

Alfalfa Hay and Balage: Testing for Quality

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Forage Testing Program
Kentucky Department of Agriculture

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Forage Testing Program

Forage Team

Jim Wade - Central

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Mac Stone – Director

Michael Judge – Executive Director

Richie Farmer – Commissioner of Agriculture

Our Goal: To Educate the Producer on the
Benefits of Testing Their Forage

Benefit: Maximize Production / Minimize Cost



Forage Testing Program

Why Test Your Hay?

- ☀ By knowing the percentages and protein levels you can increase/decrease the amount of supplements needed from your analysis report and will help the producer set feeding rations
- ☀ If you do not know what you have in your forage you are over or under feeding your livestock – therefore affecting the health of your animal and your pocket book



Forage Testing Program

Forages We currently Test for Energy and Protein

- ✦ Legume Hay
- ✦ Mixed Hay
- ✦ Grass Hay
- ✦ Legume Haylages
- ✦ Mixed Haylages
- ✦ Grass Haylages
- ✦ Cornstalk Hay
- ✦ Soybean Hay



Forage Testing Program

- ✦ The Producer calls and makes an appointment
- ✦ We visit the farm and pull random core samples
- ✦ Each sample is \$10.00 (same field/same cutting)
- ✦ Each sample is processed and analyzed within 10 business days
- ✦ An analysis report is mailed to the producer and emailed to the Extension agent
- ✦ The Producer uses the analysis to balance a ration
- ✦ For Sale Website – If you have excess hay and would like to sell it; we have a free service to advertise your hay. If you need hay this website brings the consumer and producer together
- ✦ Hay Hotline – the unknown quality hay that is posted from producers from Kentucky or other states that have hay for sale; this hay has not been tested by the Forage Testing Program.



Forage Testing Program

Forage Samples Analyzed Per Year in the Lab and Van

2004 - 1242

2005 - 3550

2006 - 2776

2007 - 3843



Forage Testing Program

Commissioner Richie Farmer

- ✦ Secured funding for updated computers and software to bring the lab up to date
- ✦ Secured funding for a new Mobile Forage 8' x 18' Unit with a new NIR Analyzing System, Grinding Mill and a Computer with Printer
- ✦ Instrumental with drought relief in lifting the wide load size limit ban to have roll hay bales brought into Kentucky from neighboring states
- ✦ Instrumental with Disaster Declaration from USDA Secretary
- ✦ Education efforts with the University of Kentucky
- ✦ Worked with Legislators / Agriculture Development Board
- ✦ Hay Hotline



Forage Testing Program

Mobile Forage Van

- ✦ The Mobile Forage Van is equipped to and has tested forages at Hay Contests, Farm and Field Days, State and Local Fairs, Hay Auctions, Young Farmers Meetings, and The Murray, Western, and Eastern KY Junior Livestock Shows
- ✦ The “Farmer Sample” is processed in the van and the producer receives his/her analysis report on site
- ✦ Talk to your Extension Agent to set up a Field Day
- ✦ There is no charge for the Mobile Forage Van



Forage Testing Program

Questions?

Thank you!

