



HAY

## HAY EVALUATION GUIDELINES

The score sheet below is a guideline for evaluating hay. The sheet indicates the amount of importance to place upon each quality factor. Note that maturity, at 30 points, is the most important factor. Leafiness, color, odor and condition each receive a possible 20 points. Foreign material has a possible 10 points.

### Sample Score Sheet

	Possible score	Score given
<p><b>Maturity</b> Alfalfa should be cut in the late bud or early bloom stage, clovers at 20 percent bloom. Most grasses should be cut in the boot to early heading stage. These stages of maturity score highest (25 to 30 points). Alfalfa and clover cut at full bloom and grasses cut between late heading and full bloom score low (1 to 10 points) because they have lower feed values.</p>	30	_____
<p><b>Leafiness</b> Hay with a high ratio of leaves to stems and a substantial portion of the leaves attached to stems scores high (5 to 20 points). Stemmy hay and hay with shattered leaves score low (0 to 5 points).</p>	20	_____
<p><b>Color</b> Hay with a bright green color scores high (15 to 20 points). Golden yellow to yellow hays score 5 to 15 points. Dark brown or black hays score 0 to 5 points.</p>	20	_____
<p><b>Odor and Condition</b> Smell of new mown hay scores high (15 to 20 points). Hays with musty or other off-odors score 5 to 15 points. Moldy or unusually dusty hays score very low (0 to 5 points).</p>	20	_____
<p><b>Foreign Material</b> Hay with noninjurious foreign material should receive a lower score than that without. Hay with injurious foreign material should not be fed to animals.</p>	10	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>	100	_____

## **Section 6 Forage Crops**

### General Considerations

Check catalog for size of sample bundles and other requirements.

Leafiness - Hay should have a high ratio of leaves to stems and with a high proportion of the leaves attached. Stemmy hay and hay with leaves shattered should be avoided.

Color - Hay should have a bright green color. Golden yellow to yellow colored hays are less desirable. Dark brown or black colored hays damaged by rain or other factors should be avoided.

Foreign material - Hay should be free of injurious foreign material. Non-injurious foreign material such as weeds should be minimized, as it represents waste (little food value, unpalatable) and gives the hay a poor appearance.

Odor and condition - The smell of new mown hay is the standard for comparisons. Hay with musty or other offodors are less palatable and less desirable. Moldy or unusually dusty hays and/or insect and/or disease damaged hay should be avoided.

### Selection of Specimens

Alfalfa - Cut in late bud or early bloom stage. Avoid hay cut at the full bloom stage with lower feed value.

Clovers - Cut at one-fourth to one-half bloom. Avoid hay cut at the full bloom with lower feed value.

Grasses - Cut in the boot to early heading stage. Avoid hay cut between late heading and full bloom stages because late heading and full bloom stages because they have lower feed value.