



MSU Agriculture Innovation Day

Focus on Forages and the Future



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and Natural Resources
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Take Home Messages: Baleage Made Tight, Made Right

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Baleage Advantages Over Dry Hay

- Reduced risk of weather damage to wilting forages because less wilting/drying time is required
- Reduced field losses of high-quality leaves during harvest
- Much lower risk of spontaneous combustion/fires within large bales
- No weather losses from outdoor storage
- No physical storage structures, such as barns or silos, are required
- Storage capacity is unlimited and can be located at multiple, convenient locations
- Same baler can be used for baleage and for dry hay
- Livestock feed wastage and refusal is often reduced

How to Make Quality Baleage

- Start with quality forage, which can be sudangrass, sorghum/sudan, millet, rye, oats, wheat, triticale, ryegrass, alfalfa, or other grasses, that are (usually) in the early maturity stages of growth
- Bale packages should have high bulk density, with as much air excluded as possible
- Target a harvest moisture range of 45 – 55% moisture
- To make denser bales only bale moderate sized windrows and gear the tractor ground speed down at baling time
- Keep bale wrapping timely with all bales being wrapped with at least 6 layers of plastic within 24 hours of baling
- Consider the use of lactic-acid producing inoculants from reputable manufacturers to enhance fermentation anytime conditions are less than optimum