

Hay! Is That

Straw?



Q: DOES HAY CAUSE HAY FEVER?

A: No. Hay fever is the body's defensive allergic response to various kinds of plant pollen and mold spores. It is not a fever and has nothing to do with hay.

Hay and straw are two different things but very often confused with each other. Both are crops grown and used on farms across the United States and Canada, but once hay and straw are harvested, their similarities end.

It's Hay

Hay crops, which include legumes like alfalfa and clover, dried grasses like timothy and ryegrass, or some combination of both, are farmed and harvested to feed livestock such as horses, cattle, sheep, and goats.

Hay must be cut at exactly the right time—when it contains many leaves with few seed heads or stems. The leaves contain high concentrations of starches, sugars, proteins, and minerals, all of which are important for an animal's diet.

Once cut, hay must be dried properly before storage. It is best to dry, or cure, hay in full sun, often right in the field where it was cut. After drying, hay is gathered into small rectangular or large round bales and stored away from moisture.