedstuffs. If you do not test your hay you can still improve the feed ration for your livestock at a reasonable price.

## **It May Soon Be Ladybug Time**

We had a killing freeze over the weekend. Forages like alfalfa for the most part are not yet dormant, so anyone thinking of cutting it again should wait until we have mid-20s for a few nights before cutting it. In the meantime,

if you have had problems with ladybugs the past few years, you might want to prepare for them now. Here is some information that might be of help.

1. Lady beetle flights are heaviest on warm sunny days (after a period of cold weather) when temperatures climb above 60 degrees F. They tend to congregate initially on the sunnier, southwest sides of buildings in mid-afternoon. Structures that are shaded and not brightly illuminated by afternoon sun are less likely to attract the beetles.

2. Once the beetles alight, they attempt to enter crevices and other dark openings in search of hibernation sites. These locations may be anywhere on the structure, but especially beneath exterior siding, around window and doorframes, soffits, fascia boards, and through weep holes and attic or crawl space vents. Sealing exterior cracks and openings with caulk, screening, weather stripping, etc., is the most effective long-term, prevention against beetle entry.

3. Once the beetles are indoors, the best way to remove them is with a vacuum cleaner. When brushed or handled the beetles often secrete a yellowish-orange fluid, making vacuuming a better option for indoor removal than brooms, mops, etc. Insecticides applied indoors tend to be ineffective and may stain or leave unwanted residues on walls, counter tops, and other surfaces.

4. While sealing exterior openings is the more permanent means of denying ladybug entry, pest proofing is time-consuming and impractical for many clients. If a household or business continues to be troubled by lady beetles, owners may want to enlist the services of a professional pest control firm. Some companies offer pest proofing services and many offer insecticide treatment of the building exterior, which helps to prevent pest entry. Fast-acting, “professional strength” pyrethroid formulations (e.g., Demand, Suspend, Talstar, Tempo) tend to be most effective, and can be applied around eaves, attic vents, windows, doors, underneath siding, and other likely points of entry.

Homeowners insistent upon applying exterior treatments themselves will usually get the most for their efforts using over-the-counter versions of these products such as Spectracide Triazicide or Bayer Advanced Powerforce Multi-Insect Killer. Purchasing the concentrated formulations of these products that can be diluted will enable the homeowner to mix up and apply larger volumes of material with a pump-up or hose-end sprayer. *In order to have any benefit, exterior treatments must be applied before the beetles enter buildings to overwinter.*

5. When all else fails, customers should be reminded that lady beetle entry into buildings is a relatively short-term event which generally runs its course by mid-November. The beetles sometimes emit a foul odor, stain indoor surfaces, and occasionally give a “nip” if they land on one’s skin. They do not breed or reproduce indoors like fleas or cockroaches, and constitute a nuisance mainly by their presence.