



Recommendations to Farmers Managing PFAS Risks: HAY

Hay can become contaminated from PFAS in soil. To assess potential contamination and the risk for exposure to livestock, it's important to understand current action levels applicable to milk and beef, soil screening levels, and the importance of characterizing your fields and tracking your hay lots. Please contact Pfas.dacf@maine.gov to learn more.

Beef and milk are currently regulated for PFOS contamination in Maine. Beef and milk have action levels above which the products cannot be sold. The action level for beef is 3.4 parts per billion (ppb) PFOS. The action level for cow milk is 210 parts per trillion (ppt) PFOS. Notice the difference in units for milk. **Please be advised that these action levels may be lowered in the future and may include additional PFAS compounds.**

Soil screening levels are under development. If soils are "ND" or non-detect for PFOS, plants and animals should not take up detectable concentrations from consuming feed grown on these soils. If soil concentrations are at or below 6.8 ppb for PFOS, these soils are currently considered adequate for producing forage to feed to beef animals and growing vegetables. However, special consideration must be taken if these soils are intended to grow feed for dairy animals.

For milk to be safely below the current action level, DACF encourages feeding hay that is non-detect (ND) for PFOS. Hay and pasture grown in soil with PFOS concentration of less than 6.8 ppb are still likely to contain detectable amounts of PFOS. As a result, feeding forages from these fields to lactating dairy animals should be avoided.

Corn and small grains take up less PFOS than grass and legumes. This is becoming a viable crop option for fields with higher levels of PFOS. Instead of a hay crop, farmers are growing corn silage, snaplage, or grain for cattle feed.

PFOS concentrations in livestock can be lowered by managing what is fed and when. For example, a farmer can greatly reduce the level of PFOS in beef cattle over a few months with clean feed. It is, therefore, possible for hay that contains low levels of PFOS to be used as feed during certain times of the year or for specific life stages of livestock. Please speak with a PFAS Agricultural Compliance Officer to discuss the details of a potential feeding plan for your farm.

Label your hay lots. Field soils vary in their levels of PFAS contamination, which means that the PFAS contamination in the hay harvested will vary by field. Therefore, storing your baled or wrapped hay in labeled lots is very important. If you use a bunker silo, segregate by fields if you can. Certain lots may be more appropriate for specific purposes than others.

Inform your customers. Let your customers know about the presence of PFAS compounds in your farm's soil so that they can make an informed decision about how to use your hay or silage. If they have specific questions, they can contact Maine DACF at Pfas.dacf@maine.gov

Financial support. DACF has programs available to assist producers impacted by PFAS. Please visit <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ag/pfas/index.shtml#funding> to learn more.