

FLORA FAUNA NEWS

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Better Forage Equals Better Results

By Brian Kanke
Chairman of Zoo Pharma Dynamics

In the world of agriculture, forages are the unappreciated and sometimes forgotten plants that facilitate livestock management. The best way civilization has developed is by allowing ruminant animals to feed on cellulosic plants and convert grass into energy, producing other very beneficial products for mankind. It is likely that the typical American consumer does not appreciate the vital role forages play in everyday life. A wide variety of products and services are directly dependent on successful forage production.

One of the biggest challenges associated with raising livestock is providing feed for them. It is healthier for the animals to obtain their nutrition by grazing on pasture forage. If livestock have the opportunity, they will selectively graze the most palatable and nutritious plants and parts. Consequently, animal performance is typically better when livestock graze on properly managed pastures or managed habitats compared to hay of the same species.

There are numerous situations in farming methods where grazing is not a viable or available option. If animals cannot graze, they must be fed daily, but grazing animals are likely to receive a healthier diet. How do I bring the benefits of grazing to animals that cannot graze? Fortunately, there is a company that manufactures pasture in a bag, offering all the benefits of fresh plants. Over the past several years, I have been feeding pasture in a bag to the animals I farm, which enables me to practice selective grazing with specific animals at various times of the year for short periods, thereby allowing my pastures to reach optimal growth. The whitetail deer and goats I farm are fed pasture in a bag daily, all year long.

What exactly is pasture in a bag? It is premium alfalfa, non-GMO, chopped while fresh and moist, with probiotics blended into an airtight bag where it safely cultures. It contains naturally occurring yeast that creates probiotics, aiding digestion by providing nutritional benefits, such as the production of B-vitamins necessary for metabolism. Thus, it establishes good gastrointestinal health in animals by boosting the existing microbial population of naturally occurring probiotics. This pre-digestion process closely mimics the digestive activity of animals and results in better assimilation of energy, vitamins, and essential nutrients. My favorite part of pasture in a bag is that there is zero waste—no money lost, which is key for a farmer. Other benefits include being low in starch and sugar, allergen-free, dust-free, and choke-free.



DID YOU KNOW?



- Forage is the foundation of many livestock diets.
- Forage is a key part of livestock economics.
- Forage is essential for human food.



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We conducted a 30-day study where we fed one pen of 10 whitetail deer baled alfalfa and half of their normal pellet ration. Each day, we fed 2 flakes of alfalfa in a trough and removed the remains the next morning, giving 2 fresh flakes. As the study progressed, the remains we removed were getting larger, filling several trash cans. The deer were only eating the leaves and leaving the stalks, even though we had reduced their pellet ration. We weighed the bales we used, and at the end of the 30 days, we measured the weight of the waste. The deer consumed only 38% of the weight of the bale, while the remaining 62% was waste. Calculating the cost of a \$22.00 bale, we were losing \$13.64 per bale. The deer were eating an average of 28.5 pounds of a 75-pound bale. Another downside to the bale of alfalfa is that it is dry and difficult for a deer to chew. The rough stalks are tough on the inside of the mouth, especially for fawns. We believe feeding pasture in a bag has nearly eliminated lumpy jaws in our fawns by preventing minor cuts and scratches inside their tender mouths, which allows bacteria an entry point.

We use a 50-pound bag of pasture in a bag, generally paying around \$18.00 per bag. We are getting the full 50 pounds consumed at \$18.00, compared to a bale of alfalfa, where we are getting only 28.5 pounds consumed for \$22.00. The economics favor pasture in a bag. We save \$0.41 per pound of feed while unlocking nature's total digestible nutrients (TDN) for better animal health.

Zoo Pharma Dynamics is excited to announce a strategic partnership with Pivotal Feeds and their product Chaffhay. Chaffhay is pasture in a bag. It is the product I have been using for many years for optimal animal health. ZPD has been conducting research and development with Chaffhay for the use of our additive, Cervid Prion Preventative (CPP), to combat chronic wasting disease. Through our research, we have found that the culturing process within the bag creates the ideal environment for our additive CPP. The yeast and natural fermentation inside the bag allow CPP to achieve maximum effectiveness while providing the deer with exceptional nutrients. Pivotal Feeds will manufacture Chaffhay with the CPP additive in mid-summer. We will conduct additional field trials using the manufactured product in late summer 2025.

If you are interested in participating in the upcoming field trial please email research@zoopharmadynamics.com. We will email you a simple questionnaire to fill out for the field trials.

**“Give your farm a pay raise with healthier animals
by feeding pasture in a bag, CHAFFHAYE”**