



# 2023 Southeastern Hay Contest

Presented by Massey Ferguson

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Like many recent years, 2023 had many challenges for our hay and baleage producers. From higher than average rainfall during the spring to drought conditions in the summer, all while fertilizer and other input costs continue to be high. The Southeast Hay Contest (SEHC) has been recognizing high quality hay and baleage production in the Southeast for almost 20 years. Over the years, this contest has gained wide acceptance among the forage producers of the region. Beginning with 100-200 entries during its first 5 years, the number of entries in the contest reached 468 in 2023 breaking all past records. For perspective, the World Forage Analysis Superbowl, which is held in conjunction with the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin, had 300 entries in 2022. The Southeastern Hay Contest is now the largest forage quality contest in the US!










The SEHC was developed by Extension agents for Southeast forage producers. Their involvement was pivotal to the success of the program during its development around 20 years ago and will continue to play an important role in the future. Extension agents not only promote the contest, but also use it in education and outreach throughout their counties and regions. The SEHC continues to fulfill its mission to bring awareness to the importance of hay testing and of managing livestock feed needs through nutritive value determination.

The SEHC is celebrating its 19<sup>th</sup> year with 468 entries coming from eight states across the SE region. New this year, the contest was expanded from 7 to 9 categories that producers can enter the forage samples. These are Warm-season perennial grass hay; Warm-season annual grass hay; Alfalfa hay; All other legume hay; Cool-season perennial grass hay; Grass-legume mixed hay; Cool-season annual grass hay; Grass baleage; and Legume baleage. Despite producer challenges, we saw some of the highest relative forage quality (RFQ) values ever. The samples are ranked based on RFQ and the top 3 entries in each category receive a cash prize. The overall winner also receives a choice of the use of a new Massey Ferguson DM Series disc mower or RK Series rotary rake for the 2024 hay production season plus \$2,000 in cash! This year's category winners are in the table below. The 2023 top RFQ was in the alfalfa hay category from Beeson Farms from Climax, NC with an index breaking 327. Beeson Farms won the Grand Prize last year (also alfalfa hay) and therefore is ineligible to win the Grand Prize in 2023. As a result, the Grand Prize goes to Mountainside Farm from Taylorsville, NC from the alfalfa hay category with an RFQ of 298.

The SEHC continues to increase its reach and strengthen its commitment to education. We will continue to lead a sponsored session on forage establishment at the American Forage and Grassland Conference, organize local hay quality workshops, and much more! Again, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of our Extension agents, who engage producers and collect samples, and our many category sponsors, as well as our title sponsor Massey Ferguson. We encourage you to continue the tradition and "prove your hay is the best" by submitting samples to next year's contest. Submissions are open year-round, check [www.sehaycontest.com](http://www.sehaycontest.com) for more information, or contact your local county agent or forage Extension specialist.

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Categories and Farm	City	State	Crude Protein, %	TDN, %	RFQ	Sponsors
<b>Warm Season Perennial Grass Hay: 159 entries</b>						
Jeff Bacon	Dudley	GA	15.1	63.5	156	
Eddy Turner Farm	Tennille	GA	16.3	62.9	152	
Wally Millsap	Gentry	AR	14.9	61.8	146	
<b>Category Average</b>					<b>108</b>	
<b>Alfalfa Hay: 20 entries</b>						
Beeson Farms	Climax	NC	29.3	73.1	327	
Mountainside Farm	Taylorville	NC	26.7	71.2	298	
Bill Conrad	Malone	FL	24.6	71.1	249	
<b>Category Average</b>					<b>199</b>	
<b>Other Legume Hay: 25 entries</b>						
Darling Farms	McAlpin	FL	16.5	68.2	247	
Dalton Dennis	Pensacola	FL	17.5	68.1	232	
Bill Conrad	Malone	FL	18.3	68.2	228	
<b>Category Average</b>					<b>180</b>	
<b>Cool Season Perennial Grass Hay: 56 entries</b>						
Beeson Farms	Climax	NC	10.4	66	160	
Mountainside Farm	Taylorville	NC	11.3	65.2	159	
Windfall Farm	Franklin	NC	15.1	62	143	
<b>Category Average</b>					<b>111</b>	
<b>Legume+Grass Mixed Hay: 14 entries</b>						
John Carter	McAlpin	FL	24.9	75.9	278	
Jon Pope	Coats	NC	21.3	68.1	192	
Chester Farms	Martin	TN	21.2	65.9	162	
<b>Category Average</b>					<b>143</b>	
<b>Cool Season Annual Grass Hay: 51 entries</b>						
Pittman Farms (Jerry Pittman)	Nicholson	GA	13.5	65.1	162	
Barnhart's	Hephzibah	GA	8.8	65.3	150	
K/P Farm	Culloden	GA	11.1	62.8	144	
<b>Category Average</b>					<b>109</b>	
<b>Warm Season Annual Grass Hay: 22 entries</b>						
McMichael Angus Farm	Monticello	GA	11.5	59	128	
Leikri Farms	Molena	GA	16.7	58.3	123	
Pittman Farms (Jerry Pittman)	Nicholson	GA	9.8	58.7	122	
<b>Category Average</b>					<b>110</b>	
<b>Grass Baleage: 103 entries</b>						
Leikri Farms	Molena	GA	12.8	73.7	213	
Walters Farms	Barnesville	GA	19.4	72.9	211	
Caldwell Farm and Land LLC	Concord	GA	13	70.3	193	
<b>Category Average</b>					<b>139</b>	
<b>Legume Baleage: 17 entries</b>						
Walters Farms	Barnesville	GA	15.8	69.3	189	
G & S Farms	Chipley	FL	19.8	66.9	187	
Yon Family Farms	Ridge Spring	SC	11.8	60	130	
<b>Category Average</b>					<b>172</b>	