

Storing *Distillers* Grains

Specialist Describes How To Buy In Summer, Store For Use In Winter

BETTY VALLE GEGG
MidAmerica Farmer Grower

SPRINGFIELD, ILL.

Methods of storing wet distillers grain in summer for winter use was discussed recently by Dr. Rick Rasby, University of Nebraska extension beef specialist.

“For small cow calf operators or back-grounders the availability and price of wet distillers grain is kind of out of sync with when it will be fed,” he said. “The price tends to go up in the fall and winter as feeders start placing cattle in the feedlot. What happens at that time is that feedlots probably have the wet distillers or co-product basically contracted and so plants are starting to fill those contracts and availability and supply goes down forcing the price up.

“So we looked at opportunities for producers to take advantage of the low price in the summer to be able to use it in the winter when they actually need the feed,” Rasby continued. “We put together a demonstration project and looked at the opportunities to store wet distillers

plants may have a little more difficulty getting rid of it,” he said. “They can store it to be used later in the year when they actually need it.

“Another thing is when we started doing this demonstration project it was about the third year of drought in Nebraska,” Rasby related. “We can do quite a bit of grazing in Nebraska, but we get inclement weather and we need some kind of forage to help get our cow herds through the winter. So here you run into the third year and there were some cow calf operators really scrambling for forage. Stockpiling the wet distillers grain, when priced economically, is a good way to get them through such a situation.”

“When information became available about storage, we had producers implementing it so it has really been a good project and one that our producers have picked up and used,” he said.

Rasby said the eye of the manager becomes extremely important in storing the wet distillers grain mixture.

“The numbers that we used in the proceedings book or even on our beef web site



DR. RICK RASBY
University of Nebraska Extension Beef Specialist
Photo by John LaRose, Jr.

in a bag, or even put wet distillers into a bunker much like you would do silage.”

You can actually store wet distillers in bag by itself. Wet distillers is 35 percent dry matter and 65 percent moist. However, when pressure is put on the bag, the bag tends to squat or split.

“So we tried mixing a little bit of forage with wet distillers grains to give it some consistency, and, sure enough, you can mix around 12-15 percent (dry matter basis) forage in there and put it into a bag, put a little pressure to exclude air and it will store for a long period of time,” he said. “So here is an opportunity for cattlemen.”

The same thing holds true for putting it into a bunker. A little bit more of forage is needed in the bunker, but it will store for a long period of time there.

“The opportunity is there for smaller operations to buy it cheap in the summer when

<<http://beef.unl.edu>> are good to start with,” he said. “However, your forage may be just a little bit different in moisture content. So when you go into the bunker – and if you are good at putting up silage you will know when you are getting it packed right – but if what you put in doesn’t pack but it sponges up a little bit that means you have to add just a little bit more moisture, a little bit more distillers grains. If it is too wet and it sinks when you try to pack it, then you need to add a little bit more forage.

“The numbers that we have available are basically starting numbers, but the eye of the manager becomes extremely important, just like in any other management area,” Rasby added. “You really have to have a keen eye and make adjustments. The important thing is that you get it packed. Use your eye to tell you whether you are doing it right or not.”

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