

Hay Auction Gives Glimpse Of What Hay Is Worth In 2013

MT. VERNON, MO.

One way to gauge the potential market for hay bales is to attend a hay auction. According to Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension, a recent area sale of 650 large bays of assorted hay drew a large crowd.

"There were 50 or so farmers who attended, but I'm pretty sure most were there for social reasons while a few probably had hay at home and thought they'd see what the potential market was like," said Cole. "I attended out of curiosity because we take several calls a week from folks wanting to know the price for hay."

Cole says the sale was similar to other hay marketing where buyers get hay bales that they know very little about. One lot of 30 bales had a posted bale weight of 1425 pounds for the 4 by 5.5 foot, net wrapped fall-cut orchard grass hay.

"This hay did run 19.9 percent crude protein on a dry basis. I suspect it had a good bit of moisture in it and it carried 0.50 percent nitrate. The final bid was \$90 per bale," said Cole.

Some decent, fall-cut fescue in 4 x 5.5 foot bales sold in various sized lots ranging from 10 to 100 bales brought bids from \$47.50 to \$55 per bale.

Around 50, 5 x 5.5 foot, net wrapped, fall-cut fescue sold for \$55 to \$62.50 but once again, no weights and no idea of the moisture level.

Forages at the sale that did not even attract a bid were: net wrapped corn stalks, wheat straw and corn silage. A small lot of plastic wrapped, wheat-grass silage received a bid of \$25 per bag.

A few bales of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) hay weighing an estimated 1,000 down to 900 pounds or less were bid at \$35 to \$40 per bale, but apparently did not sell.

MU Extension's Missouri hay directory at <http://agebb.missouri.edu/haylst/> and the weekly hay markets report from the Missouri Department of Agriculture does not have much activity it seems this year ac-

ording to Cole.

"Some farmers are tentative about offering hay for sale due to prospects for another dry year in 2013. Those who have sold hay seem to be having luck using internet methods," said Cole.

As with most commodities, Cole says if you intend to market hay effectively, it needs to have numbers on it like percent moisture, nutrients and weight. Any other description about the hay or forage can help establish a fair market value. △



Farmers look at, feel and smell hay at a local hay auction.



The auctioneer searches the audience for another bid at a southwest Missouri auction.



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