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How much does a bale of pine needles weigh

Pine straw may be harvested mechanically or raked by hand. Mechanical operations are often conducted by a contractor who has a tractor-drawn baler collects and bundles the needles into bales that are bound with twine or wire. Bales may be round or square depending on the baler type used. Round bales may weigh as much as 40 pounds and measure about 18 inches in diameter. This size bale is typically used by landscape contractors who use large volumes of pine straw annually. Square bales are smaller, weighing approximately 30 to 35 pounds. These are bought most often by retailers who sell them to homeowners for small-scale use. Hand raking is also common. It is often used in forest stands that are planted in a narrow spacing or where lower-impact operations are desired. Similar to mechanical raking, individuals use hand rakes to gather the straw between the rows of trees. Straw is then placed in a bailing box, compressed into a square bale, and secured with twine. This box may be made of wood or metal, and can be readily made by the industrious landowners. Several plans for box balers can be found online. Hand raking is usually the method of choice for landowners who want to harvest their own straw or own smaller acreages. Sources: Dyer, J. 2012. Three essays on the pine straw in Alabama: Needlefall yields, market demands, and landowner interest in harvesting. PhD dissertation in Forestry, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University. Texas AgriLife Extension Service. 2003. Managing your East Texas forest for the production of pine straw. Online. Internet. Baling Pine Straw using a Hand-Powered Box Baler. Last accessed 1 August 2013. 11p. Pine straw has been the #1 ground cover product in the Southeast for over 50 years, and Swift Straw is proud to be the largest provider in the country. Pine straw's popularity has stood the test of time because of its beautiful, natural look, and it's less than half the price of many alternatives such as colored mulch. Our goal at Swift Straw is to offer a quality service at a fair price and to help educate and empower you to make the best decisions possible for your property. • Where is pine straw produced & when does it fall? Pine straw comes from stands of agriculturally processed planted pine trees (AKA pine plantation) throughout the Southeast. When a stand reaches 8 years old, the canopy closes, and it becomes suitable for harvest. At that age, the canopy blocks out sunlight helping prevent herbaceous competition while the tree density remains high, which results in a high concentration of needle fall. • How do slash & long leaf differ? Slash pine trees (standard straw) shed its needles once per year in the winter, and the majority fall by January 1st. The quality is always best at the first of the year since it's freshly fallen. Longleaf pine trees (premium straw) shed needles twice per year in the summer and winter. The additional fall makes the quality of long leaf better and more consistent throughout the year than slash. The conventional slash bale also covers approximately 45 square feet, and the conventional long leaf bale covers about 50 square feet. • How is pine straw harvested? The historic means of harvesting pine straw is by hand producing a square bale. This process includes hand raking the straw into a pile, removing the sticks by hand, shoving the straw into a box baler, closing the lid, and tying the bale with twine. This process is extremely labor intensive and less appealing to the workforce than other seasonal agricultural produce. Many times, straw workers elect to leave pine straw fields when more lucrative produce is in season, which often creates square bale shortages throughout the year. • HOW ARE BALE SIZES DETERMINED?Over the years, pricing per bale has increased costs to produce. To compensate for this pricing compression, the standard bale size has decreased as suppliers fight to survive in the difficult industry. Bale boxes are typically handmade by the workers, creating extreme variability in the size, weight, and density of the bales produced. A typical bale box is usually 26-28 inches in height and 10-13 inches in height and width. The weight of a typical bale is approximately 10 lbs depending on the size of the box, compression applied by the baler, and the moisture content of the material at the time of harvest. Thanks to recent packaging and mechanical harvesting innovations, Swift Straw is proud to offer a full menu of options based off your needs including mechanized rolls in a few different sizes, pallet bales (smaller bale size & packed on pallets), jumbo bales, and conventional bales.

• WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MACHINE PRODUCED ROUND ROLLS? Given the challenges with square bales, machine produced round rolls are becoming more popular today. The process is to "wind row" straw in trees and then drive the mechanized roll machine over the wind row to create rolls. The process is more mechanical requiring half the number of workers to produce an equivalent amount of rolls vs. square bales. There are multiple types of compact round balers being used today, which make a string wrapped or a net wrapped time of harvest. As our nation's labor and immigration policies continue to evolve, there is going to be a significant shift away from square bales and towards mechanically produced rolls.

HOW IS PINE STRAW PRICED?Historically, the industry has priced pine straw by the bale. The challenge with pricing pine straw by the bale is that there is a high amount of variability in bale size, which makes the amount of raw material the consumer gets extremely subjective and inconsistent. This variability in the size of each unit based on its size compared to the conventional bale. For example, if you purchase a roll that is made by the Star baler, it is typically 2.25x the size of a conventional square bale. If you purchase a string wrapped roll that is made by an MTE roller, they are closer to 2x the size of a conventional square bale. • WHAT IS CONTRACT PRICING? Modern packaging and mechanical harvesting innovations led Swift Straw to switch to contract pricing when charging for all straw and mulch installations. With so much subjectivity in the amount of raw material found in the different bale sizes, roll sizes, and bulk yards of mulch, it makes it hard for the property owner to make an educated decision on how much material is actually needed. In order to solve this problem, we price everything with a pre-approved contract price based on the approximate square footage of the property. The straw is to be applied at 2-3 inches of thickness and will average around \$0.11 - \$0.14 per sq. ft. With contract pricing per square foot, it allows us to select and install the best quality material that we have on hand regardless of whether it is the form of a conventional bale, jumbo bale, or one of the multiple sizes of rolls. Yes, this means that we have available. • How I determine the square footage for my property? We work with our customers to understand how many square bale count. The conventional slash square bale count. The conventional slash square bale count. The conventional square bale in the past then you are covering approximately 4,500 square feet of bed space. If we agree on a contract price of \$.12 per ft, or \$540, this is the same as paying \$5.40 per bale. As long as the square footage provided is accurate, we offer a satisfaction guarantee on the application and coverage.

How does the price of pine straw compare to the price of \$12 per ft, or \$540, this is the same as paying \$5.40 per bale. mulch?At 2-3 inches of thickness, a conventional bale covers approximately 45 square feet. At \$5.40 per square ft. The property owner is paying \$.12 per square ft. At \$5.40 p Nothing looks better than two applications of pine straw per year. If you are using standard pine straw, it is freshest in the winter time. So, if you are going with two apps, we recommend one in November or December just after the leaf fall and another later that spring. If you are only planning to do one application, we recommend late February while the straw quality is still good. Remember, this year's straw is on the ground, so it will look the same in April whether it is installed in February or April.

