NEUTRAL DETERGENT FIBER DIGESTIBILITY (NDFd)

Forages can be evaluated for NDF digestibility (NDFd) as an aid in the prediction of feed energy content, the total forage digestibility, and animal performance.

- Measuring the digestibility of fiber allows for more precise ration balancing and more predictable animal performance:
  - Research has demonstrated that lactating dairy cows will eat more dry matter (DM) and produce more milk when fed forages or total mixed rations that have higher NDF digestibility.
  - Relatively small improvements in fiber digestibility can significantly increase dry matter intake.

- NDFd analysis also gives us the tools to better compare different forages:

Example:

Haylage Sample A	Haylage Sample B
18% Crude Protein	18% Crude Protein
30% ADF	30% ADF
41% NDF	41% NDF

Would you consider these two haylage samples equal? If NDF digestibility analysis results are available, and Haylage Sample A has NDFd of 40%, and Haylage Sample B has NDFd of 60%, we know that Sample B is a higher quality hay.

Implications of NDFd analysis:
If forage quality is high, the producer can feed fewer supplements, resulting in savings. Conversely, if the forage quality is low, diet supplementation can improve animal performance, and increase profits.

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