

## FORAGE RESEARCH UPDATES

### WISCONSIN

#### PLASTIC WRAPPING MEDIUM SQUARE BALES

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If quality hay is baled into medium square bales and wrapped in plastic, University of Wisconsin research indicates that high quality can be preserved and made available to animals. We have been researching the benefit of plastic wrapping square medium-sized (600-1000 lb) bales and have learned the following:

- Square bales can be plastic wrapped at any moisture content and will be well preserved. We believe that wrapped bales with less than 55% moisture are preserved by oxygen exclusion (microbes use up the oxygen and then die), and that wetter bales are preserved both by fermentation and oxygen exclusion.
- The commonly used 1-mil plastic wrap leaks oxygen unless enough wrappings are applied. Our research indicates that we should wrap the bales with 6-8 wrappings of 1 mil plastic, or fewer wrappings of thicker plastic.
- Plastic wrapping must occur within 24 hours of baling to avoid spoilage.