

Guidance on storing hay

Always try to store hay in a building where it will be protected from both sun and moisture. Both of these factors can damage hay and leave it unusable. Before you bring it in, check the ground for dark areas that suggest new roof leaks. Even a little bit of water can be disastrous for hay storage.

Hay is a natural product that doesn't expire in the traditional sense of the term. When stored in the proper conditions, hay will retain its nutritional value for many months.

Hay that has been cut and then rained on can lose quality in four ways. These include: 1) leaching of soluble carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, 2) increased and prolonged plant respiration, 3) leaf shattering, and 4) microbial breakdown of plant tissue

Bales stored on wet ground can take on moisture, causing early deterioration and up to 50% spoilage.

There can be a significant amount of waste for this labour-intensive crop, depending on how it's stored. Unprotected hay stored outside is at the mercy of the elements, but covered bales suffer loss as well. The least amount of loss occurs with hay stored in a barn or hayshed.

It is preferable for hay bales to not get wet and be kept dry at all times to maintain their quality.