

NEWS RELEASE

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Hay Preparation Essential For Winter Survival

There have been several forecasters have been predicting a heavy snowfall this winter. When it comes to it, preparation for snow should start right away this fall says Steve Pritchard, UNL Extension Educator in Boone & Nance Counties.

There are several questions to consider before feeling confident to handle a long winter: Will there be adequate feed supplies for livestock on hand?, Will there be easy access to hay supplies during a blizzard?, or will it be accessible for livestock?

Hay storage during the winter also is an issue as lots of people store hay stacks and round bales next to trees or in low spots or along fence lines, says Pritchard. These areas are susceptible to drifts. Even if the hay isn't stored in these spots there still might be problems, such as if the road will be accessible through winter snow or spring mud.

It also is important the hay is properly organized and accessible. Have hay tested, to identify what hay to feed cows needing only a maintenance diet and what hay should be saved for animals needing extra protein and energy. Check if both will be available. Also, test millet and cane hay for nitrates. Nitrate poisoning occurs most frequently when high nitrate hay is fed to hungry animals right after a snow storm.

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