



FEED central NEWS

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Testing is key

Happy New Year!

Seasonal conditions mean decisions have to be made, and testing for Prussic Acid and Nitrates is an incredibly important one right now.

Ten years of research went into our on-farm testing kits - essential to have on hand as conditions vary week to week, and paddock to paddock.

On another note, last month I was a guest on the [Angus Table podcast](#). In that interview I talked about planning, and that drought preparedness starts with mindset not just fodder reserves.

Feed testing is part of being prepared - for the best of times, or when you need to survive drought and/or face floods, preparation and forethought is always time well spent.

Times are tough for many, and we're here to partner with you. Please let us know how we can support you.

Here's to a productive, profitable, and rewarding 2026. Let's make it a year of growth, together.



Tim Ford
Managing Director,
Feed Central & LocalAg



Be safe. Stressed sorghum should be tested.

Grazing or Haying Sorghums - Take Care

Late-season conditions often include moisture stress, temperature fluctuations, reduced growth and regrowth after rain. These disrupt normal plant function and increase the chance of both prussic acid formation and nitrate accumulation. Sorghum and related species are especially sensitive to these changes.

Hay made or stored over summer is more exposed to risks like mould development, heat damage and nutrient loss. For livestock producers, this can mean feeding hay that looks fine but delivers less energy or protein than expected. Even worse, if grown and/or harvested in stressed

conditions, Prussic Acid or Nitrates may turn fodder deadly.

In ruminants, nitrate is converted to nitrite in the rumen. Nitrite reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen. Effects range from reduced intake and performance to breathing difficulty and, in severe cases, sudden death. Visual inspection is not a reliable guide.

Prussic acid (HCN) and nitrates can't be seen or smelled. Testing is the only way to know.

Once eaten, Prussic Acid (HCN) prevents the animal's cells from using oxygen properly. This can disrupt normal respiration at a tissue level, with clinical signs appearing within minutes in severe cases.

Plant colour, height and maturity do not consistently indicate toxin levels. We recommend either in lab or on farm instant testing.

[Read more on the blog.](#)



Prussic Acid and Nitrate in Forage: Your Questions Answered



Put simply, periods of crop stress change the chemistry of forage.

Drought, temperature variation, slow growth and rapid regrowth after rainfall can cause prussic acid and nitrate to build up to levels that pose a real risk to livestock.

This is particularly relevant for sorghum and related species at this time of the season, where toxin levels can change quickly with little or no visible warning.

Why is risk higher at this time of the season?

Late-season conditions often include moisture stress, temperature fluctuations, reduced growth and regrowth after rain. These disrupt normal plant function and increase the chance of both prussic acid formation and nitrate accumulation. Sorghum and related species are especially sensitive to these changes.

Which crops are most affected under stress?

Prussic acid risk is highest in sorghum, sorghum-sudan hybrids, sudangrass and johnsongrass, particularly when crops are drought-stressed, frost-affected or regrowing rapidly. Nitrate accumulation can occur in many forage species when growth is restricted or nitrogen uptake exceeds the plant's ability to convert it into protein.

Can stressed crops become dangerous quickly?

Yes. Toxin levels can increase within hours of stress events such as frost, drought, chemical application or physical damage. Forage that previously tested low risk can become hazardous without any obvious visual change.

Does harvesting reduce seasonal risk?

Prussic acid is volatile and usually dissipates as plant material dries, reducing risk in hay and silage. Nitrate does not dissipate with drying and remains in conserved fodder. Ensiling may reduce nitrate levels but does not remove the risk. Testing is still recommended.

What are my testing options?

On Farm testing is a recommended first step. Different kits are available for Prussic Acid and Nitrates, and both are simple to use. While they can detect if these risk factors are present, they can't determine the values. This is only possible by sending a sample in for in-lab testing.

How should high-risk forage be managed during this period?

When elevated levels are detected:

- Delay grazing or harvest where possible
- Dilute with low-risk forage to control intake
- Avoid feeding high-risk material to hungry animals
- Consider ensiling or controlled feeding strategies for nitrate-affected forage
- Retest after weather changes or regrowth.

[Read more on the blog.](#)



LocalAg Marketplace

Latest Listings

#89782




Oaten Hay

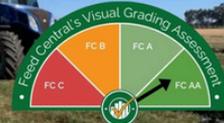
1120 tonnes available

Caldwell, NSW

Energy: 9.37 MJ/kg
Protein: 10.50%

[Get More Details](#)

#90775

Vetch Hay

203 tonnes available

Berrigan, NSW

Energy: 10.27 MJ/kg
Protein: 18.90%

[Get More Details](#)



HAY MATTERS
WITH STEPHEN PAGE

Summer Season Ep 3

Mixing Family and Business in Ag with Megan Ford

Brought to you by



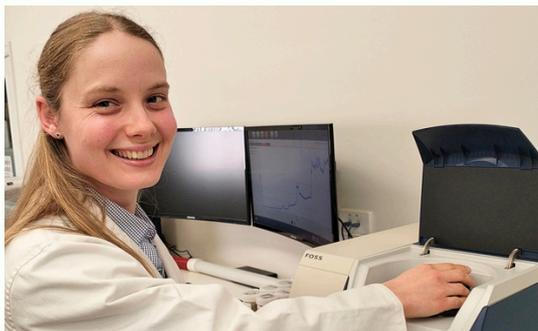

What Do You Look For in a Feed Test?

A feed test is about more than just numbers. It's about knowing whether your hay is suitable and doing the job you expect it to do. **Here are the basics.**

Moisture or dry matter is one of the first things to check. Hay with low dry matter can carry a higher risk of mould, heating and storage issues, and it also means you're paying for more water and less feed.

Energy (M.E.) and protein are next. These are the drivers of livestock performance, yet they can't be judged by appearance alone. Two lots that look the same can deliver very different results. With protein and energy we are looking for higher numbers, ie. M.E. >10% and protein >20% is considered a high quality milking hay.

Fibre levels help explain intake and digestibility. As fibre increases, animals may eat less and extract less energy from the feed. In some systems, higher digestibility is desirable to maximise nutrient availability - for example in pregnant animals - which may correspond to an NDF of around 35-40%. In other situations, limiting calorie intake is the goal, and higher fibre levels (around 60% NDF) may be preferred, such as for horses that are considered "easy keepers"



Ultimately, a feed test helps match the right hay to the right animals. It removes guesswork, reduces risk and helps farmers make confident feeding decisions from every bale.



No Feed Central satchel? **No problem!**

We're more than happy to send you out a sample kit and satchel but if you can't wait, or something else is at hand... well, we'll take that too.

It's easy to get a good sample to send in ([check out this short video if you haven't already](#)). Then just put the sample in a bag (or glove) with your contact details and send it to:

**10775 Warrego Hwy,
Charlton QLD 4350**

We'll take care of the rest!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

On Farm Test Kits

If you are not growing sorghum

If you are growing sorghum

[Get more details](#)



hey

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FarmScan Moisture Meter

A farming essential, it's a digital hay moisture tester with a stainless steel tip, for accuracy, versatility and durability. It has a super bright, outdoor-friendly display screen and you can download results via USB.

\$726
+ postage

[More details on the website](#)



~~\$5~~ **Now \$5**

Hay Safety Poster

A1 sized for home, office or farm. A reminder and discussion starter.



\$100
+ postage

On Farm Nitrate Testing Kit

Get the answer you need in minutes. Each Kit contains 5 tests and an info booklet. Prussic Acid & Nitrate Test (10 tests) - \$250

Delmhorst Moisture Meter

The key to a high quality product is proper moisture monitoring with the correct and precise equipment.

The Delmhorst Navigator FX- 20 moisture meter has the ability to check hay moisture in bales or windrow, matched with class leading accuracy and clarity!

\$1685
+ postage



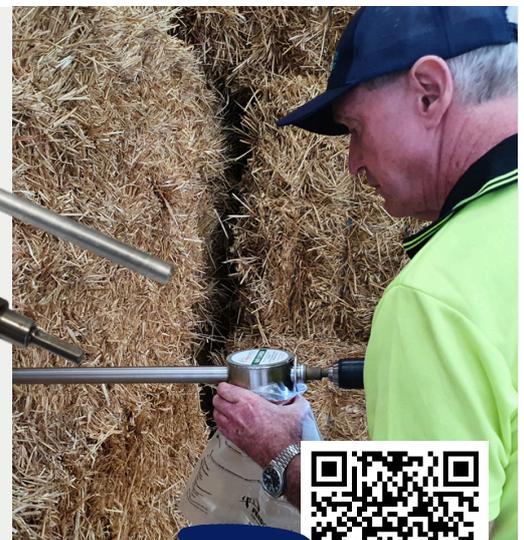
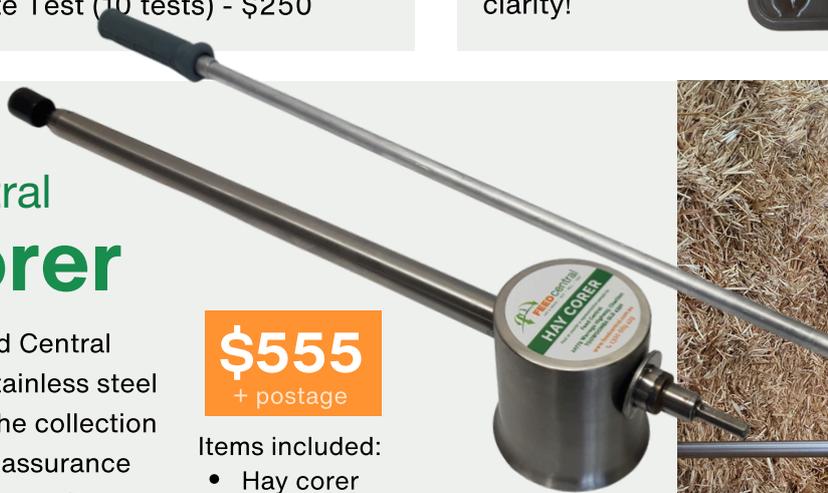
Hay Corer

Developed by the Feed Central Hay Inspectors, this stainless steel hay corer is ideal for the collection of samples for quality assurance and feed testing purposes. It simply attaches to your cordless or corded 1/2" drill.

\$555
+ postage

Items included:

- Hay corer
- Clean out rod
- Hay Corer Storage Satchel
- Clip Seal bags



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