SIMPLE HAY MAKING METHOD USING A PIT

Compressing hay in the pit

Tying the hay bale

- Remove/pull out hay bale from the hole and store in a cool dry place for future use.

Ready hay bale out of the pit


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Introduction
- This is a cheap method of making hay for dry season feeding at farm level.
- It is simple and easy to adopt for a small scale farmer
- Makes use of locally available materials.

Objectives
- To enable farmers conserve grass into bales of hay for dry season feeding.
- For improved animal nutrition.

Advantages of using a pit
- Farmer will reduce on the cost of production in terms of buying timber to make a hay box which is more costly.
- One can dig it next to where the grass has been planted and cover it with polythene sheet or iron sheet to avoid rain water getting into the pit.
- It avoids one carrying the hay box from one place to the other resulting into breakages.
- Easier for the farmer to adopt the simple technology as it involves digging a pit measuring 70 cm long x 45 cm wide x 40 cm deep.

Procedure of making hay
- Cut the grass at the flowering stage, at least 5 cm above the ground for the new re-growth.
- Spread the grass under shade for 2-3 days depending on the weather and let it wilt. Direct drying on the sun is not recommended as this lowers the quality.
- When the grass has wilted, line the hole with polythene sheet to avoid the grass coming in contact with the soil.
- Take the sisal twine in double strands and first put it across the 70 cm length ensuring that the strands exceed the 70 cm length to give it easy time when tying the hay bale.
- Put the second double strands across the 45 cm width to make sure the strands exceed the 45 cm width to give it easier time of tying the hay bale.
- Put the wilted grass into the dug hay hole starting from the bottom along the 70 cm length and compress it by stepping on it to take the shape of the hay hole up to the top of the hay hole.
- Start tying the hay bale once the grass has been compressed and filled up to the top by tying the four stands tightly.

Equipments required are:
- A well drained site near the grass field.
- A jembe/hoe for making the hole.
- A tape measure or ruler for setting the hay hole on the ground.
- A panga/machete for shaping up the hay hole.
- Polythene sheet for lining inside the hay hole.
- Sisal twine for tying the grass into a bale of hay.
- Wooden pegs for marking the ground for the hay hole.