

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture  
**KENT A. LEONHARDT**



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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **WVDA WARNS OF RISKS DUE TO FLOOD AFFECTED HAY**

**Charleston, W.Va.** – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is warning citizens against feeding flood contaminated hay to livestock. When forages are affected by flood waters, they become contaminated with soil, bacteria and debris. Feeding this hay to animals can be very dangerous.

“Once flood waters come in contact with hay bales, bacteria often grows making the hay unsafe for animal consumption. With the recent floods, we want to make sure our farmers and their livestock are safe,” stated Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “Before buying hay, make sure you know where it comes from and that it hasn’t been affected by flood waters.”

Some guidelines to follow include:

- Baleage not sealed on both ends should not be used for animal consumption.
- Some individually plastic wrapped baleage may be useable.
- Closely inspect bales for punctures or separation of the plastic layers. If there is no visible damage, the hay may be safe to feed.
- Continue monitoring baleage for separation of plastic layers prior to feeding. If the plastic separates, the forage will spoil and should be discarded. If the plastic remains intact until feeding, closely inspect bales for abnormal smells or colors and the presence of molds or excess moisture before feeding.

For more information, please contact WVU Extension Services at (304) 293-4221 or the WVDA at (304) 558-3200.

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