Preparing Burley in Bales

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Preparation of Burley in Bales

INTRODUCTION:

The stripping and marketing of burley tobacco in bale form was approved in 1981 to allow any burley producer to market burley in an untied (loose leaf) form.

This publication shows how to build a simple, economical bale press and gives instructions on making proper size and quality bales.

You should use 1 bale box for each grade of tobacco you strip. One jack-type presshead can be used with several boxes. You may want to build and share the bale presses with neighbors to keep costs down and get the most use out of the equipment.

For more information or assistance on the burley bale marketing program, contact your County Extension Agent for Agriculture or the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Office.

BUILDING A 1-BOX BURLEY BALE PRESS:

Materials needed (for each bale box):

- Plywood: 1/2" A-C EXT.: 1-4'x8' sheet
- Plywood: 1 pc-12"x35 3/4"
- Wood: 2x4 (dressed): 4 pcs-8' ea.
- Nails: 6d common: 1 lb.
- Bolts: 1/4x2 1/2 carriage: 4 ea.
- Bolts: 3/8x2 1/4 hex: 2 ea.
- Bolts: 3/8 flat wshrs.: 2 ea.
- Angle Iron: 3/16x2x2x6": 1 ea.
- Rod: 1/2" dia. x 4": 1 ea.
- Latch: 6" heavy duty safety hasp w/1/2" or 5/8" No. 10 flat hd. screws: 2 ea.
- Jack: car bumper type w/handle: 1 ea.

(Estimated retail cost of above items: $50-$60.)

Step 1. Cut the plywood pieces:
Step 2. Cut the wood pieces:

- Cut wood pieces to the following dimensions:
  - **FRONT BASE**: 2'-4" x 2'-4" x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2'
  - **REAR BASE**: 2'-4" x 2'-4" x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2'
  - **BASE END**: 2'-4" x 2'-4" x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2'
  - **JACK ANCHOR FRAME**: 2'-4" x 2'-4" x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2'
  - **PRESS HEAD**: 2'-4" x 2'-4" x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2'
  - **TOP JACK ANCHOR BAR**: 2'-4" x 2'-4" x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2' x 2'

- Nail plywood STRIP to FRONT 2x4 with 1 inch extending above BOTTOM as support for door.
- Cut saw notches and slits for TWINE in BACK & DOOR SUPPORT.
- Paint marks on BACK at 22 & 24 inch heights for bale height reference.
- Fabricate DOOR.
- Set DOOR in position & install appropriate fasteners.

Step 3. Assemble the bale box:

- Put ripped edges of 2x2's to the plywood and nail with 6d common nails at 6'-6" spacing.
  a. Nail 2x2x44 to SMOOTH side of plywood BACK.
  b. Nail BOTTOM to 2x4x12, 32, and 32 3/4-inch members.
  c. Nail ENDS to BACK.
  d. Set box upright, put BOTTOM snugly in box, WIDE EDGE TO FRONT, raise box 1 1/2 inches up onto 2x4's of BOTTOM per figure below and nail.
  e. Nail plywood STRIP to FRONT 2x4 with 1 inch extending above BOTTOM as support for door.
  f. Cut saw notches and slits for TWINE in BACK & DOOR SUPPORT.
  g. Paint marks on BACK at 22 & 24 inch heights for bale height reference.
  h. Fabricate DOOR.
  i. Set DOOR in position & install appropriate fasteners.
  j. Fabricate presshead.
k. Bolt jack base to presshead.

l. Set bale press boxes in stripping area opposite bench.

2. Cut a supply of 84-inch long TWINE (cotton type approved for tobacco bale use).

3. Remove DOOR and put 3 TWINE in each box:

4. Replace and latch DOOR.

5. Strip LOW to MEDIUM case (order) tobacco only! Don’t put HIGH case (order) tobacco in bales.

6. Fill each box with bunches of oriented leaves of the same grade, butts out, tips overlapping, alternating direction of bunches to build a uniform bale. DO NOT put FOREIGN matter (suckers, stalks, sticks, cans, bottles, etc.) into the bales or NEST the tobacco (conceal inferior tobacco).

m. Mount jack anchor frame on box.
7. Use jack to compress leaves.
8. Refill box with leaves once more, or as required, to get right amount of tobacco for a firm, proper size bale.
10. Press bale to a firm 22-24" height. Remove the front door. Pull each TWINE snugly and tie with a BOW KNOT. Tie TAG with producer's NAME and farm GRADE ID to center TWINE at top edge of bale.

11. Retract bale presshead, remove bale, and take bale to barn storage area.
12. Store bales on EDGE (as removed from press) with moisture protection underneath. Begin at post or wall to keep bales upright. Lay boards or plywood on top to permit stacking a second layer. Cover and protect as with normal bulked tobacco. Check daily to be sure condition is safe.
13. To check if your bales are FIRM enough: Put a test bale flatways on a level place. Stack 3 more similar bales on top of it. Leave for 24 hours. If the stack remains nearly vertical, the bottom bale is OK. If the stack leans 3-4 inches or topples over, the bottom bale is TOO SOFT! Repress and make it and all other similar bales tighter! Bale dimensions are 1'x2'x3'. Bales properly made should weigh 60-70 pounds for flyings, 70-80 pounds for lugs, and 75-85 pounds for leaf grades. DO NOT make bales over 24" high or over 90 pounds in weight.
14. CAUTION: Some MOIST tobacco can be pressed too tightly resulting in "bruised" or "caked" leaves and should be avoided. DO NOT USE EXCESSIVE FORCE with modified or other type press equipment.