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Livestock owners take note: Feed quality extremely variable

Feed quality this year is extremely variable. Because of this Barry Yaremicio, Beef and Forage Specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Food, urges livestock owners not to be lulled into a false sense of security and discover they have not been providing their animals with adequate nutrition to cope with cold weather conditions.

“Forage quality is down considerably from the average. The first cut hay that was cut either a month late, or cut on time but it was turned three or four times before being baled, is showing protein levels borderline to deficient. The other thing that we are finding is the neutral detergent fibre compound of the forages is much higher than normal. It’s up around the straw area. So feed tests are critical,” advises Yaremicio.

He says a lot of the hay “is going to be short on groceries” or required nutrients. He foresees more grain being fed this winter. He cautions livestock producers to get their feed supplies tested in order to *prevent* a problem rather than reacting to one.

“This winter, just because you see that there’s a bale of hay in front of your stock and it looks like everything is good - they’re eating and there’s lots of feed available - does not mean that they’re actually consuming the amount of ‘groceries’ they need. The animals could be losing a pound or a pound-and-a-half a day in weight: 60 - 100 days later, you’re in a real mess.”

Clip No. 1:

Livestock feed quality this year is extremely variable. Barry Yaremicio, Beef and Forage Specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Food, elaborates:

(13... “average.”)

Clip No. 2:

A feed test is critical says Yaremicio. He talks about protein levels found in tests this fall:

(20.... “area.”)

Clip No. 3:

Yaremicio suggests the procedure producers should follow:

(19... “3276.”)

Clip No. 4:

“Feed tests can greatly affect the bottom line and avoid heavy losses,” adds Yaremicio:

(20... “mess.”)

This story is brought to you by Alberta Farm Animal Care in partnership with the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association.

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