Southeastern Hay Contest

PRESENTED BY MASSEY FERGUSON

Overview

The Southeastern Hay Contest (SEHC) proudly recognizes regional producers who grow and harvest high quality hay. Although we are all growing weary of the word “unprecedented”, there is no better word to describe this forage production season. Producers faced many difficult decisions this season with respect to managing high input costs. With record fertilizer and diesel prices, even the simplest task in the hayfield was scrutinized for it’s economic return! We want to praise our local and state Extension personnel for aiding in these decisions and educating producers on how best to balance agronomic productivity with economic benefits. On top of financial challenges, Mother Nature threw us a few curveballs in the Southeast this season. Many producers encountered extended periods of drought or heavy rain depending on the time of year, neither conducive for a successful hay harvest. High rainfall periods can also make insect control a challenge, especially for timing applications for the bermudagrass stem maggot and fall armyworms. It is not surprising that hay market reports are illustrating a downward trend in available hay for purchase. This severity of these implications will be felt this fall and winter as livestock producers are forced to make tough choices with regard to supplementation strategies. Hay testing will be more important than ever before!

Our Mission

The mission of the SEHC is to bring awareness to the importance of hay testing and of managing feed demands based on nutritive value.

Categories

1. warm season perennial grass hay
2. alfalfa hay
3. perennial peanut hay
4. perennial cool season grass hay
5. mixed and annual grass hay
6. grass baleage
7. legume baleage

Prizes

Samples are ranked based on relative forage quality (RFQ) and the top 3 entries in each category receive **cash prizes**. The overall winner also receives a choice of the use of a new **Massey Ferguson DM Series disc mower or RK Series rotary rake** for the 2023 hay production season plus **$2,000** in cash!

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371 entries

submitted to the 2022 competition

9 states

represented from around the region in the 2022 competition

1 winner

2022 SEHC Overall Winner
Beeson Farms
Climax, NC

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2022 AWARD WINNERS

Categories and Farm	City	State	CP, %	TDN, %	RFQ	Category Sponsor
Warm Season Perennial Grass Hay: 107 entries, avg. RFQ = 111						
Walters Farms	Barnesville	GA	13.7	63.5	155	
Eddy Turner Farm	Tennille	GA	13.6	61.9	147	
Jeff Bacon	Dudley	GA	16.9	61.5	145	
Alfalfa Hay: 20 entries, avg. RFQ = 234						
Beeson Farms	Climax	NC	26.5	73.5	359	
Seldom Rest Farm	Pulaski	TN	25.5	73.3	309	
Stegall Farms, LLC	Peachland	NC	24.9	71.1	272	
Perennial Peanut Hay: 27 entries, avg. RFQ = 175						
Bill Conrad	Malone	FL	22.2	66	211	
Cone Family Farms LLC	Greenville	FL	13.7	67.1	210	
Dalton Dennis	Elberta	AL	18.4	66.2	204	
Cool Season Perennial Grass Hay: 56 entries, avg. RFQ = 117						
Stegall Farms, LLC	Peachland	NC	10	64.6	152	
Dennis Hollingsworth	Commerce	GA	11.8	63.3	150	
Sugarhill Cattle Company	Thomaston	GA	14.6	62.6	149	
Mixed, Annual Grass, or Other Hay: 62 entries, avg. RFQ = 115						
Fox Pipe Farm	Laurens	SC	26.5	70	243	
Pittman Farms	Nicholson	GA	13.2	68.3	181	
Butler Farms	Lake Park	GA	11.1	65.9	162	
Grass Baleage: 90 entries, avg. RFQ = 136						
Walters Farms	Barnesville	GA	13.5	69.1	186	
Caldwell Farm and Land LLC	Concord	GA	13.1	68.2	181	
SSS Farms	Thomaston	GA	14.8	67.1	175	
Legume Baleage: 9 entries, avg. RFQ = 150						
C & C Farms	McAlpin	FL	23.2	68.6	203	
Walters Farms	Barnesville	GA	13.6	65.4	172	
G & S Farms	Chipley	FL	15.9	61.1	149	
Grand Prize Winner						
Beeson Farms	Climax	NC	26.5	73.5	359	

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Agent Award Winners

These awards are presented to the local Extension agents who submitted the highest number of samples in their respective state.

Georgia Agent Award Winner:
Hailey Pertain, Upson and Lamar Counties

GEORGIA AGRIBUSINESS COUNCIL

Florida Agent Award Winner:
Mark Mauldin, Washington County

UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

FORAGE TEAM

2022 Southeast Hay Contest Executive Comittee

Dr. Lisa Baxter, University of Georgia, Chair
Dr. Leanne Dillard, Auburn University
Dr. Katie Payne, Virginia Tech
Dr. Marcelo Wallau, University of Florida
Dr. Uttam Saha, University of Georgia FEW Lab
Mr. Chip Blalock, Sunbelt Ag Expo
Mr. Matt Leroy, Massey Ferguson
Mr. Greg Hunsley, Massey Ferguson

Partnering Universities

UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA EXTENSION

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

extension ALABAMA A&M & AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

U of A DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EXTENSION University of Arkansas System

UTEXTENSION INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Virginia Cooperative Extension Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION N.C. A&T NC STATE UNIVERSITY

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Cooperative Extension Service

CLEMSON COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

LSU AgCenter Research & Extension

PROVE YOUR HAY IS THE BEST

visit www.SEHayContest.com for complete rules and entry

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What is RFQ?

RFQ is an index used to represent different forages relative to their overall nutritive value (total digestible nutrients) and predicted dry matter intake. The index was developed by researchers at the University of Florida and University of Wisconsin and is consider a better fit for comparing forages (especially southern forages) for accounting for the digestible fiber as determinant of intake. In the past, hay quality prediction equations were based on the fiber concentration of the hay crop. However, forage crops can have similar fiber content but have very different digestibility. For instance, Tifton 85 bermudagrass often has a higher fiber concentration than other bermudagrass varieties, yet it is more digestible. This improved digestibility results in enhanced animal performance but is not reflected just considering traditional forage nutritive value parameters. This value is a single, easy to interpret number that improves producer understanding of a forage's nutritive quality and helps in establishing a fair market value for the product. Since 2003, hundreds of warm season samples have been used to refine the RFQ equation for bermudagrass and other warm season forages at the UGA's Feed and Environmental Water Lab in Athens, the official SEHC laboratory.

How can RFQ help me?

RFQ allows hay producers to easily categorize and price hay lots based on relative quality, and livestock producers to balance supplemental diet based on the quality of the hay being offered. Producers can purchase hay lots depending on its end use. For example, there is little need to feed high-quality hay to livestock that could easily utilize poorer quality forage. Hay with a RFQ of 100 or more can usually be economically fed to maintain beef cows, while hay with an RFQ of 125-150 is adequate for stocker cattle or young growing replacement heifers, and hay with an RFQ of 140-160 is suitable for dairy cattle in the first three months of lactation. It is also easy to see that Relative Forage Quality could provide the framework for a quality hay marketing system. For instance, hay with a RFQ of 155 could conceptually be labeled "premium" hay, while hay with an RFQ of 100 could be labeled "fair". This simple system could allow producers to price hay consistently and fairly across harvest maturity, fertilization regimes, or plant species (i.e. bermudagrass, bahiagrass, perennial peanut, or tall fescue).

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