

Shopper's Guide Article: January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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## **Dispose of Hay Bale Net Wrap Properly**

Net wrap has become a common way to wrap hay bales during the summer hay season. Research shows that net wrap reduces harvest loss and also storage loss due to shedding more water. Besides these benefits, net wrapping hay during harvest saves time. While there are direct benefits to net wrapping hay bales, there is also a downfall, trash.



Driving along county highways and dirt roads, you can find net wrap in the ditches. All it takes is a gust of wind to blow the wrap from the back of a pickup. With the track record of savings that net wrap brings and the durability of it, it also creates issues for those tasked with mowing roads and ditches along with livestock. Net wrap gets caught in the blades of the mowers and it creates choking hazards for livestock and wildlife. A few cattle die every year from eating plastics such as net wrap. The

plastic doesn't break down in the rumen and cannot pass through. It is critical when feeding livestock that all of the net wrap be removed from the hay bales. We feed net wrapped bales and I know how hard it is, especially during the winter months, to get it removed. For the safety of your livestock, make sure you get all the net removed.

Due to net generally being made from recycled plastic, it cannot be recycled or burnt. The proper disposal method is placing it in the trash. Once net wrap is removed from the hay bale, it should be securely placed or stowed so it does not come off during transport. Simply tossing it on the back of a pickup is not secure and when you reach your destination you will find that it is no longer where you left and instead has become trash along a road.

Hopefully the warmer weather and grass season will be here soon. In the meantime, make sure to use extra caution removing all the net wrap from bales before feeding and securing it properly so it stays put on the vehicle during transport. Your livestock, the wildlife and those who mow the roads will thank you!