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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Scouting for Alfalfa Weevil

In the first few days of May I was in parts of Fleming, Mason, Bracken, Pendleton and Harrison Counties in KY, as well as Adams and Brown Counties in Ohio. I saw more hay being rolled up than I ever remember seeing this early before. Of course we have not had a lack of moisture in this area in the past month, and the temperatures have been pretty decent in recent weeks. While most of the rolls appeared to be wheat and rye, there may have been some other forages baled as well. Yes, this appeared to all being wet baled and wrapped.

With the warm temperatures in the past few days, harvesting alfalfa may be the best option to avoid losses to alfalfa weevil. The following article appeared in this week's CORN newsletter from Dr. Andy Michel, OSU Extension State Specialist. This explains scouting and also gives some ideas about harvesting vs. spraying depending on the number of weevil and the size of the alfalfa.

While most are worried about getting corn and soybean in during the next few weeks, the same heat is also making alfalfa weevil larvae develop quite quickly. We would expect enough heat units to have been reached in much of the state to see alfalfa weevil munching away. Scouting is essential to maintain a healthy alfalfa stand. Keep in mind too that while your alfalfa may be resistant to potato leaf hopper, it is NOT resistant to alfalfa weevil. As a reminder, alfalfa weevil scouting is accomplished by collecting a series of three 10-stem samples randomly selected from various locations in a field. Place the stem tip down in a bucket. After 10 stems have been collected, the stems should be vigorously shaken in the bucket and the number of larvae in the bucket counted. The shaking will dislodge the late 3rd and 4th instar larvae which cause most of the foliar injury. Close inspection of the stem tips may be needed to detect the early 1st and 2nd instar larvae. The height of the alfalfa should also be recorded at this time. Economic threshold is based on the number of larvae per stem, the size of the larvae and the height of the alfalfa. The detection of one or more large larvae per stem on alfalfa that is 12 inches or less in height indicates a need for rescue treatment. Where alfalfa is between 12 and 16 inches in height, the action threshold should be increased to 2 to 4 larvae per stem depending on the vigor of alfalfa growth. When alfalfa is 16 inches in height and there are more than 4 larvae per stem, early harvest is recommended.

Issues with Wet Baleage

As I stated above all of the hay that I saw being baled appeared to be wet baled and wrapped, or was going to be wrapped. While this is a good practice for improved quality of forage because it can be harvested when the forage is not over mature, there are some things that we need to be aware of. The most recent Forage News from the University of Kentucky had an article from Dr.

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Michelle Arnold, who has been involved with some of our local cattlemen programs a few years ago, about the possible risks and what you need to know.

If you are making baleage (round bale silage) this spring make sure to read the article by our UK Extension Veterinarian Dr. Michelle Arnold "Wrapping your Hay this Spring? Inadequate fermentation may lead to Health Risks." Link to the article in the UK Beef Newsletter "Off the Hoof" www.uky.edu/Projects/BeefIRM/downloads/**offthehoof**apr15.pdf.

Dr. Arnold tells us that the simple goal of ensiling is making sure the forage is properly preserved. Anaerobic bacteria (those that live without air) convert sugars to lactic acid which in turn lowers the pH and preserves the forage as silage. The main management principles governing any type of silage production include: 1) start with high-quality forage harvested at the proper growth stage, 2) manage the moisture content, 3) eliminate air and 4) maintain the package integrity until feed-out. Round bale silage (or "baleage") is an alternative to baling dry hay that allows shorter curing time and saves valuable nutrients by avoiding rain damage, harvest delays, spontaneous heating and weathering. However, if not done properly, inadequate fermentation can lead to botulism or listeriosis, both potentially fatal conditions in cattle. For more detail on the how to make quality baleage go to the UK Forage Website under publication and then Silage/Baleage and read "Baleage: Frequently Asked Questions."

The website for the UK Forage page was not included, so here it is www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage . The publication is 8 pages and it explains wet baling in detail. This is the direct link to the publication: http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/Baleage%20FAQ%20-Hancock%20Sears%20Smith%20SENA%20Review.pdf

For those of you who may want to read this more in depth and do not have the internet stop by the Adams, Brown or Highland Co. Extension office so we can print one, or both, for you. The other publication listed above from the UK Beef Newsletter discusses moisture estimation and testing, as well as other information about wet baling hay. The testing information ranges from a hand squeezing method to moisture testers to using a microwave. Below is from the UK publication on the hand squeeze method.

"Hand squeeze" technique for estimating DM content

1. Collect a representative sample of material. Mix and sub-sample if excess is collected.
2. Cut the forage into ½ inch lengths and leave for 1 minute to allow some moisture to escape from the plants.
3. Very tightly squeeze a handful of the sample into a ball for at least 30 seconds, preferably longer. This is the most important part. Can be helpful even to squeeze with both hands. Squeeze the ball in one hand and with the other hand over it. Do not release the pressure over this period.
4. Open your hand quickly and observe how quickly the ball opens out and how wet your hand is.
5. Estimate the moisture content from Table 1.

Table 1. **Moisture content**	Ball shape and hand moisture observations
Above 75%	Ball holds its shape. Free moisture runs through

	fingers. Lot of free moisture on hand.
70 to 75%	Ball just holds its shape. No free moisture runs. Hand is moist.
60 to 70%	Ball falls apart slowly. No free moisture. Little moisture on hand indicates higher end of range. NO moisture indicates lower end of range
Below 60%	Ball springs apart quickly

Dates to Remember

Pesticide Testing	Private or Commercial Pesticide Testing available at the Old Y Restaurant at noon on Monday, May 11. The test is offered on the second Monday of every month except October. Go to http://pested.osu.edu or call the Ohio Department of Agriculture at 800-282-1955 to register for the testing opportunity.