

May 17, 2016  
 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## The Cost of Baling Hay

Hay season is here and I am sure most have equipment greased and ready as soon as Mother Nature decides to offer weather acceptable for making hay. I thought this post that showed up in the Beef Blog this week was good food for thought when putting a value on the bales you will be making in the coming weeks.

This is from Travis Meteer who is with extension in Illinois, but the values and numbers would most likely be similar to here. I can tell you one part that seems to be the same here in Ohio, the part below dealing with the weatherman and additional passes over the field. As the saying goes, been there and done that.

Mowing, raking, and baling. I wish hay-making was that easy. For me, that sequence is too often interrupted by cussing the weatherman, tedding, and more raking. Making hay is a consuming summer-time task. As farmers prepare to sharpen the pencil, I think it is important to look at what hay costs to produce.

Every ton of hay contains approximately 40 lbs. of N, 20 lbs. of P, and 50 lbs. of K. However, it is important to calculate N losses at about 75%, thus only about 10 lbs. of N are returned to the soil. The values of P and K are accurate to what would be returned. Fertilizer prices for Illinois published by USDA (May 12 report) are: N \$0.40, P \$0.34, K \$0.29. Using current nutrient values, hay has a fertilizer value of \$25.30 per dry ton. Assuming a 1200lb round bale is 15% moisture, the nutrient value per bale is \$12.91.

If you are figuring what it costs you to make hay on your farm, add mowing, raking, and baling at 20.20 per bale (*Machinery Cost Estimates, University of Illinois Extension, June 2015*). As a result, a bale of hay sitting in the field costs \$33.11.

Other costs would include removal of micronutrients, moving the bales from the field, some additional time and labor in handling the bales, and the use of equipment to transport the hay. If yields are below average, nearly all costs increase. Hay storage costs can also be a substantial part of hay costs.

Knowing your cost of production is far from a new topic in production agriculture, however it remains a very important one. Tally production costs and take a look at them. That is the best way to improve your profit potential.

## Crop Issues Due to Rainy Conditions

At this point it seems to just continue to rain just about the time it gets dry enough to get into the fields.



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I talked to several producers in the last week and many stated that every seed they bought to plant this year is still in the bag. I realize some have several acres planted, while some state the earlier planted crops look pretty good, but some has been planted 2-3 weeks ago and not much has come up.

There has been very little hay made. I have not seen any dry hay made in a bale, but do know of a few that have made and wrapped some wet bales.

Wheat is another story. Some may have been made for hay, but much of the wheat is past its prime for wet hay. The issues now include rust in some areas, and the conditions are good for head scab in the coming days. There is a good write up with information for the recommendations for fungicides in this week's CORN Newsletter that can be found at <http://corn.osu.edu> or stop by your local OSU Extension Office and we can print it out for you.

### **Free Garden Seminar – New Location**

The next OSU Extension Brown Co. Master Gardener Seminar will be held in the conference room at the Brown Co. Board of Ed. Building on Hamer Road on Thursday May 19 at 7:00 p.m.

Danielle Thompson (Brown County Soil and Water) will talk about prairie plants and how we can incorporate them into our landscape. All seminars are free and open to the public

### **Dates to Remember**

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| May 25  | Strawberry Field Night at OSU South Centers in Piketon. Call 800-297-2072 or go to <a href="http://southcenters.osu.edu">http://southcenters.osu.edu</a> for more information. |
| June 16 | Nature Photography at 5:30 p.m. at Chatfield. Call 378-4424 ext. 125   |