

# FEEDING Hay

Hay is the traditional diet for sheep/goats during the winter months and/or in confinement. It is also commonly fed to grazing animals, especially during drought or other periods of inclement weather. Hay can be a substantial part of the feed budget, especially if it has a high opportunity cost or must be purchased. Storage losses and feed wastage also factor into the cost of feeding hay.



Hay can vary significantly in quality and should be tested. If you don't know the nutritive content of your hay, you won't know what (or how much) you need to supplement in the diet of your animals



## Some ways to reduce hay cost

- Harvest hay properly
- Store hay properly
- Feed good quality hay
- Chop low quality hay or incorporate it into a TMR
- Always feed hay in feeders
- Limit feed hay; make animals clean up what you feed.



Hay bales vary considerably in weight. You need to feed and purchase hay by weight. If hay is sold by the bale, be sure to weigh some representative bales so, you know how much you are paying (and feeding). Hay prices are usually reported on a per ton basis.

For some farms, it may be more economical to feed diets that contain less hay, though some long stem forage is always recommended in ruminant diets.

