Lack Of Hay Makes Every Teachable Hay Management Tip Important Says Extension Specialist

MT. VERNON, MO.

University of Missouri Extension specialists are always looking for a teachable moment. One of those moments came during the "Drought Survival Tour" led by MU Extension on Aug. 14 at a farm in Barry County.

Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension was giving a presentation on useful practices to follow in short forage years.

"I spoke about doing an inventory on the forage supply. I stressed the importance of counting bales, check-weighing bales and getting a forage analysis. The latter is especially needed if you've purchased hay that's unusual to you," said Cole.

After his talk, the group visited the farmer's hay barn. The bales were all neatly stacked three high. Each type of hay was labeled and stored together so there was easy access to it.

"In most cases the hay was easily accessible unlike in some barns or bale yards where the hay you should be feeding to a class of cattle is hard to reach," said Cole. "An organized hay storage system is an asset whether in a drought or a normal year."

This farmer had brome hay, ammoniated fescue stubble hay that was either last years or 2012 hay and soybean hay. In another barn there was alfalfa and prairie hay. He also had a stack of wheat straw that had been ammoniated.

All of the lots of hay had been tested at a commercial lab. The owner had noted on each lot the type of hay, source, moisture, crude protein, acid detergent fiber, neutral detergent fiber and total digestible nutrients.

According to Cole, neutral detergent fiber is an item many do not request when testing hay. It is necessary if a farmer wants a relative feed value analysis. NDF may be used to determine whether the hay is a candidate for treating with anhydrous ammonia. Also nitrate levels should be tested in the forages.

"All this information effort will aid cattlemen as they match up the nutrient requirements with the type of hay that's available," said Cole. "I heard a lot of talk on our tour about what this farmer had done with his hay. I think there will be several following this farmer's lead on identifying and testing hay." Δ

The before and after example of treated corn fodder.

Justin Sexten, University of Missouri Beef Nutrition Specialist demonstrates the use of calcium hydroxide and water to corn fodder.

Rob Kallenbach, University of Missouri Extension Forage Specialist discusses beef cow performance...