



Title: “Baling bedding”

Description: Straw bales and bailer.

Photographer: Tansy Hutton

Where, when: Southland, January 2022.

Sustainability? Before I met my husband I had no idea that hay and straw were two different things. I very quickly learned the difference. Barley straw is a by product from grain farms where the barley is grown for both stock feed and human consumption. On farms it is important to try and utilise as much of what you grow as possible, this image shows some of the 4000 bales of barley straw being baled on this farm. Unbaled straw will be burned which will return fertilise the soil. Straw is primarily used for bedding, or bulking up stock feed. Whereas hay is a dried grass primarily used as a stand alone feed, and is especially popular for horses.

The straw is baled using the same machines that create balage, except the outer layer is one of netting instead of the plastic film that is used to seal in balage. It is crucial that when creating straw bales the moisture content is low enough, the bales need to be dry to prevent mold and rot – both of which make it unfit for animal consumption, and not ideal even for bedding. Once the straw is baled and stored or carted off the farm, the land is cultivated and reseeded with next year's crop. Grain farms will rotate their crops yearly to help prevent diseases.

Using straw as bedding is common in lots of animals, from cattle and calves, to rabbits and guinea pigs – although some of those animals use a lot more than others.

Photo notes: *Camera:* Canon EOS 800D *Settings:* f/8 1/500 sec ISO 200, 149 mm.

Digital specs: 6,000 x 4,000 pixels (24 MP).

Key words: Straw, machinery, bedding, animal welfare, farming, Tansy Hutton, Ecosystems Photography, Aotearoa, New Zealand, sustainability

Price: \$160 (incl. GST) for use of the digital image.

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Image Ref: THu#009 (Please refer to this reference in orders and correspondence).

Tansy Hutton
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