Beef Producers Pool Calves

Cornell Cooperative Extension and local beef producers are teaming up to pool beef calves for better marketing. Small beef producers face a challenge when marketing their calves even though they may be of good quality. By grouping calves by size and type and requiring certain health management practices the group hopes to provide a uniformly managed group of feeder calves, commingled from several producers, in a truck load lot, which can be marketed at optimum value.

The calves will be housed at a farm in Canton, NY where they will be grouped into heifers and steers, different breed types and frame size and fed a controlled ration. The group hopes to demonstrate a feeding and management system that will support an average daily gain of 1.5-2.0 lbs. during the 45-day weaning program.

Farmers will probably retain ownership of the calves and pay a daily charge for feeding and any vet bills incurred while the calves are there.

Hay Storage Considerations, Don’t Waste it!

By: Nancy Glazier, NWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team

Now may be a good time to think about hay storage. With lost hay this season from armyworms and dry conditions, and high purchased feed prices, more of the bale will need to be utilized. Large bales are a convenient form of hay for one-person operations. These bales can be moved, stored and fed relatively easily with the right equipment. Hay loss can occur when baling, moving and feeding and some is unavoidable. The biggest loss – both dry matter and digestibility – occurs with outdoor storage. Dry matter loss can reach 50% depending on the beginning quality, storage conditions and length of storage. It is not always realistic or practical to build a barn to store hay. Here are some tips to minimize waste from outdoor storage.

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**If you harvest it, Make sure it Reaches the Cow**

By: Joe Lawrence, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County

Corn silage harvest is fast approaching. When you consider the storage phase for silage, chopping, the corn and feeding it out become the easy parts. Storing this forage properly to reduce losses and maintain quality is the real challenge and opportunity. This is true every year, but particularly with tight forage inventories on many farms, you want to make sure that every bit of forage harvested makes it to the cow’s mouth. This certainly applies to haylage harvest as well.

A lot of things have to happen correctly to successfully store feed. There is often a slide shown in presentations that boils it down to this:

- **Poor Forage + Good Management = Poor Quality Feed**
- **Good Forage + Poor Management = Poor Quality Feed**
- **Good Forage + Good Management = Good Quality Feed**

When storing feed in A Bags or upright silos, harvesting at the proper growth stage (dry matter for corn) is very important. The storage process still takes management, but there are not as many challenges with these storage structures as there are with bunk silos/drive over piles. Storing in bunks or piles can be done very successfully, but there is a great deal more management involved.

Quick Silage Harvest Checklist:

- Harvest at the correct Dry Matter (32-35%)
- Silage Density in Bunks – pack, pack, and pack some more.
- Achieving a high density is critical to reducing forage losses.
- The cost of extra packing weight is minimal compared to the benefits.
- Aim High—the often used 15 lbs. DM/ft. is a minimum density required for good fermentation, farms routinely achieve greater than 15 lbs./ft. and everyone should be striving for more.
- Reduces losses.
- Pack more tons of DM into the same bunk space
- Cover your bunk. Plastic is good, two layer oxygen limiting plastic is better.
- These two layer plastic covers are more expensive, but many reports have the return on investment at 6-8:1 crediting the amount of forage that is saved. Farms using this plastic rarely have to throw away any silage from the top of the bunk when rolling back plastic.
- Consider Inoculants
- Inoculant will not make a bad forage good but it will help a good forage be better.

**Be safe this and every harvest season!**