

The Ten Commandments of Baleage

1. **Cut early and often** – The whole idea is to use a harvest/storage system that helps mitigate the risks of poor quality forage. *(You already knew this, but we still had to put it as number one!)*
2. **Wilt to no less than 35% dry matter (DM) for quality and consider wilting to 45% DM for cost of operation.** *(Page 18, The Balewrapping Handbook and pages 5, 6 & 13, Silage How & Why)*
3. **Wrap as soon as possible (within 2 hours of baling) to optimize fermentation.** *(Page 33, The Balewrapping Handbook)*
4. If you adhere to Commandments 1 – 3, **You would be crazy to wrap with less than six layers of plastic at 70% pre-stretch.** Six layers means 1½ turns of the bale on its longitudinal axis with a 50% overlap of the plastic. *(Pages 28, 29, 32, 33 & 34, The Balewrapping Handbook and pages 7 & 12, Silage How & Why)*
5. Not controlling variation in nutrients delivered to cows affects the bulk tank in the short run and can affect cash flow in the longer run. **Adopt a mapping, sampling/analysis and ration adjustment strategy.** *(See Sampling Options section)*
6. No one doubts your abilities as an equipment operator. However, **bale density is the name of the game and swathing and driving techniques will affect it.** *(Pages 16, 24 & 25, The Balewrapping Handbook and page 9, Silage How & Why)*
7. **Regardless of which bale handler you choose, gentler is better and don't break the seal!** *(Page 36, The Balewrapping Handbook and page 11, Silage How & Why)*
8. Unless you have unlimited land with excellent drainage close to the feed center, **stacking bales on end 2 – 3 high in a prepared yard will pay dividends!** *(Page 36, The Balewrapping Handbook and input section of the Baleage Cost Comparisons section)*
9. **Distance from field to feed center dictates storage site and bale mover options.** *(Page 11, Silage How & Why)*
10. **Feedout equipment need not be expensive. Labor efficiency and adaptability to your facilities are key.** *(See Feedout Options and Bale Movers section)*