

AN ALFALFA THAT TASTES GREAT AND IS LESS FILLING!

by Barbara Reed¹

Determining Market Value for Haylage

This is a small worksheet you can use to make your own calculations on pricing alfalfa haylage. The focus here is on harvesting costs and dry matter. Quality is not priced in. Substantial amounts of weedy material, especially fiddleneck, would be cause for discounting the forage.

Moisture content is the single largest factor in pricing haylage. Always sample the haylage as it comes from the field and run a dry matter analysis at your local lab. As moisture increases, so do harvest costs.

Both the grower and buyer can gain some advantages in making haylage versus baling alfalfa.

Yield for the following cutting will be greater due to less traffic and earlier irrigation than if hay was made. If all cuttings are bagged in a growing season, an overall yield increase of 10-12% is expected.

Protein and TDN of the haylage will be greater due to lower leafshatter. Sorting and refusal will be less with haylage than with hay. Some losses do occur in the ensiling process, however. Losses of 3-7% can be expected in bags, and 10-30% losses in the pit.

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CALCULATING BREAKEVEN VALUE PER TON OF HAYLAGE

	Sample Cost	Your Cost
Value of Hay roadsided	\$90.00	
Roadside		
Bale .00		
Rake		
Swath		
Total Harvest Costs	- \$26.00	Your total costs
Value less harvest costs	\$64.00	
Haylage dry matter at 45%		Your haylage DM
Hay Dry Matter at 88%		Your hay DM

Standing value of haylage $\$64.00 \times (45/88) = \32.73

YOUR STANDING HAYLAGE VALUE:

For the person buying the haylage:

Add costs for chopping, hauling, and packing in pit.
 $\$7.00^* + \$32.73 = \$39.73$
 Don't forget covering costs.

^{*}(We use \$7.00/ton to pack & cover the pit and \$12.00/ton for bagging)

Adjust for 15% shrink $\$39.73 \times .15 = \underline{\$5.96}$
 (use 5% if bagged)

Cost per ton FED OUT $\$39.73 + \$5.96 = \$45.69$

Since the grower will benefit in yield increases, and the feeder will have some ensiling losses, the breakeven price may have to be adjusted for both parties to benefit.