

Hay Storage

A majority of beef producers in Tennessee are feeding hay stored as large round bales. Although the large round bales reduce the labor required when handling hay, there is a problem. Hay stored outside can have significant storage losses.

Most research and demonstrations show that the method of storage has a major influence on the amount of forage that is lost. Data from a hay storage demonstration in Moore County, Tennessee is presented in Table 1. Bales were weighed and stored in June with reweighing being done in January.

Table 1. Losses of Hay Stored using Six Methods of Storage

<u>Treatment</u>	<u>Percentage Loss</u>
1. On ground, no cover	37%
2. On tires, no cover	29%
3. On ground, covered	29%
4. On tires, covered	8%
5. Net wrap on ground	19%
6. In barn	6%

As can be seen from the table, the losses can be significant. Losses for hay stored in the barn was 6%. Other methods resulted in greater losses. Hay stored on tires and covered had an 8% loss while the loss was 29% when covered but placed on the ground. Storage losses from ground storage and on tires with no cover were equal at 29%. The greatest losses occurred when the hay was stored on the ground and not covered. This resulted in a 37% loss. The data support the idea the losses occur both from moisture getting to the top and bottom of bales. The

Producers should strive to store hay in a barn if possible. The next best option is storage outside with the hay lifted off the ground and covered. Do not store hay on the ground or under trees.

For additional information on hay storage, contact you local Extension office.

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