

Bale Feed Nets Reduce Wasted Hay

Erin Olson was tired of playing hay police to her fast eating Alpha mare so that her other horses could get their fair share of hay. She and her friend and partner in a barefoot trimming business, Kris Anderson, began searching for ways to spend less time doing chores.

The small hay nets they found seemed to work. Having to pull hay through holes slows down the horses that eat more than their share, and all the horses thrive on the slow feed system.

"We thought it would be nice if there was a net for big round bales," Olson says, since big bales reduce labor and are less expensive than buying hay in small bales. After not finding any nets on the market they made a couple. "It worked so well. There was no waste – with a round bale that's hard to believe," Olson says.

A University of Minnesota feeder trial study confirmed that typically up to 57 percent of a round bale goes to waste when

fed to horses. There was only 6.3 percent waste with Olson and Anderson's net.

In 2009, the women started marketing their patent-pending CinchChix hay nets.

"We use U.S. knotted netting – Dupont nylon. It's nontoxic UV-treated so it's stable in sunlight," Olson says. The marine-grade netting is hand sewn into bags in Duluth. The partners add the cinch strap – polypropylene rope and a "keeper" closure also from the marine industry.

CinchChix offers nets in several sizes – from mini bags (\$37.50 including tax/shipping) that hold half a small square bale to large (\$177 including tax/shipping) for large round and square bales. Nets come with extra nylon string to mend tears.

CinchChix also offers nets with various hole sizes. The 1 3/4-in. dia. holes work for most animals, Olson says. But, 1 1/4-in. and 1-in. dia. hole nets can be a better option for horses that are really big eaters and tend to



Having to pull hay through holes in net keeps horses eating more slowly.

founder.

It takes some time for the horses to get used to the hay net. CinchChix suggests having loose hay next to the net until the animals adjust.

"The hole size works for many animals, including sheep, goats, donkeys, llamas and

alpacas," Olson says. "We were at the State Fair and beef producers were interested in it. They want to do a study with cattle."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, CinchChix, LLC, P.O. Box 773, North Branch, Minn. 55056 (ph 651 276-6972 or 651 210-8535; www.cinchchix.com).

Slow Feeding Bags Boost Livestock Health

Feed bills drop and horses get healthier with slow feeding hay bags from Natural Alternative Grazers (N.A.G.). The net bags are designed to simulate day-long grazing that horses would do naturally. The bags were developed by a life long horse breeder involved in showing, racing and natural equine health care. She says they work equally well for sheep, goats, llamas and other grazing animals.

"I've seen too many horses only fed once or twice a day," says Mandy Blais, N.A.G. "That's why 80 percent of horses in stables and show barns end up with ulcers. They get meds, and that soothes the stomach acid, but it isn't a cure."

Slow feeding produces saliva to buffer the gastric acid constantly released in the stomach. She explains that slow feeding also reduces cribbing, colic and other health problems.

"We use 1/4-in. wide, soft braided nylon netting that horses won't get caught between their teeth, like finer strands do," says Blais. "It is knotless, as they can get knots caught in teeth too. It is also seamless, with 1/4-in. braided string that won't loop around a leg. A ring at the bottom can be used to secure the bag to a fence."

Blais warns that netting or net bags should never be left where shod horses can step on or into the netting. However, hay bags can be left on the ground for unshod horses, providing them with exercise and distraction as they push them around a paddock to get at the hay inside.

Blais says the N.A.G. bags, which are available in a variety of sizes, are ideal for enclosing large round and square bales as well as smaller bales. They reduce waste and discourage over eating.

N.A.G. bags are projected to last 5 to 6

years under normal use with periodic hosing down. She notes some horses are more aggressive with the bags. Her bags vary in price from \$34.95 for one that holds 5 flakes of hay off a big square bale to \$225 for one that can hold a 1,200-lb. square bale. A bag that will hold a single small square bale (up to 85 lbs.) is priced at \$54.95.

Blais also makes custom-sized bags. She will soon be introducing a hay bag that can be mounted over a stall, paddock or window with one side open to the outside. She hopes it will promote slow feeding in stables.

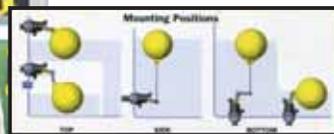
"Workers will be able to walk by and pitch hay into the bags without stopping to untie and tie," explains Blais. "The hay drops to the bottom, and as the horse eats it, the bag collapses."

To see how N.A.G. Bags work, watch a video of horses using various size bags at www.farmshow.com.



Slow feeding net bags are designed to simulate day-long grazing that horses would do naturally.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Natural Alternative Grazers, 2620 Otter Lake Road, Armstrong, B.C., Canada V0E 1B4 (ph 250 308-6208; slowhayfeeders@live.ca; www.slowfeeder.com).



Megaflow valve attaches to side or bottom of cattle tank, using a float attached only by a nylon cord. It requires very little pressure to open or close.

Underwater Float Valve

This new valve attaches to the side or bottom of cattle tanks with a float attached only by a nylon cord.

"The Megaflow valve requires very little pressure to open or close," explains Bill Irwin, a long time distributor of Jobe valves. "Other valves require more pressure, which requires the leverage of an arm attached to the float. The longer the arm, the more likely it is to be damaged by cattle."

Damage to the valve is also reduced by its below water level installation. The quick detach connection makes it easy to clean out debris and keep the valve working correctly.

"The Megaflow valve works on any pressurized system from 5 to 150 psi," says Irwin. "It's ideal for smaller tanks in portable grazing systems. It provides greater water flow than standard valves, which allows for the use of a 50 or 75-gal. tank, which is easier to move from paddock to paddock. Every paddock doesn't have to have its own tank."

The Megaflow valve retails for \$46.95.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kencove Farm Fence, Inc., 344 Kendall Rd., Blairsville, Penn. 15717 (ph 724 459-8991; toll free 800 418-6631; www.kencove.com).



Shop vac sucks water into 20-gal. pressure tank. When tank gets full operator shuts off shop vac, then opens shut-off valve on tank to drain water onto ground.

Shop Vac-Powered Water Removal

"I use an old 20-gal. pressure tank and a shop vac to drain water out of the 1,000-gal. storage tanks we use on our tobacco farm. It's easy to use and there's very little cost," says Emile Perron, Adams, Tenn.

Perron uses the big 1,000-gal. tanks at planting time to fill sprayers. At the end of the season, he stores the tanks – which don't have drainage valves -- in a shed.

He cut two holes (1 and 1 1/4 in. dia.) in the top of the 20-gal. pressure tank and welded couplings into them, then attached nipples, elbows, and a short length of pipe on each coupling. He connected a 5-ft. long hose between one coupling and the shop vac, and he connected a 25-ft. long, plastic swimming pool hose to the other coupling. He also glued pvc pipe and a shutoff valve to the drain hole at the bottom of the tank.

He simply turns on the shop vac to suck

water out of the 1,000-gal. tank and into the pressure tank. When the pressure tank gets full he shuts off the shop vac, then opens the tank's shut-off valve and drains the water onto the ground.

"The shop vac is still sucking up the water but it's deposited into the pressure tank," says Perron. "A shop vac is designed to hold water, so if the tank gets too full and water flows into the shop vac it won't get damaged. The tank and shop vac are light enough that I can throw them in back of my pickup and take them wherever I want. I think the same idea would work with shallow water spills, too."

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