



HAY and STRAW

HAY and ALFALFA:

- Use as livestock feed. Farmers process the crop into hay, silage or meal. All these forms of the feed can be stored.
- Farmers often plant alfalfa mixed with grass for grazing.
- Hay can be stored in rectangular bales, usually weighing from 50-150 pounds. Round bales, weighing as much as 2,000 pounds as well as in bags.
- To make hay, farmers cut an alfalfa field and let the sun dry the plants in the field. They have to bale the hay at about 15% moisture. If the hay is too dry it will lose its leaves which is where much of the nutrients are stored. If it is baled too wet it will 'spoil' and cannot be fed to livestock.
- Farmers produce hay for their own livestock or as a 'cash crop' to sell to other farmers.
- Hay is usually dull green in color.
-

STRAW:

- Straw consists of the dried stems of such grains as wheat, rye, oats and barley.
- Straw has many uses. Farmers use it for bedding for animals and for soil improvement. Manufacturers use straw to make hats, baskets and paper. In chemical laboratories straw is used to produce carbon and acetic acid.
- Straw is usually shinier in color.

What is the difference between straw and hay?

Straw differs from hay because it lacks all the nutrients needed for feeding livestock. It is also has a hollow stem, hence the name "straw."