

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Gene Schmitz
Livestock Specialist
University of Missouri Extension
(660) 438-5012
schmitze@missouri.edu

Date: 4/24/18

Headline: Bale Feeding Survey

WARSAW, Mo. – I recently saw an article in an e-newsletter produced by Hay and Forage Grower magazine about feeding round bales. The article summarized results from a South Dakota State University (SDSU) survey of livestock producers concerning removal of binding material from big round bales before feeding. I found the original information on SDSU's Extension website. The article was written by Taylor Grussing, SDSU Extension Cow/Calf Field Specialist and the information below is taken from her summary.

The needs assessment was completed by 548 respondents: primarily beef cow/calf producers (80%), as well as beef feedlot producers (5%), dairy producers (2.5%) and sheep producers (2%). Preferred method for binding forage was net wrap (67%) vs twine (26%) for most respondents, with 6% alternating between the two based on forage purpose (crop or livestock).

With several ways to feed bound forages to livestock, removal varied based on feeding method. Fifty-four percent removed net wrap or twine before feeding whole bales, either in bale feeders or on the ground. Eleven percent removed binding prior to grinding/ processing bales. Twenty-four percent do not remove net wrap or twine prior to feeding whole bales or processing bales. Eleven percent sometimes remove binding material before feeding bales to livestock.

When binding materials were not removed prior to feeding, 46% of respondents have observed livestock eating binding materials that remain on the ground. Even when forages are processed with binding materials still in place, long strands of plastic material can be found and when consumed by livestock can accumulate in the rumen.

Long-term feeding of forages without prior removal of binding material can cause rumen accumulation and pose challenges to livestock health. Symptoms of net wrap impaction reported by livestock producers include reduced feed intake and depressed performance. Forty-one respondents found net wrap/ twine accumulation during a postmortem exam and 30% of respondents believe binding materials may be a leading cause of livestock deaths on their farms and ranches.

Disposal of net wrap or plastic twine is a problem for many livestock producers. Judging from the results of the SDSU survey, not removing those materials from bales prior to feeding may cause animal health issues and even death loss.

The complete survey summary can be obtained on the SDSU Extension website igrow.org, and click on the livestock, beef, and net-wrap-survey-summary tabs. If you have additional questions, contact me at the Extension Center in Warsaw at 660-438-5012.

##