

BALED SILAGE TIPS

TIPS FOR MAKING THE BEST POSSIBLE BALED SILAGE



- Cut at the optimum growth stage (Refer Diagram A.) Crops harvested in the early stage will have the best balance between energy and protein and have high nutritional value.

- Cutting during dry, sunny conditions provides the best start to the ensiling process.

- Rain is the greatest threat to nutrient-rich forage during the harvest. If you are forced to bale in the rain, some nutrient losses can be offset by the use of additives.

- Cut the crop at a minimum height of 8 – 10 mm. This will help to avoid contamination and consequential losses through unwanted bacteria.

- Where possible, cut the highest quality fodder possible. If you put poor quality in, you will get lower feed value out and yet still incur the cost of ensiling.

- For silage, the ideal Dry Matter (DM) content is 40 to 50%. For haylage, it is 60%.

- Pre-wilting is beneficial to obtain the ideal DM content in the shortest time frame. Wide spreading of the fodder and turning will advance drying.

- Raking is very important to achieve even density in the bale. If the bale is 1.2mts it will have a straight profile and even density if the swath is 1.3 – 1.4mts wide. (Refer diagrams B and C.) Well-shaped, denser bales enable better wrapping and less damage when handling and stacking, therefore minimising losses.

BALEWRAP APPLICATION TIPS TO ACHIEVE THE BEST POSSIBLE SEAL AND MINIMISE LOSSES

- Always choose a high-quality, branded wrap, manufactured using the latest technology.

- Always read film and wrapper instructions before use.

- When the bale is on the wrapper, make sure the centre of the bale is centred to the roll of wrap on the dispenser. (Refer diagram D.)

- Check the film application stretch percentage by making two marks on the film, 10cm apart prior to stretching, then slowly commence wrapping while locating these marks on the film on the bale surface measuring the distance between each mark. If you are stretching to 70% there should be 17cm between the marks. (Refer diagram E.)

- Check the neck on the film applied to the bale. For round bales using 750mm wide wrap, this should be 580mm to 630mm. (Refer diagram F.) For square bale wrapping, the neck should be 560mm to 630mm.

- Always apply a minimum of four layers of wrap (six layers is better) to all areas of the bale, for bales of up to 40% DM. For bales of 40% + DM, all square bales and bales of coarse fodder, always use a minimum of six layers on all areas of the bale.

- Check the wrap overlap on the bale is minimum 50%. (Refer diagram G.)

- Wrap at stacking area if possible. If not, move bales from the paddock as soon as possible.

- Be aware that all balewrap allows more oxygen to pass through it as the surface temperature of the bale rises. At 50 °C, balewrap will allow six times more oxygen through than at 15 °C. Dark colours heat up faster, especially black wrap.

BALE MOVEMENT AND HANDLING TIPS TO MINIMISE LOSSES

- Never use a spike to stack or move bales and repair any damage to the wrap immediately.

- Protect bales from birds and vermin to avoid damage to the wrap.

- Bales should always be stacked on their ends to maximise the seal of the wrap and avoid oxygen penetration.

