

Fodder storage and hay sheds

Key points to consider when building a hay shed

Fodder Brief



There are multiple factors to consider when planning to construct a hay shed on your property, such as permits, access, size, location and stormwater capture.

This Fodder Brief aims to provide a planning framework to consider, prior to building your new hay shed.

Location

Shed location is paramount to your operation.

When planning your location, it is recommended to consider whether your shed will have:

- all-weather access: hay is often needed during strong weather events such as floods
- east-facing opening: this will reduce weather damage
- good drainage: ideally situated on the top of a rise
- tree clearance: ensure your gutters don't fill and reduce the risk of tree-limbs falling
- protection from livestock:
- reduce damage associated with stock having access
- access to roads: for efficiency in storing and transporting hay.

Planning Permits

Acquiring council permits can be complex and time consuming.

To ensure efficiency, it is recommended to view your property and shed location on the relevant State Government

website, for example www.land.vic.gov.au, and check whether there are any overlays to consider, such as environmental, inundation, and cultural sensitivity.

Then, you can draw up a site plan to send to your local council planning department (with a rates notice or copy of title) or use a private planning consultant for advice on whether you need to obtain a planning permit. Some shed manufacturers may also be able to assist with this process.

Building Permits

A key determinate of cost with building permits is fire regulations.

Unless you are looking to store large quantities of hay on your farm, aim to keep the building size below 2000m² as this will ensure you stay clear of high-cost fire requirements such as tanks, pumps and hydrants.

If you need additional storage, consider building multiple sheds.



Getting experienced project managers and building surveyors will save you time and money and it is worth getting expert advice.

Shed Size

When determining shed size, start by thinking about how many bales you wish to store and whether this is likely to increase in future. Entegra has provided a rough size estimation:

- 1,000 bales – 32m x 18m
- 2,500 bales – 48m x 24m (most common size)
- 5,000 bales – 96m x 24m (will require a fire tank which can add \$20k+ to budget)
- 20,000 bales - 160 x 45 (export size)

Once capacity is determined, you can then proceed to other design factors such as enclosing three sides to reduce wastage, hot dip galvanised trusses (hot dip galvanised columns should be a fundamental), column removal, concrete plinths and buffer rails.

Loading and Unloading

Understanding how you will load and unload your hay shed is crucial to designing an efficient hay shed.

Questions worth investigating are: what are you loading and unloading with; who is on the loader; how dense are your bales; and how high will you stack?

Entegra Signature Structures advises “what we have found to work best is to stack your sheds six bales high. Some farmers squeeze an additional seventh bale on top, however handling the seventh bale takes more time and effort. Trucks are stacked and unloaded by threes, so six makes sense.”

It’s also important to factor in enough room between bales to enable efficient loading.

Entegra recommends 8m bays work well for three bales wide and 10.5m bays for four.

Stormwater

Stormwater management is often overlooked, despite the benefits of capturing this resource.

For every square metre of roof area, 1mm of rainfall will capture 1litre of water. Therefore, if you live in a region that receives 350mm rainfall p.a. and have a 1000m² shed, you are able to harvest 350,000 litres of free, fresh rainwater per year.

Effective and efficient capture and storage of stormwater is worth the investment.

Large gutter systems that feed directly into the top of a tank, removes the possibility of stagnant water in underground pipe systems and prevent costs associated with damaged downpipes.

Consultation with experts can help determine which tank will suit your needs.

Once you know your bale capacity and have investigated permits, location, stormwater, loading and unloading of your site, you will be ready to design and construct your hay shed.

In Brief

Important factors to consider when building a hay shed:

- Shed location
- Planning permits
- Building permits
- Shed capacity and size
- Loading and unloading
- Stormwater access

Note

Primary producers may be entitled to claim a full deduction for capital expenses incurred on fodder storage assets. For more info, search “Fencing and fodder storage assets” at:

www.ato.gov.au

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