

Cone Wins Again



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I've reported several times in the last 5 or more years on trials to measure hay waste in big bale feeders. I believe every trial has shown the cone type feeder to be the winner. I've recently seen the results of a similar test at Oklahoma State last year. Once again the winner for hay savings was a cone or cone-type feeder. Dave Lalman, formerly of Missouri Extension and Robert Wells were the OSU team that did the project.

Their trial showed the cone feeder permitted only a 5.3 percent waste while more conventional bale rings ran up waste figures just over 20 percent. Another way of putting it is if a 1200 pound bale cost \$70 then the cost of the waste was almost \$4 per bale in the cone. However, the ring type would show a value loss of \$14.50

or so. That's a per bale loss of roughly \$10.

The common complaint about the cone style is, "they're too expensive." Well, as I've heard an economist say, "if you want economy you'll have to pay for it." Yes, some of these feeders do run \$800 or more, but if you feed valuable hay they pay out over time. I've noticed that most of the cone style feeders are very heavy and sturdily made. They are bull stout. If you take care of them they'll maybe outlive you.

Another observation made as I've followed these trials at various research stations is, not all cone feeders are the same. They may have slightly different designs and even be a different color, but they always seem to be the winner in hay savings. If you use a bale feeder, look around as the winter winds down at the amount of wasted hay on your farm and around your neighbors bale feeders. △

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