University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

Ohio County Farm & Home News

Cooperative Extension Service

Ohio County
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HELP EXTENSION MOVE OHIO CO. FORWARD

As we are coming down to final days of collecting information from the survey, we would like more responses from Ohio Co.

Knowing what matters to Ohio Co. means our services will matter to Ohio Co. You might already know about our educational programs for agricultural production, youth development, nutrition, business development, and family finances… but our outreach has grown even more. Our last survey led to partnerships with nationally recognized experts and new services in areas such as:

- Addiction Intervention & Prevention
- Small-Town Tourism & Art Revitalization Programs
- Rural Mental Health & Suicide Prevention
- Natural Disaster Preparedness

No prior knowledge of the Extension Service is required to complete this survey. You'll answer a series of questions related to many aspects of our community such as, agriculture, youth development, family & individual development, and community & economic development.

We hope you'll take a few minutes to take the survey found at: go.uky.edu/serveKY and please encourage others to do the same. The deadline to complete the survey is coming **December 22nd.**

The survey is confidential (no names). We want to hear from all Kentucky citizens ages 18 and up.

If you do not have computer access, you can complete a paper survey by visiting the Ohio Extension office, located at 1337 Clay St. in Hartford or by emailing Jodi Williams at jodi.williams@uky.edu .

Help the Ohio County Extension Service make our county a better place!

WHY DO PRODUCERS NOT TEST THEIR HAY?

Before we started using near infrared reflectance spectroscopy (NIRS) as a forage testing tool, there were good reasons why few farmers didn't routinely test forages. Most notable among these reasons were that wet chemistry procedures were both expensive and they took time.

These days of post-NIRS, there are really few good reasons not to test all your forages given that it's all fed to livestock or sold and then fed to livestock. Testing forage ensures that the feed will be properly utilized or that a hay buyer is getting what they pay for.

The reasons I hear for not testing are that it's too time consuming, it's too expensive, or their buyers aren't interested in test results, so there is no point in sampling. Those first two reasons are somewhat subjective and do not take into account the certain payback realized when the information on the forage analysis is used appropriately.

The third excuse of "my buyers aren't interested" seems legitimate on the surface, but it seems that it would be helpful to have forage tests on your own production to track progress and performance over time. Maybe your production isn't as good as you think, or maybe it's better? You can't know unless you test.

There's no denying that doing a good job of forage testing requires some time and labor. In fact, it's almost mandatory if the results are to truly represent the forage being tested, which is the end goal. There are proven

procedures to follow on the farm just as there are in the lab.

They are:

1. Identify and sample only a single lot of hay: An individual hay lot is comprised of a single cutting and a single field, baled within a 48-hour period. The maximum amount of hay in a single lot should be 200 tons or less, preferably much less.

2. Sample close to the point of sale or feeding. Although testing right after harvest isn't a bad idea to offer a guide as to what is going into inventory, realize that moisture and, to a lesser degree, forage quality can change during storage.

3. Use a sharp, well-designed hay probe. The probe opening should be 3/8 to 3/4 inch and not slanted. Many excellent probes are available for purchase. The Ohio Co. Extension Office has a probe and drill available to borrow for testing your hay/haylage.

4. Take enough cores. This is often the biggest mistake that is made. Research shows that you need at least 20 cores, perhaps more, for extremely variable or larger lots. It's the core number that helps reduce variation. Taking only a few probes will almost always yield misleading results, just as with soil sampling.

5. Take random samples. Although sometimes access is limited in a stack, at least 20 different bales still need to be randomly selected for probing.

6. Use proper technique. Angle the probe 90 degrees from the center of the butt end of the bale, inserting the shaft about 12 to 18 inches deep, on square bales and come in from the side on round bales, again inserting the shaft 12 to 18 inches deep.

7. Take the right amount. A sample needs to be large enough to represent the lot, but not so large that the lab can't or won't grind the entire sample. Ideally, you don't want the lab to subsample your submitted sample. The right size is a ½ gallon zip lock bag filled about three quarters full.

8. Handle samples correctly. Seal or double-seal the sample in a ziplocked bag. Keep the sample cool and out of the sun and submit it to the lab as soon as possible. Once the samples are taken, simply bring them to the Ohio Co. Extension office. We now offer **free testing** for hay samples sent to the Ky Department of Agriculture's lab for testing using NIRS.

As you can see, hay testing is now easier and less expensive than it has ever been. So, take advantage of this opportunity to check your hay quality.

- Dec. 12 – U.K. Beef Webinar: Shooting the Bull with Beef Specialist; offered over Zoom; 7:00 p.m.; Register by sending an email with your name and county to dbullock@uky.edu with the topic heading of UK Beef Webinar Registration.
- Dec. 14 – Managing Cattle in Confinement Conference; Hardin Co. Extension Office; 1:30 p.m. till 7:30 p.m. CT
- Jan.2-4 - Ky Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference; Sloan Convention Center, Bowling Green
- Jan. 11-12 - Ky Cattlemen's Association Convention; Central Bank Center, Lexington
- Jan. 17 – Intensive Soybean Management Workshop; Sloan Convention Center, Bowling Green
- Jan. 18 – Commodity Conference Meeting; Sloan Convention Center; Bowling Green
- Feb. 1 – U.K. Wheat Meeting; James E. Bruce Convention Center; Hopkinsville
- Feb. 8 – Ky Crop Health Conference; National Corvette Museum; Bowling Green
- Feb. 8 – Ky Alfalfa & Stored Forage Conference; Warren Co. Extension Office; Bowling Green

More information about these programs is available by contacting the Ohio Co. Extension Office at (270)298-7441.