

Score Card for Visual Hay Quality Evaluation to Determine Relative Feed Value (RFV)

Use this chart to assist the horse owner with a visual estimate when evaluating hay quality. Although not as reliable as forage testing, these guidelines for sensory evaluation are given. Hay that is cut early, leafy, soft, green, free of foreign material and has a pleasant odor, will be high quality and have a high Relative Feed Value (RFV).

Select which "line" of Buckeye Horse Feed to use based on your RFV score^(d)

Visual Evaluation ^(a)		Possible Score	Your Score
I. Stage of Harvest Example: Timothy Head Length			
1. Pre-Bud	1. Before blossom or heading	26-30	
2. Less Than 1"	2. Early blossom or early heading	21-25	
3. 1" to 4"	3. Mid-to late bloom head	16-20	
4. Over 4"	4. Seed stage (stemmy)	11-15	
II. Leafiness	1. Very leafy	26-30	
	2. Leafy	21-23	
	3. Slightly stemmy	16-20	
	4. Stemmy	0-6	
III. Color Note: the <i>outside</i> of a bale will bleach out from light, but this does not affect quality.	1. Natural green color of crop	13-15	
	2. Light green	10-12	
	3. Yellow to slightly brownish	7-9	
	4. Brown or black	0-6	
IV. Odor	1. Clean - "crop odor"	13-15	
	2. Dusty	10-12	
	3. Moldy - mousy or musty	7-9	
	4. Burnt (caramel smell)	0-6	
V. Softness	1. Very soft and pliable	9-10	
	2. Soft	7-8	
	3. Slightly harsh	5-6	
	4. Harsh, brittle	0-4	
		Sub-Total:	
VI. Penalties	1. Trash, weeds, dirt, etc.	Subtract 0-35	
Quality Standard	RFV ^(b)	Visual Grading Scores ^(c)	
Prime	= >151	= 95-100	TOTAL:
1.	= 150-125	= 85-94	
2.	= 124-103	= 75-84	
3.	= 102-87	= 65-74	
4.	= 86-75	= 55-64	
5.	= <74	= Below 54	

(a) From fact sheet AGR-62, Quality Hay Production, University of Kentucky

(b) "Standard", assigned by Hay Market Task Force of AFGC

- (c) Grading scores from Buckeye Nutrition
- (d) >151 = Grass Plus or Alfa Plus Line/Ration Balancers
103 - 150 = Grass Plus or Alfa Plus Line
75 - 102 = Formula and Race Series
< 74 = Buckeye "complete" feeds (Maturity/Senior, Unbeetable, Wrangler)

[Return to Technical Bulletin Index](#)

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