



## Hay Availability & Pricing Information for this coming Arizona Winter

Hello, all of us here at Mike's are horse owners and know first-hand how expensive it is getting to care for our four legged friends. Mike searches continuously for the best feed at the best prices to help all his customers in the struggle to care for their animals.

Below we have included a few reasons for the *SHARP* increase in Hay and Feed prices over the past 6 months and have also included a few ways to help make your hay go further to lessen the burden on all horse owners.

Regarding the availability and pricing for Alfalfa and Bermuda Hay during the Winter of 2011 and 2012

Like many things in the world today hay prices have sky-rocked, and there are numerous reasons for this, below are a few of the more prevalent reasons driving this situation:

- Hay in this region of the country is currently in short supply due to an increase in the amount of hay that is being exported out of Az, Ca, Or, Wa, to other countries, mainly the Middle East.
- Drought in other areas of the U.S. is causing more of our hay to be sold and transported to these areas of the country.
- A sharp price increase in crops traded on the stock market; Corn, Wheat, Cotton.
- This rise has caused some long-term hay growers to replace some, or all, of their hay crop with crops that are more profitable to grow, thus reducing the amount of hay being grown.
- A longer and cooler than normal spring pushing back the first cutting date, and in some cases increasing the amount of time between cuttings.
- Increase in milk prices have Dairies buying large quantities of hay, after several years of little or no purchasing.
- Recent water availability issues for irrigation of local crops.

### **So what does all of the above have to do with the increase cost of hay?**

Basically, supply is down and demand is up... More buyers competing for less hay, causing a drastic rise in price for what hay there is to purchase. We are looking at retail Alfalfa and Bermuda hay hitting the \$18.00 a bale mark easily, and possibly even reaching as high as \$20.00 plus. Even more upsetting than that, is the fact that there just isn't enough hay in the barns to get many people through until the spring 2012 cuttings are available.

### **Making our hay go further**

What does this mean for you... the horse owner?

We've been recommending that people stock up with enough hay to get them into mid spring 2012, when the farmers will be cutting hay again. Money to do this tends to be an issue with many people right now, and space for safely storing this amount of hay is also a major concern for many. Because of this, we will also outline some options horse owners can take to make what hay they can purchase and store last longer.

- Feeding a mixture of hay and cubes or pellets can help things go further. Pound for pound, or ton for ton, you can store a lot more cubes or pellets in the same space you can hay.
- Personally, I store 2 ton of cubes in the same amount of space I can store 12 bales of hay... that's just over ½ a ton.
- It must be noted that cubes and pellets are made from locally grown hay and have been subject to the same cost increases as hay, but is currently still readily available.
- Please note that we order pellets and cubes on a weekly basis to keep them as fresh as possible, so if you decide to go this route and plan to order a large quantity be sure to give us about 1 week advance notice so we can have plenty on hand for your order.

- Supplementing your hay with other concentrated roughage i.e.: Grains, grain mixes, sweet feeds, or other processed feeds such as **Az Senior Feed** or **Nutrena Safechoice** will allow you to reduce the amount of hay you need to feed, while supplying your horse with all its necessary nutritional needs. We also have a fairly new line of feed from Nutrena called Triumph, which tends to have a better price point compared to many other processed feeds. We stock **Triumph Senior, Triumph Complete, and Triumph Sweet Feed**. These are High Quality feeds at a good price.
- It's important to note here that it is entirely possible to use this method and not compromise your horse's quiet disposition. Many feeds these days are designed to offer good balance nutrition without making a horse "hot" or excitable.
- Another option that can be utilized alone (along with hay of course), or in conjunction with some of the ideas above is to add another fiber source such as **Beet Pulp**. We stock beet pulp in three different forms... **Shreds, Pellets, and a Fortified Beet Pulp Mix**.

If you're unsure how to go about choosing a method to stretch your hay and make what you are able to purchase and store last through the winter, speak with your veterinarian about your horse's individual needs, or speak to one of us here at the store, we will be happy to help you.

The suggestions listed above will allow you to "stretch" what hay you have available to you without having to skimp on your horses' nutrition and care. You will not be compromising **Quantity or Quality**; you will simply be fulfilling your horse's dietary needs using different options than you have in the past.

We hope this information has been helpful and hope to see you soon.

**Thank You,  
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***Horse People Serving The Horse Community of Arizona***