



Livestock Feeders

Livestock feeders can help prevent your paying for additional hay and grain ruined by your livestock. Find out how to foil their wasteful ways.

By John & Sue Weaver

Premier1 Portatrough

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If you raise animals on your farm, you know the truth: They waste a lot of feed if you don't use the right kind of livestock feeder. We can't address every kind of animal feeder used in every situation, but let's look at types you're most likely to have on your farm: hay and grain feeders for horses, cattle, goats, sheep and camelids, many of which you can use to feed your pets and other livestock, too.

Before buying feeders for any species, evaluate the models you're considering with these points in mind:

1. Are they durable? Horses chew. Rams and bucks batter feeders for the joy of hearing them crunch. Some materials shatter (producing serious safety hazards) in sub-zero weather; others degrade when exposed to prolonged summer sun. If you aren't sure the product you're buying will last, consider one that comes with a good warranty.
2. Are they safe? Metal feeders with sharp edges tear skin. Larger feeders must be designed so foals and calves can't get inside of them. Stability is an important feature; top-heavy feeders are easily pushed over and often injure young stock.
3. Are they designed for the animals that will use them? If your animals have horns, make certain feeders accommodate horned stock. What works for horses may not work for smaller stock and vice versa. Sheep that reach up to nibble hay from a horse-feed bunk are constantly showered with fleece-ruining chaff; horses will easily dump over and ruin a chest-high, sheep hay feeder. Can all animals, even youngsters, reach the feeding stations?
4. Are they practical? Are goat feeders designed so that wasteful goats can't climb in them and spoil good feed? Are hay feeders designed to catch chaff or does it fall on the ground and get ruined underfoot? Are the units easily cleaned? Repairable? Recyclable?

Basic Feeders

A wide variety of feeders are designed to serve individually portioned concentrates indoors. Horse feeders must be ultra-sturdy. Tough, longwearing, stainless-steel items like Nelson's 13-quart Models 540se and 560se are hard to beat. Nelson feeders have a built-in, feed-saver lip that prevents feed flinging; they're also warranted for one year.

Noble Corner FeederBasic, welded-rod hayracks like Country Manufacturing, Inc.'s models CM212 and CM213 wall-mounted units are a simple answer to feeding hay to stalled horses. They're welded of 716-inch hot-rolled steel and built to last. The CM212 mounts on flat walls, the CM213 in corners and both hold a lot of hay.

Another Country Manufacturing offering, the Model CM2125 combination feeder, is welded out of rugged, 16-gauge steel with heavy, steel hay bars. It's designed to feed both hay and grain. Priefert's brawny Model HGFNB hay and grain feeder is built of similar materials and performs the same function. These sturdy, dual-feed feeders are mainstays in many horse operations and they work exceedingly well for other species, too.



A simple, natural way to feed large, stalled animals is the Noble Panels and Gates' large, sturdy corner feeder manufactured of seamless molded poly-urethane. Designed with a roomy central area to allow animals to eat hay with their heads at ground level in a natural grazing position, and with two built-in side pans for feeding salt, grain or supplements, it can be used in either stall or paddock.

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Timed Feeders

Sometimes it's hard to feed on schedule, yet livestock thrive when fed on time. The answer? Timed setups based on HayDay's Stable Grazer hay feeder coupled with an automatic grain dispenser.

Agro Pro FeederThe galvanized steel, battery-operated Stable Grazer is engineered to deliver individual flakes of hay up to six times per day. This, plus its close-to-the-ground manger, is designed to simulate natural grazing activity. It can be stall- or fence-mounted and used to feed virtually any sort of livestock that eats baled hay.

Quick Feed automatic grain feeders come in manual, electronic and solar-powered models in single- and double-feed units designed to feed horses, small livestock and household pets. The QFS electronic feeder holds 50 pounds of pellets or grain, or 25 pounds of dog or cat food. It can be programmed to dispense one to five cups of feed up to 12 times per 24-hour period. All Quick Feed units are constructed of high-impact, polyurethane plastic and designed to be mounted under cover or indoors.

Agro's watertight, rodent-proof, stainless steel Pro Feeder can be used indoors or out, and while it's built for horses, it can be used to feed livestock and pets as well. Like Quick Feed automatic feeders, it holds 50 pounds of concentrates, feeds up to 12 times per day and comes in electric or solar-powered versions, including a 230-volt version for overseas customers.

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Tubs, Troughs and Bunks

HayDay Stable GrazerAnyone who feeds hay or grain from tubs knows how annoying (and wasteful) it is when animals dump them over or stand in them. Sydell's neat Model 811 sectional feeder for hornless goats stops those wasteful behaviors cold (and the feeders work for other small livestock, too). This six-sided, 12-opening feeder built of heavy, 12-inch, solid rods encloses a sturdy, easily removable poly tub at a height of 16 inches above the ground. This feeder works admirably well for sheep and small camelids, too.

Premier1's PortaTrough stackable poly troughs are low-slung, practically tip-proof grain feeders. They come in 36- and 60-inch models, and are easily carried by hand or on an ATV. Designed for sheep, they work well for every sort of small livestock and for feeding multiple pets.

Even the most determined goat can't stand in or tip over Tarter Gates' Billy Goat Gruff super-sturdy, low-to-the-ground, V-style trough. Available in 4- and 8-foot length models, they quickly pay for themselves in the grain you save (we know because we use them ourselves).

We also use Billy Goat Gruff low-slung, goat-size bunk feeders and hay racks for our sheep. At 14 inches in height and 64 inches long, these sturdy poly bunk feeders are ram-tough (and the galvanized hayrack's 4-inch by 4-inch spacing really cuts down on waste). Take note: Tarter Gates' American Farmland product line features a full lineup of similar units for horses and larger livestock in 5- and 10-foot long models.

Baled Hay Feeders

Nelson 500 Series



Tarter Gates' Equestrian World Equine Hay Basket is a unique feeder engineered to feed multiple small, square bales of hay in small group settings. A framework of heavy-duty, 134-inch, round tubing cradles a smooth-sided, easily removable poly basket designed with large vent holes to let moisture out, but keep hay in. It works well for camelids, too.

It's a fact that hay growers can bale, move and store big bales more economically than small ones, so in many parts of the country (our own included), it's becoming increasingly difficult to purchase small, square bales of hay. However, research conducted at Purdue University showed wastage of 22.6 to 38 percent occurred when big bales of hay were fed directly on the ground, so when feeding big bales, use a feeder!

Finding Feeders

Agpro
www.profeeders.com
800-527-1030

Country Manufacturing, Inc.
www.countrymfg.com
800-335-1880

Crystalyx (Goat-Lyx)
www.crystalyx.com
800-727-2502

Farnam
www.farnamhorse.com
800-234-2269

HayDay (Stable Grazer)
www.stablegrazer.com
800-732-1654

Nelson Manufacturing
www.nelsonmfg.com
888-844-6606

Noble Panels and Gates
www.noblepanels.com
800-437-3966

Preifert
www.preifert.com
800-527-8616

Premier1
www.premier1supplies.com
800-282-6631

Quick Feed
www.quickfeed.com
800-211-4206

Sweetlix
www.sweetlix.com
800-325-1486

Sydell
www.sydell.com



800-842-1369

Tarter Gate (American Farmland, Billy Goat Gruff, Equestrian World)

www.tartergate.com

800-REDGATEHay-Mizer's 8-foot square, big bale feeder is engineered to be used with a raised, wooden floor, making it a waste-resistant choice for feeding cattle. It's designed to feed big, round or big, square bales, is bull-proof and feeds up to 20 cows at any one time.

Cattle owners who prefer a classic, round design, but who are tired of replacing standard hay rings every few years, should investigate American Farmland's Model RBF 3-Piece Extra Heavy-Duty Bull Hay Feeder; American Farmland promotes it as the heaviest and tallest (54 inches) metal hay ring in the industry.

Horses that dine from standard hay rings rub their manes and abrade their necks, and horned cattle catch their heads in classic, closed-top designs. Equestrian World remedies these situations with their models GHF (galvanized) and RHF (red-coated) 3-Piece Horse and Horned Cattle Hay Feeders. These feeders are open-topped, A-frame feeders fabricated of 134-inch round tubing while Priefert's Model RBFH, 22-gauge, sheet metal round-bale horse feeder does away with top bars altogether to create an uncommonly safe design.

Sydell's Models 886 and 887 collapsible goat and sheep hay feeders (for round and square bales respectively) are built using horizontal bars welded of 15-gauge, square tubing, making them suitable for feeding both horned and hornless breeds.

Premier1's six-panel, collapsible WirePanel Big Bale Feeder is designed for hornless sheep and goats. It features small holes for less wastage and adapts to most bale sizes and shapes. The unit provides hay for an average of 40 ewes and conveniently folds flat when not in use. There are four head holes per panel.

About the Authors

John & Sue Weaver are long-time hobby farmers based in Arkansas.

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