

Storing Round Balage Bales and Dry Hay

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How Should Round Balage Bales or Dry Hay be Stored?

There's two ways your bales can be stacked for storage until winter feeding, which can have substantial impact on the quality of the forage and storage losses.

Why is it important?

We all know how much it costs to make hay or balage. Very often the prime cause of crop spoilage is poorly stored bales. Following these basic storage principles can have a huge impact on the quality of the forage in the bale by the time it comes to feed them to your cattle. These principles can also save a lot of time and frustration during feedout.

**STACKED ON
THEIR ROUND**

VS

**STACKED ON
THEIR FLAT**



Balage Bales

(Individually Wrapped)

Balage bales (Baled Silage) are sometimes referred to as baleage, haylage or even wet hay in some parts of the globe, and when stored correctly the fed silage can be of better quality, with less wastage than pit or clamp silage, although costs more to produce. This makes it important to store correctly.

A high-quality crop, good quality bale wrap, and top notch wrapping system will have been wasted if the bales are not handled, stacked and stored correctly or left in an unsuitable environment.

Stored on Round

Storing bales on their rounds is not recommended for stacking higher than one layer. Stacking in more than one layer badly deforms bales, avoiding the seal on the film overlap opening through the constant heavy pressure, which can cause secondary fermentation of the silage reducing nutritional value of the feed and encourages mould growth.

Deformed bales are more labour intensive to feed out. Bales stacked on their round are more prone to puncturing due to less wrap in the rounds than the flat, especially when stored on concrete surfaces.



Stored on Flat

Storing on the ends is the recommended choice, because the bales have up to 4x more wrap on the ends than the sides, which provides better protection from puncturing, an improved ensiling process and more nutrition.

Bales that hold their shape are easier to feed out, safer for transporting. It is recommended to stack heavier bales with a higher moisture content in one layer. And a maximum of up to 3 layers for dryer bales.



Handling and Stacking Balage Bales

Care should be used when transporting and stacking bales to minimize damage and deformation.

Using a set of Softhands® that have been designed to do both stacking/unstacking and handling can save costly damage. Most bale handlers or bale clamps are designed for handling bales, but choose a bale handler wisely because some can damage adjacent bales when picking or stacking.



Hustler's unique Softhands® hand design eliminates bale deformation while handling bales with equal pressure, so that it doesn't over-stretch wrapping causing spoiling of the balage.

Transporting Individually Wrapped Baleage Bales

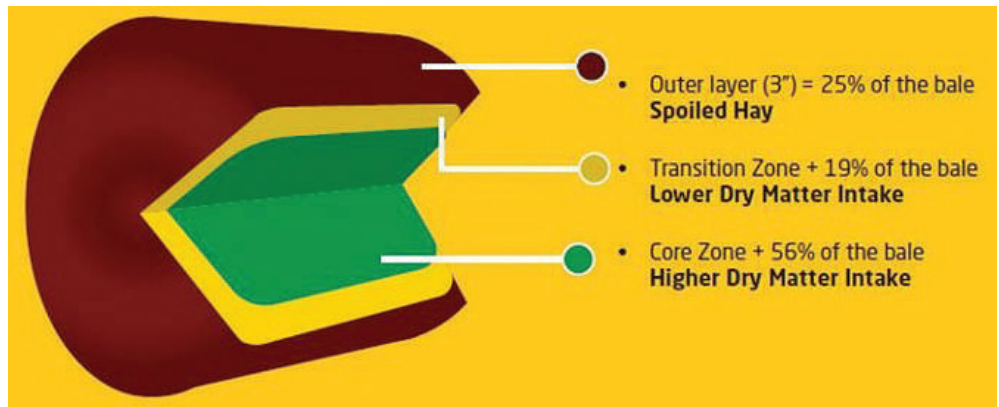
When transporting bales from the field to the stack, it's even more important to transport them on their flats, once again for the advantage of 4x the wrap on the flats compared to the side, because they're less vulnerable to damage caused by any movement during transporting the bales, when stacked on their flat. This also makes for a more stable load, which is easier to tie down tight. Using a Hustler tip trailer, with the folding head board can make the job easier.

Storage Tips for Balage Bales

- Store in a well-drained site for easy pick up in winter and wet periods. Close to feeding area
- Store on smooth surface free of rubble and trash
- Stacking saves room, stack no more than 3 bales high
- Store round bales on flat end = more plastic, less "squish"
- Avoid stacking at high moisture
- Patch holes promptly
- Store close to feeding area

Dry Hay Bales

Ultimately if you're making dry hay it wants to be stored in a barn or under a shelter in order to minimise wastage from weathering. Now not every farm has the luxury of enough barn storage for all their hay, so often compromises have to be made. Although dry hay deteriorates less than bad storing of balage, nutritional losses of dry hay stored outside can amount to as much as 44% of the bale! The cost of this waste can go a long way towards the cost of covering your bales.



The Best Storage Method

The best storage method varies for bales stored outside to those in a barn.

When storing bales outside without a cover it is best to store on their rounds, because the netwrap provides the best protection you have, and partially acts as a cover to help shed water.



Storing in a barn is the ultimate solution, and it is recommended to stack bales on their flats when using open sided barns, as the netwrap provide the best weather protection to reduce damage.



Alternatives to Storing in a Barn

When storing bales outside, a cover such as a tarp can be used as a low cost alternative to reducing waste due to weathering, but is a labour intensive chore. When using a cover, it is recommended to store bales on their flats to protect the bales from any weather exposure.

An important tip is to cover the ground, prior to stacking, to stop the bottom layer of bales from soaking up the moisture from the ground.



Handling Dry Hay Bales

When handling round net-wrapped dry hay bales, it is important to choose a bale handler with plenty of clamping power, because the net-wrap is slippery and with not enough power you'll find yourself dropping a few bales. That's why Hustler built the Mega Softhands with more clamping force and larger hands than any other bale grab, so you don't drop a bale.



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Parts Update

Parts Team attended Stihl Conference

As another great summer season has come to an end, things are looking positive for the farmers amidst a slow off in moisture in the last couple of weeks. There has been unprecedented growth amongst a mix of scorching days which has kept everyone on their toes.

We were privileged to be invited to the annual Stihl conference last Saturday held in Dunedin where a wide range of exciting products were unveiled, including a range of new 36V cordless push-mowers, robot lawnmowers and a new game changer the Stihl MS 500i injected 80cc chainsaw. We were allowed to get our hands on these new products and run them through their paces with great delight. Keep a close eye out for these new products as they will be released into the NZ market mid-2019.

Now is a good time to get your saw checked over and not forgetting the Stihl essential products, 2 Stroke lube, bar oil, files and all your safety gear is up to scratch.

Thanks for all your continued support and business over the last while. We look forward to continuing to provide a great service and offer products to assist you in your farming needs.

When you purchase any STIHL petrol powered machine, we would like to offer you the STIHL SERVICE ADVANTAGE.



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Service Update



We are very pleased to welcome Ashley Moore to our workshop team.

Ashley comes to us from ICS and brings with him a wealth of experience in engineering and small engines aswell as specialising in hydraulics. Ashley is a local North Canterbury lad who some of our customers are bound to already know through his current field service work.

Ashley comes on board to replace the vacancy that George Harrison leaves. George departs from NC Equipment to embark on his OE. We wish George all the best and have been pleased to see him complete his apprenticeship.

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8 Useful tips for maintaining a feeder wagon.

To ensure the longevity of your feeder wagon and maximum performance, it is important to ensure that the machine is maintained correctly. Here at NC Equipment, our expert team have compiled a quick guide of 8 tips to help you to confirm that your feeder wagon is being correctly maintained.

Don't Overload Your Machine

Do not overload your feeder wagon. Overloading will affect the performance and will disrupt the mixing process. Too much weight being forced on your feeder wagon will shorten its lifespan and cause unwarranted wear and tear. It is important that you don't leave your wagon to sit over night or for prolonged periods with a full load of feed as this can cause premature wear and tear.

Ensure That Your Machine Size is Adequate

It is important to establish that your machine size is the correct size for your herd. If your herd is frequently expanding, you may need to consider upgrading your feeder wagon. If you are using a wagon which is designed to facilitate a smaller herd size, you will find yourself having to use it more frequently and may have no choice but to overload it. This will rapidly shorten the lifespan of a feeder wagon.

Keep Your Feeder Wagon Clean

The feed and mixes loaded in and out of a wagon on a daily basis can lead to a considerable accumulation of dust and dirt. Clean the machine regularly. An accumulation of excessive dirt on parts such as bearings and chains can result in the need for costly repairs. When cleaning down your wagon don't directly waterblast the load cells. Lube the wagon after water blasting.

Check Oil Levels

It is important to check the oil levels of your feeder wagon regularly. The oil is necessary to keep chains lubricated, which is required for optimum performance and functionality. It is recommended to change the oil in your feeder wagon at least once a year.

Monitor for Wear and Tear

Regularly check your feeder for wear and tear. If you can spot wear and tear on parts of the wagon, repairs will be a much less costly and timely task than replacing the parts completely. The paddles and augers of a feeder wagon can be particularly susceptible for wear and tear. Don't forget to check the tyres, as the weight of the loads mean that they too are susceptible to wear and tear.

Regular Servicing

To guarantee years of trouble free operation, it is important to get your machine serviced annually by agricultural mechanics. Although you may check regularly for wear and tear, only a trained agricultural mechanic may be able to spot certain key areas of damage.

Ensure Correct Set-Up

Undoubtedly, if the machine is not being set-up or used correctly, it will be more susceptible to damage and the need for repairs. It is necessary that all operators of a feeder wagon are correctly trained to operate and set-up the machine in an efficient, effective manner.

Long Term Storage

Make sure to grease all nipples and to lubricate all floor and elevator chains. Remember to grease the wheel bearings. Your scale monitor should always be removed and stored in a cool, dry place. When not in use disconnect your battery (or keep it on a small trickle charge).

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