

Animal Hides

Revised 2018

Storage Conditions

Temperature	30-36°F (-1 to 2°C)
Relative Humidity	80-90%
Storage Period	Over 1 year with good storage conditions

Hides must be adequately cured promptly after removal from the carcass and prior to putrefaction, spoilage or hair slippage. Treatment with an effective bactericide in proper proportions can improve storability. Salt-cured, brine-cured, irradiated, or dried hides may be placed in storage. It should be noted, however, that dried hides require lower humidity conditions. If dried hides are stored, check with the drying facility for appropriate humidity conditions.

Hides must be protected from contact with metallic salts and/or water, since metal salts can stain or otherwise damage the hides. Water damage is of particular concern in the industry. To protect hides against water damage, the top of a pile may be covered with plastic; however, condensate must be carefully controlled under changing temperatures.

Hides should not be piled too high in order to avoid excessively crushing weight. They must also be held off floors by pallets or racks. Normal tannery storage practice is to palletize hides 3-4 feet (90-120 cm) high, and then stack the pallets 2 high.

Adequate air circulation is necessary to avoid heat build-up and hide sweating. Hides arriving during summer months may carry considerable latent heat, and if piled solid may heat and sweat with resulting damage. In this case, re-salting should be done immediately. Salt used in curing and for protection must be pure in order to prevent stains and halophile contamination, commonly called “red heat.”

Rodents and insects are readily attracted to and will damage hides, especially dried hides. Beetle infestation can cause severe damage. Furthermore, small skins are more delicate and may require extra attention.

Because of their odor, hides require special facilities that are not part of a regular cold storage operation. Only products such as green casing, and pickled skins should be stored in the same room. Thus, hide storage is largely a separate enterprise. Cellar or basement rooms are often used. Adequate drainage and assurance against flooding are important. Use of an exposed brine refrigeration system may cause odor transfer.

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