SEASON AVERAGES – FIRST QUARTER 2015

There is something different each season and this one is no exception. Samples received for testing so far this season would seem to indicate fairly tough Agricultural times/conditions ahead in many parts of the country. There is a trend of test results coming through that should sound alarm bells for both feed quality and the fire season. Many samples FeedTest have tested show very high moisture levels. Water Soluble Sugar levels are also higher than last season which in tandem with high moisture can lead to mouldy hay, heat damaged hay and potential shed fires.

The table below can be compared directly with the First Quarter Results from Season 2013/14 as they represent a similar time frame. Ranges of results have not been included, as the comparison of the means serve to highlight the differences of this season. Mean averages for the same period last year have been tabulated below for comparison.

The first thing to notice is the difference in numbers of samples. There has been more cereal hays tested than for the same period last year and half the number of silages. The number of silages are too few to be reported and or meaningful. The quality of the cereal hays is higher than last year. This is indicative of a hard season where plants have been stressed and in survival mode rather than full growth with high yields per hectare. A further indication of this stress is the Water Soluble Sugar levels tabulated below.

Description	No. of Samples		Water Soluble Sugars (%)
Hay, Barley 15/16	101	Means	24.0
14/15	17		23.5
Hay, Oaten 15/16	458	Means	27.1
14/15	124		23.5
Hay, Wheaten 15/16	265	Means	23.6
14/15	26		22.0

Moisture levels on average have been similar to last year, however there seems to be a wider spread rather than a tight average. The FeedTest laboratory has reported a high proportion of samples this year with high moisture and others of very low moisture. The average has ended up the same, whilst the high number of moist samples is a cause for concern. Coupled with the high sugars there is a distinct danger of mouldy hay and possible heating.
I would strongly urge anyone who has a FeedTest Result with high moisture to closely monitor their hay. As suggested by AFIA, a crow bar inserted into a bale or stack, left for half an hour, taken out then checked for temperature is a good way to monitor any changes in the hay. Regular checking is important as temperatures can change in a relatively short time, early detection of heating could possibly avoid disaster.

Average results for previous seasons can be found on the FeedTest website; http://www.feedtest.com.au/feedtest_averages.htm however care must be exercised in making comparisons. Average results for the whole of the 2015/16 season will be posted on the website towards the end of March 2016.

2015/16 SEASON TO DATE MEAN AND RANGE OF QUALITY MEASUREMENTS

(Source FEEDTEST 01 September 15 – 20 November 15)

Description	No. of Samples		Crude Protein CP (%)	Dry Matter Digestibility DMD (%)	Metabolisable Energy ME (MJ/kg DM)	Neutral Detergent Fibre NDF (%)
Hay, Legume 15/16	23	Mean	16.7	71.3	10.7	40.0
14/15	7	Mean	18.2	72.0	10.8	38.5
Hay, Grass 15/16	141	Mean	10.2	60.7	8.8	60.4
14/15	24	Mean	11.0	61.9	9.0	57.6
Hay, Barley 15/16	101	Mean	9.0	70.6	10.5	50.0
14/15	17	Mean	9.6	69.1	10.3	51.8
Hay, Oaten 15/16	458	Mean	7.1	67.6	10.0	50.4
14/15	124	Mean	6.3	63.5	9.3	54.5
Hay, Wheaten 15/16	265	Mean	10.2	68.7	10.2	50.3
14/15	26	Mean	9.7	64.0	9.4	53.7
Hay, Lucerne 15/16	79	Mean	21.0	65.9	9.7	41.4
14/15	28	Mean	21.3	67.6	10.0	40.3
Hay, Vetch 15/16	279	Mean	20.2	74.7	11.2	38.0
14/15	141	Mean	20.9	70.0	10.4	42.1

PLEASE NOTE: This information is produced using data from FEEDTEST records, derived from samples as submitted by clients. FEEDTEST produces these tables for the information of clients merely to demonstrate the range in quality which can occur for a given type of feed.