



June 13, 2018

Store Hay Properly

This past week, the weather was ideal for harvesting hay in Coffee County. Hopefully a lot of hay has been baled recently. As I drive through the county, I see lot of large round bales stored in ways which promote waste. The main problem is storing bales under trees. When you store them under trees, water drips from the trees getting the hay wet. Then when the sun is shining, the hay is shaded, therefore preventing drying. The hay is going to get wet either way and by storing the hay in an open area with sunlight, the hay will dry faster. Using a fence line is okay as long as the hay is not shaded. Also select an area that is well drained. It is also preferred to store the bale on rock if possible, this reduce rotting on the bottom of the bale.

The second major problem I see is placing the bales side by side, touching. When this happens, water runs down between the bales and has nowhere to go. Therefore it is absorbed in the bale. When placing baled outside, place them in a row, end to end. In this situation, place the bales as close together as possible to reduce spoilage on the ends. Just don't place any side by side.

The third problem which I see is stacking the bales outside. This causes the same problem as placing them side by side, the water runs down between the bale with no place to go. If you do this, the hay must be covered properly. In many cases, the cover gets blown off leaving the hay exposed. Black plastic is extremely difficult to keep over the hay. The best way to keep it covered is with a tarpaulin specially designed to cover hay. These tarpaulins should be tied down properly. The ends should be left open for ventilation. Also, in this case the hay should be stored on rock since a large percentage of the spoilage will be on the bottom. Two inch rock works well since it allows water to run through it well. Pallets may also be used, but be careful of the nails in them. One flat tractor tire can negate the savings in hay. Old tires can be used but be careful of the water retained the rim the tire.

The best method is to store the hay in a barn or shed. An open sided pole barn works well. Make sure it is an area with good drainage or you will still get spoilage on the bottom. If the barn is enclosed, leave doors open if possible for ventilation for the first two weeks and watch for heating. If the inside of a bale gets too hot, set it outside for a few days or you might have a barn fire.

When storing hay, remember these three things, (1) store inside if possible, (2) break contact with ground and (3) if outside, put end to end, not side by side. If you have questions about hay storage methods, call our U.T. Extension Office – Coffee County at 931-723-5141.

Dead Farm Animal Removal

I want to remind everyone that Coffee County has a Dead Farm Animal Removal Program. If you have a dead livestock animal that weighs in excess of 75 pounds, you may call Appertain Co. at 931-363-8284 and they will come and pick it up. Call Appertain as soon as possible, because it will probably be a couple of days before they can pick the animal up. You will need to move the animal close the road for pickup. I would try to get Appertain Co. to let you know when they can pick up the animal and wait as late as possible to move the animal next to the road. It may also be good to cover the animal with lime or a tarp while waiting for the animal to be picked up. I would recommend that all Coffee County residents that own livestock utilize this service when necessary.