

Forage Facts

Published by the Peace Country Beef & Forage Association

September 2020, Volume 16, Issue 188



2020 Feed Testing Policy & Process

er to understand where their samples were taken. This is especially important for producers that submit multiple samples.

Follow Us!



[/peacecountrybeef](#)



[@PCBFA](#)



[@peacecountrybeef](#)



[Peace Country Beef & Forage Association](#)



[peacecountrybeef.ca](#)

Follow Us and Stay Up-To-Date With Everything PCBFA!

DID YOU KNOW?

As a part of your PCBFA Membership, you get 2 free feed samples per year, and we will ship as many as you need at a small cost per sample.

PCBFA is pleased to offer feed testing services for Peace Country producers. We have a few modifications to our normal processes for the 2020 program to ensure we are following guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

General Information

Current PCBFA members receive two free feed tests with their annual membership

- All samples are sent to Central Testing Labs (<http://www.ctl.mb.ca>)
- The basic forage sample package includes analysis of the major nutrients by NIR (near infrared spectroscopy) and minerals by wet chemistry
- Additional tests can be added, such as nitrates, mould, mycotoxins, etc. and will be invoiced to members at cost

Members are welcome to submit more than two samples and will be invoiced at a discounted feed test cost (\$30/dry hay sample & \$42/silage sample)

- Non-members are welcome to submit samples and will be invoiced at full feed test cost (memberships are available to be purchased at any time if a producer would like to receive the two free tests)

Collecting & Submitting Samples

Producers are encouraged to submit their samples in large ziploc bags that are labelled with the producer's name, and a sample identifier for the produc-

Silage and haylage samples should be kept cool if going to be sent in right away and frozen if they'll need to be stored for more than 12 hours

PCBFA has several feed testing probes available in our Fairview and High Prairie offices, contact each office to arrange pickup of a probe. Producers are encouraged to use a probe for only 24 hours.



The following Agriculture Service Boards also have probes available for their ratepayers to use; contact each office for information:

- Saddle Hills County
- Big Lakes County
- M.D. of Greenview

Probes and samples can be dropped off at the following locations:

- Fairview Research Farm: drop box is located at the entrance to the farm yard
- High Prairie: County of Big Lakes Office or our High Prairie office in the Provincial Building if arrangements are made ahead of time.
- Valleyview: M.D. of Greenview Ag Services Building



Feed Test Policy & Storing Carryover Feed Supply

- Spirit River: Saddle Hills County Office
- Clairmont: County of Grande Prairie Ag Services Building

Samples will be sent to the lab on a regular basis. PCBFA waits for 6 samples to be received before shipping. This is to reduce shipping costs. If a producer wants their feed samples to be shipped right away, shipping costs will be invoiced to the producer.

Turn around time to receive feed test results is expected to be approximately 3 weeks, possibly longer at the peak of feed testing season this fall.

Results will be sent to each producer via email or other requested method

PCBFA staff members will be available to assist with interpreting results and advising on ration balancing guidelines

Once the majority of the feed tests have been completed for the season, PCBFA logs the feed quality data to gain a better understanding of the feed quality across the Peace Country.

For any questions regarding the feed testing program please contact PCBFA staff for further information.



Storing Carryover Feed Supplies

By: Katie McLachlan

If there is one good thing to come out of 2020, it is an abundance of feed. It is a good year to replenish those sparsely filled feed yards. It feels really good to have a yard full of good looking green hay bales after dealing with last year's low yielding, poor quality, mostly black hay that was put up across the region.

It has been a few years since we've had this much hay at our disposal, and most of us will have more feed in the yard than what we will use through the winter. With the price of hay climbing steadily over the past several years, we want to make sure that we get the most out this year's lower cost, abundant feed.

Once it is in the bale, bale storage has a large effect on long-term feed quality. Driving down the road, anyone can see

that there are many different ways to store bales.

The best bale storage strategy to protect feed quality is to store your hay indoors (example pictured below). Protecting your hay from the elements like snow, rain, and wind will minimize feed deterioration. This ensures that bales stored under cover retain their quality and feed quality of these bales are the same or similar quality next year that they are this fall. Sheds are not cheap, however, according to Barry Yaremci, studies have shown that when the price of hay is \$0.07/lb (approximately what hay was worth in the Peace 2019) it would only take 4 years to pay for a hay shed.



Bales stored indoors

Thank You to the PCBFA Board of Directors

- Preston Basnett
- Faron Steffen
- Robbie Hale
- Allan McLachlan
- Kelvin Krahn
- Clay Armstrong
- Michael Gross
- Dan Martin
- Michael Strebchuk
- Mackay Ross

Do You Have Project or Workshop Ideas?

We are always looking for ideas! Give us a call!

PCBFA Member Perks:

- Two Free Feed Tests Per Year
- Ration Balancing Assistance
- CAP Application Assistance
- Environmental Farm Plans
- Scale & Tag Reader Available for Member Use
- Soil & Water Quality Testing

Thank You to Our Municipal Partners

- [MD of Fairview](#)
- [MD of Peace](#)
- [Clear Hills County](#)
- [Saddle Hills County](#)
- [MD of Spirit River](#)
- [Birch Hills County](#)
- [MD of Greenview](#)
- [Big Lakes County](#)
- [County of Grande Prairie](#)
- [Northern Sunrise County](#)

Storing Carryover Feed Supply



If building a hay shed is not in the cards, there are ways that you can stack your bales to minimize damages to feed quality and save spoilage.

According to an Alberta Agriculture study, the best way to stack bales for the winter is to store bales in single rows, leaving space between the bales and between the rows so the bales do not touch (pictured bottom left). You will want to leave a couple feet between rows, and about six inches between the bales. Not allowing bales to touch, allows moisture to shed off of the bale, and not get trapped. When bales touch, moisture gets trapped in that touch point, causing spoilage.

A mushroom stack (pictured bottom middle) is not the worst as far as spoilage goes, but is still a bit problematic. The top bale may have little spoilage, as it can shed the water well, but that water is being channelled to the bottom bale. Since the bottom bales are set on their ends, that water can potentially penetrate deep into the bales. These bales set on their ends are also susceptible to absorbing moisture from the ground up through it's bottom end. That is why when you unstack these mushroom bales after sitting for some time, the bottoms of those bales on the bottom row are usually dark brown or black.

If possible, it is advised to avoid stacking your bales in a pyramid (pictured bottom right). This is because stacking in a pyramid has bales touching on multiple sides, and the inner bales are touching other bales all around. Moisture gets trapped inside the bale stack, causing spoilage on those touching sides.

According to the same Alberta Agriculture study, over a single winter, hay bales stored outside in a pyramid can loose up to 300lbs of weight. Some of this is weight loss comes from a loss of moisture, but most of this loss is in the form of lost protein and soluble carbohydrates due to moisture being trapped and fueling the spoilage process. Loss of protein and carbohydrates means that the feed quality is going down. This study sited a 7.2% lower digestibility and reduced feed consumption by about 8% percent compared to those bales stored indoors.



Bale stack properly tarped in

Tarpping in bales (pictured above) will also help to protect carryover feed from the effects of moisture. When tarpping in stacks, they shouldn't be secured too tightly. Moisture can condense under the tarp, and if there's nowhere for it to go, there will be spoilage similar to having no cover at all. It is also important to not close in the ends on these tarped stacks. Leaving the ends open allows for air to enter the stack and carry the moisture away.

How your bales are made will also have an impact



Examples of bales stacked in rows with space (left,) stacked in mushrooms (center), stacked in a pyramid (right)



High Prairie Perennial Site & Upcoming Events

on how those bales store. Hard core, dense bales leave less space for moisture to enter the ends of the bale than a soft core bale does. Bales that have been net-wrapped will also shed the water better than those tied with twine. The plastic net wrap can work a bit like a raincoat, especially if there are a few layers on the bale.

If you have silage bales wrapped in plastic, it is important that you get the very ends of your bale tubes sealed. This is especially true if you are planning to carry those bales over. When the ends of bale silage tubes are not fully wrapped, even with a straw bale on the end, air can penetrate the ends and cause spoilage.

If you have silage in a pile or pit, get-

ting a tight seal with plastic will ensure proper ensiling. Just like bale silage, if there are any tears in the plastic where air can enter the pile, there will be spoilage. Even after the ensiling process is finished (approximately 10 days to 3 weeks after sealing the pile) exposing the silage to oxygen will cause spoilage and rot.

If you have carry over from last year, or successfully carry over this year's crop, be sure to get your feed tests done! As noted previously, feed quality can deteriorate drastically. Even if you have a feed test from last year, the quality may be vastly different on that same feed this year.

Give us a call at any of the numbers below to arrange your feed test!

| Event | Date & Time | Location |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Cattle Market Outlook Webinar with Anne Wasko | September 16th 7-8pm | Online! Register at peacecountrybeef.ca/ cattle-market-outlook |
| Morning Corn Walk | September 30th 9:30 -11:30am | Teepee Creek |
| Extended Grazing Tour | October 8th | Valleyview |

Attendance is Limited for These Events, Pre-Registration is Required! Please Register Early! Social Distancing Guidelines will be in Place

For Directions & to Register:

Visit peacecountrybeef.ca/upcoming-events or Call 780-523-4033

Thank You to Our Corporate Sponsors

Nutrien Ag Solutions™



IMPERIALSEED
Forage Seed Specialists



PRAIRIECOAST
equipment



ONE TIME FENCING LTD.

Brandt

Proud Member of

FarmRite

PCBFA receives funding from the Government of Alberta



Agriculture and Forestry

Contact Our Team!

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| Chelsey Hostettler Interim General Manager Fairview, AB P: 780-835-6799 C: 780-523-0443 E: chelsey@pcbfa.ca | Akim Omokanye Research Coordinator Fairview, AB P: 780-835-6799 C: 780-835-1112 E: akim@pcbfa.ca | Buthaina Al-Maqtari Research Technician Fairview, AB P: 780-835-6799 C: 403-667-2219 E: buthaina@pcbfa.ca | Katie McLachlan Environmental & Communications Coordinator Fairview, AB P: 780-835-6799 C: 780-772-0277 E: katie@pcbfa.ca | Johanna Murray Extension Coordinator High Prairie, AB P: 780-523-4033 C: 403-426-0426 E: johanna@pcbfa.ca | Monika Benoit Extension Program Advisor High Prairie, AB P: 780-523-4033 C: 780-837-4752 E: monika@pcbfa.ca |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|