



Round Bale Feeders

... a feeder that is uniquely "goat".

A continuing issue for this goat producer is how to get the hay into the goats with the least amount of labour and least amount of waste. This particular feeder experiment was spurred on by the fact that I was very pregnant (so forking hay from round bales took me a LONG time), and my husband was going to be helping me with the goat chores while I was away showing for five days (he did not like the idea of having to fork hay into feeders). So began our search for the ultimate round bale feeder for horned goats.

After hearing many horror sto-



The round bale is dropped into the "V" shape made by the two panels.

ries of goats being caught in sheep feeders, and having round bales fall on them in cattle feeders, we knew that we needed something uniquely "goat".

At first I thought I'd try the simple way... buy livestock panels and put them around the upright bales. Well, the livestock panels that we have available here have spaces that are 8" wide x 6" high – this is the perfect size of opening into which a young horned buckling's head will go, but will not come out, so my chore time was spent wrestling these guys and smashing my fingers in an effort to rescue them. Then, I thought I'd cut strategic openings in the panels so they could put their heads in and out easily... however, if they can do that, they also eventually just climb right on in, which kind of defeats the purpose of having a feeder in the first place. As we all know, once they've pooped and peed on it, they consider it bedding,



The empty feeder, showing the basic construction of two sheets of 3/4" treated plywood with two welded metal panels.

not feed! In our area, we're still suffering from three years of drought, so wasting hay like that is not an option. Seeing my frustration (and bloodied fingers), my husband (who is handy with a welder) decided to help me out and began the process of designing a feeder that would work in our situation.

We had a few criteria: it had to be



When the goats first start the bale, they can eat from either the top by standing on the horizontal bars, through the bottom bars (that are 5" apart) or from the side above the plywood.



As the bale is eaten down, the metal panels are pushed up so that the goats can still reach all of the hay.

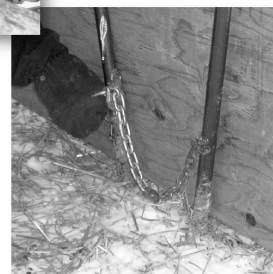
portable, it had to keep the hay in and the goats out, it had to be adjustable, it had to be safe (no more heads stuck), and it had to be affordable... so he set to work, first using some existing dividers and later buying the pipe. Through trial and error, he came up with a realistic design which works great for us. We are now feeding about 150 goats with five feeders, with a minimum of waste and effort.

The basic design involves two sheets of 3/4" treated plywood, and two panels of welded bars. Once the goats start working on the bale, we sometimes need to loosen it with a straight crowbar so they can eat it again. This depends on the kind of hay being fed – tighter bales require a little more work than loose ones. The panels can be adjusted to 4 different heights, simply by pushing them up and sliding a pin in. As the goats eat the bale down, we push the panels up, and therefore closer together, so that the goats can still reach the hay. Once the bale is completely eaten, the panels are side by side in a vertical position.



Submitted by Karen Kolkman of Vanscoy, Saskatchewan.

The metal panels are adjusted to four different heights by sliding in a metal pin. A chain is needed at the bottom of the two metal panels to hold them in place so that they aren't pushed out by the weight of the bale.



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