

COW/CALF CORNER

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In this Issue:

Comparing Storage Methods of Big Round Bales

By Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

Changing Expectations in the U.S. Economy

By Derrell S. Peel, OSU Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

Comparing Storage Methods of Big Round Bales

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Fuel and labor costs have made hay baling an increasingly expensive chore. Harvesting and storing quality hay will be as important in today's economic environment as it has ever been. Once the hay is harvested, keeping maximum energy and protein stored for winter feed will help make the best use of the haying expense.

University of Tennessee extension specialists conducted a trial to compare different methods of storing large round bales of grass hay. The hay was cut and baled in June in Moore County, Tennessee. The bales were weighed at the time of harvest and storage. Then the bales were weighed again the following January at the time of winter feeding. The following lists the type of storage and the resulting percentage hay loss. Bales that were stored on the ground with no cover lost 37%. Bales stored on used tires but with no cover lost 29%. Bales that were stored directly on the ground but were covered with a tarp also lost 29%. Hay bales that were stored on used tires, and also covered with a tarp lost only 8%. Bales that had a net wrap and were stored on the ground lost 19%. Bales that were moved inside a barn lost only 6%.

Obviously, it would be ideal to store the hay inside, but that will not often be practical. The next best option is when the hay is stored on something that gets the hay off of the ground under a rain shedding cover. Source: Dr. Clyde Lane, University of Tennessee Department of Animal Science. AS-BV 14

Changing Expectations in the U.S. Economy

By Derrell S. Peel, OSU Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

The shock waves of dramatically higher energy prices are reverberating through every corner of the U.S. and are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The impacts are obvious in some

regards and much more subtle in others, but are widespread and only just beginning to be manifested in many cases. There is a growing cry of hysteria-tinged voices asking how we will survive in a world of high energy prices.

A change such as this ultimately must lead to a change in the expectations of all consumers and producers. This process takes time and involves several stages. The first stage is one of assuming the impact is a short run shock that will soon pass. Consumers make no or very minor temporary adjustments in spending habits and accept the fact the costs are higher and the money does not go as far. Producers accept smaller returns and margins but make no significant changes in the production process.

At some point in time, producers and consumers reach stage two where the change has not passed and it is no longer possible to avoid making more significant changes. Consumers, for example, may still have the gas guzzler but make changes in driving habits and recognize that they may want to buy a different vehicle when the time comes. Consumers begin to significantly alter eating habits by eating out less and changing food purchasing choices. Producers make more significant efforts to find cheaper inputs and manage production costs. However, in stage two, neither consumers nor producers have fundamentally changed their lifestyles nor ways of doing business. It appears to me that many consumers and producers in the U.S. are in or very near stage two at this time.

Stage three occurs when consumers and producers stop asking how they can continue with the status quo (assuming the change is permanent) and begin asking how we fundamentally change what and how we produce and consume. It does not appear that many producers or consumers have reached stage three yet. Consider the reluctance of the airline industry to fundamentally reassess a business model that clearly is not working. For the most part we are still asking how to keep doing what we have done rather than asking how we can use an entirely new approach to do things. The process of long run adjustments to our economy does not begin until we change the long-run expectations of consumers and producers.

These adjustments are not easy or quick. Many will take up to a decade and some much more than that. The suburban-sprawl, car culture that is so dear to us in the U.S. has been developing continuously since the 1950s. For example, we do not have nor can we effectively use things like public transportation to a much greater degree in the short run, even if our expectations have changed enough to make us willing to use it. However, over time, we may recognize the need to invest in more and different public transportation infrastructure and adapt it to work in our suburban landscape. This and a multitude of other changes have yet to be recognized let alone embraced. The process will be painful, frightening and threatening for many people but like all changes will also offer a host of new opportunities previously unimagined by both producers and consumers.

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