Steer Responses to Alfalfa, Perennial ryegrass, and Mixed Alfalfa-Perennial ryegrass Baled Silage. (C06-collins162322-Poster)

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Abstract:

Alfalfa preservation as round bale or chopped silage avoids most of the negative weather effects of hay curing on forage quality. However, the composition of alfalfa forage is not ideal for silage fermentation due to a high buffering capacity and relatively low levels of fermentable carbohydrates. Information is needed on feeding responses of livestock on mixed alfalfa/grass silages compared with pure alfalfa silage. Neutral detergent fiber content averaged 540, 547, and 431 g/kg DM, for pure alfalfa, mixed, and pure perennial ryegrass, respectively. Ad libitum intake and in vivo digestibility were measured using ruminally cannulated beef steers and round bale silages prepared from pure alfalfa, pure perennial ryegrass, and a mixture of the two species. Daily dry matter intake of silage after an 8-month storage period averaged 10.7, 10.0, and 8.7 kg DM for pure alfalfa, mixed, and pure perennial ryegrass, respectively. In vivo dry matter digestibility averaged 748, 647, and 630 g/kg DM for the perennial ryegrass, mixed, and alfalfa silages, respectively. While related work showed improved silage fermentation characteristics of the mixed silage, these results indicate that a low level of grass addition did not improve animal response over that on pure alfalfa silage.

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