Feeding Hay with Herbicide Residues

Many of you winter cows on corn stalks or other crop residues. Do you also sometimes feed grass or prairie hay to supplement those stalks? If you do, double check to learn if those hay fields were sprayed with herbicides before hay was cut earlier this year.

If your hayfield was treated with Milestone or ForeFront or Chaparral herbicide, residues of those herbicides will still be in the hay. It won't hurt your animals but those herbicide residues will pass through your animals in their manure and urine.

So what, you ask? Well, if you plant that field to beans or alfalfa or another sensitive crop next spring, that herbicide residue may prevent those crops from growing wherever the manure and urine fell. Also, any of that hay that is not eaten but remains in the field also can release the herbicide residue and prevent crop growth.

To prevent this problem, don't feed treated hay to cattle while they are on potentially sensitive fields. And if they are already eating treated hay, stop feeding it three days before moving them on to sensitive fields so the residue has time to pass through the animals before being deposited in the fields.

One last thing – avoid spreading manure from animals that were fed hay treated with Milestone, ForeFront, or Chaparral on potentially sensitive fields. Next year's crop could be affected by herbicides in the hay you feed this winter. Double check now to avoid losses later.

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