



# Know Your Requirements When Purchasing Hay



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With below-average hay and pasture growth in 2009, many livestock producers are purchasing hay to augment their feed supplies. Evaluating the feed requirements of the stock to be fed, as well as identifying key visual and chemical quality parameters in the hay, will maximize the efficiency of feed purchasing. Each species and class of livestock has differing nutritional requirements, which also vary from winter to summer. The important quality components of feed are energy, protein, minerals and vitamins. (Nutrient requirements of various classes of livestock are shown in Table 1.)

Inspecting visual quality parameters such as colour, leaf attachment, stem coarseness and weed content is also useful when buying hay. A green colour and fresh smell indicates that the hay has had minimal rain or weathering damage. A high proportion of leaves

attached to stems indicates that the hay was not baled too dry or over-mature. Good leaf attachment means that nutrient-rich leaves have not been lost in handling, and feeding losses will be lower. Hay that contains noxious or potentially toxic weeds should be avoided, to both reduce the risk of animal health problems and the introduction of problematic weeds to new areas. Hay with coarse stems is usually indicative of low feed value, and will reduce intake and increase wastage.

**Table 1. Recommended Nutrient Allowances for Beef Cattle (90% dry matter)**

Class	TDN %	Crude Protein %	Ca	P	Vitamin A IU/day	Vitamin D IU/day
cows summer maintenance	45	6	0.20	0.20	30,000	3,000
cows bred, winter	50	8	0.25	0.25	45,000	3,000
heifers	55	10	0.30	0.30	30,000	3,000
feeders (500-700 lb.)	57	12	0.48	0.32	30,000	3,000
bulls, winter	56	10	0.37	0.30	40,000	4,000

Regional supply and demand has a large impact on hay prices. Determine hay prices by surveying market conditions locally and regionally. Local market information can be obtained from neighbours, local hay auctions, or local livestock sales facilities and feedlots, and the asking price for hay advertised in the local press. You can also find price information on Saskatchewan Agriculture's *Forage, Feed and Custom Service Listing* (1-866-457- 2377 or [www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/FeedForageListing](http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/FeedForageListing)), as well as links to buyers and sellers of hay and a list of custom operators.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Visit the Saskatchewan Agriculture website at [www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca](http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca).

## MAKE YOUR CHOICE

This fall, the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (SPG) will be running an election for their 2010 Board of Directors. The election ballots were mailed out in early November to all registered pulse producers (i.e. you have sold pulses and paid check-off to SPG in the last two crop years between September 1, 2007 and August 31, 2009). If you are a registered pulse producer and have not received an election package in the mail, please contact Shelly Weber at 306-668-0590.

Ballots must be received by the Returning Officer no later than 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 2, 2009. All election packages will have a postage paid return envelope to send in ballots.

For more information about the election or the candidates, contact SPG at 306-668-0032 or visit our website at [www.saskpulse.com](http://www.saskpulse.com).

SPG would like to thank all pulse producers for making their choice and participating in the 2010 Board of Directors election.

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