

PROFIT OPPORTUNITIES WITH CASH HAY

Hay prices. What do you think the weather this year will do to hay prices. Maybe you can cash in.

Have you paid attention to this year's hay news? If so, you realize that good quality alfalfa hay could be in short supply this year. Alfalfa acreage still is way down. In addition, throughout much of the alfalfa growing region, including here in Nebraska, persistent rains greatly reduced dairy quality hay production during first cutting this spring. But all that rain may boost total tonnage for the rest of the year.

What this all means is that dairy hay prices are likely to remain strong but there probably will be downward pressure on other hay prices.

For you cattle producers and hay growers in our area, this could be good news! Just think about this. Suppose someone paid you 200, or even just 150 dollars per ton for your best alfalfa. Could you find other hay nearby that would work for your animals that would only cost you 60 or 70 dollars? Even if you paid your neighbor 100 dollars for his average hay, you still could sell high, buy low, and pocket the profits. And make your neighbor happy, besides.

What do you have to lose by trying? If you harvest your alfalfa hay before it blooms, get it baled in heavy, transportable packages with most of the leaves intact, store it under cover to prevent weather damage, and then market that hay to get its true value, you also can sell it for a premium price. And, if you try but your hay does not meet premium standards, you still can feed it to your own animals.

You may need do some work and have a little luck to be able to sell high and buy low. Smart operators look for these opportunities.

Dr. Bruce Anderson, Extension Forage Specialist
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
314 Keim Hall—East Campus
Lincoln NE 68583-0915
402-4742-2577
banderson1@unl.edu

