

# Disaster Relief

## *Handling Flood-Damaged Forages*

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### **Overly Mature Perennials**

You can partially save some overly mature alfalfa or clover grass by mixing and ensiling them. Although nutritional value will be low, this is a fast method of salvaging the forage and promoting regrowth for the next harvest. Ensile perennials in either conventional upright or temporary trench silos.

To make a trench silo:

- Locate the trench where drainage is good.
- Design the trench for efficient feeding. A long, narrow, deep trench results in less feeding loss than a wide, shallow trench.

To make the silage:

- Direct cut or wilt to 65 to 70 percent moisture.
- Chop finely.
- Pack thoroughly.
- If available, add 100 to 200 pounds of corn and cob chop to each ton of ensiled forage. This improves fermentation, quality, and palatability.

### **Hay**

To lessen damage to flooded hay crops:

- Remove old growth from fields you haven't harvested. This encourages regrowth for later cuttings.
- Make this crop into hay or silage.
- If crop is silt-damaged, chop it uniformly back onto the field. Then topdress immediately with fertilizer. You may also want to apply nitrogen to stimulate legumes as well as grasses. Check with your county Extension office for recommended application rates.
- On fields harvested just before the flood, make the crop into hay or silage. Then topdress with fertilizer. Check with your county Extension office for specific recommendations.
- If growth is short or yellow, topdress immediately.

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