

BUYING AND SELLING ALFALFA HAY ON THE BASIS OF A CHEMICAL ANALYSIS  
FROM A MARKETING ASSOCIATION'S VIEWPOINT

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I know that many of the points that I will cover will be a repetition of what you have heard from the previous panel members. However, there may be a few items from the marketing association's point of view that will be different than those already expressed.

The main function or purpose of the marketing association is to market that which is grown by the association members. To do so by orderly marketing methods in which both the grower and the dairyman can co-exist. One can not get along without the other.

Probably, the only real difference in buying and selling alfalfa hay on the basis of a chemical analysis from a marketing association's point of view, is that the marketing association really has to wear two hats, or to serve two masters, so to speak. It takes a particular type of individual to be able to accomplish this in a manner which is equitable to both parties concerned. They are definitely in the middle. The association must be able to satisfy both the grower member of the marketing association and the ultimate consumer, whether he be a dairyman, cattle feeder or other user of alfalfa hay. In order to be able to do this, he must be knowledgeable of the problems of both the hay grower and the dairyman. The question is how to overcome the problems of both parties.

If the dairyman is to have high quality alfalfa hay based on a chemical analysis, that hay must be high in net energy. It also must be highly palatable if the cow is to consume the amount needed for her to produce at her capacity. I am sure we all know and accept the fact that based on the method of testing developed by the University of California, in order to get both high net energy and high palatability, a hay with very low crude fibre is needed. We also know that in order to produce a low fibre hay, the hay cannot be allowed to grow for too long a period, and therein seems to lie the main concern.

In order to produce the low fibre, high energy hay, the cutting cycle must be shortened. The reduction in cutting cycle will vary with the time of year. Shortening the cutting cycle will mean a loss in yield per cutting. If the grower is willing to take the loss in yield, this means that the grower is then going to want to be compensated in some manner for his loss.

Here again is where the marketing association is in the middle. They must convince the grower to grow a higher quality of hay in order to have a readily available market for his product. They still must convince the dairyman that the grower needs to be paid for producing that high quality hay.

What I am really saying, is that when the time comes where there is an equitable formula which is fair for both grower and dairyman on a price schedule so that both may benefit from high energy hay, we will see much more hay sold on that basis.

It may be that hay will have to be sold on a "per unit of energy" rather than on a "per ton" basis, or a combination of both price per ton, plus or minus a set figure for each unit of energy.

These are just a few of the many possibilities