

Leeim

## The Dreaded Hay Bale Incident

Leeim was tough, hardy, a "leg at each corner" kinda guy. He proved that toughness on an August day in 2007. August and September were the months we'd pack the barns with hay for the coming winter, usually 90 tons or so. Running the riding school, I had a great group of kids that would help with getting the hay in the barn. We were getting hay from a neighbor very close by, so we were using my truck and no trailer because it was easier to back into the barn with just the truck. We were on our 3rd or 4th load and we had a good routine going, when some younger kids showed up early for their lessons and wanted to help. For safety purposes, we had several rules about hay help. One was, wear gloves, another was look and see where everyone is before you drop a bale of hay off the truck or trailer and the dogs stay in the truck.

I had a tote of gloves for the helpers that didn't have their own. Unfortunately, on that fateful day, my tote of gloves had been left in the truck with the dogs. The new kids were so excited about helping, that they got some gloves out of the truck and let the dogs out in the process...

Normally, the tote of gloves were out on a hay bale or somewhere close by, not in the truck. No one noticed the dogs getting out of the truck. I had been shoring up a corner of the hay stack, my back to the unloading process. All of a sudden I had help, Logan's dog Spigot was at my feet. It took a second or two for my brain to process and I turned around looking for Leeim...

That moment is forever etched into my mind and heart, I saw Leeim walking right past the

truck's rear tire and the 85 pound hay bale falling through the air directly above him.

No time, there's no time, my mind screams and I think "NO, I haven't had enough time with Leeim, not today, not like this, I'm not ready"

I race over to the bale and lift it off my dog. He's on his side, inverted, like a backwards letter C. His eyes are open and glassy, he's lifeless. I pick him up and grab the nearest kid and shout to the others "we're done haying for now, let everyone else know we're taking Leeim to the vet"

The kid and I run for my little truck without the hay in it, I'm telling Leeim "don't leave, I love you, please don't die" I feel a ragged breath and his eyes focus a little, please, please. I hand Leeim over to the kid, she's crying, sobbing actually, she loves him too. I call my vet on my cell phone as we're headed out the driveway (we're friends and I have her personal cell number) she answers right away, somehow gets the gist of what's going on and tells me "I'm too far away, take him to the clinic in town, I'll call them and let them know you're coming"

Luckily, we're only minutes away from the clinic. They are expecting us as we dash in the door, by this time, Leeim's breathing, labored, but breathing and he's try to hold his head up.

After what seemed an eternity, the veterinarian comes out, he has a funny kind of smile on his face, I can't read it, good news or bad, I can't tell.

He tells me "Leeim is very badly bruised, but we can't find any broken bones or signs of internal injury. I think he's one very lucky little dog."

With those words, my world righted itself.

## Footnote

Leeim's recovery was challenging and ultimately it was discovered that he did not make it through the hay bale incident unscathed. Read "My Broken Little Dog" for the rest of the story