

Sila-wrapped Grass Silage Production Using the Small Bale System (SBS) for Feeding of Goats and Sheep

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Silage making involving mechanised sila-wrapping of small round bales has been introduced in Malaysia in 1991. This method of silage production, which involves mainly grasses, has been undertaken on three ruminant farms as well as on grazing reserves. However, regular production using this method is now primarily carried out on two farms, the Sheep Multiplication Centres in the states of Kedah and Trengganu, which normally suffer from drought during part of the year.

Fresh grass is cut using a mower conditioner and then baled to produce small round bales averaging about 30 kg per bale. These bales are then collected from the field and delivered to the storage shed where the sila-wrapping machine is located, wrapped mechanically and stored. In some cases, sila-wrapping and storage are done in the field.

Annually, about 500 bales of sila-wrapped silage, equivalent to 15 tonnes, are being produced to feed cattle and sheep during the dry season. In the first 8 months of this year, a record of 2000 sila-wrapped bales have been produced. Up-to-date, a production of about 290 tonnes of sila-wrapped silage has been achieved.

Grasses used are *Brachiaria humidicola*, *B. ruziziensis*, *B. decumbens*, *Panicum maximum* and *Setaria sphacelata* cv Kazungula. Crude protein determined in the silages produced ranges between 5% to 13.4% in the grasses cut between 21 days to 2 months of maturity.

The sila-wrapping system is considered a very convenient means of silage production. However, the main problem is in the high cost of sila-wrap film which has to be imported. Another problem is rats chewing through the sila-wrap film to get at the silage causing spoilage.