Green Gold Report – June 8, 2017 – EASTERN

This is the final report for the 2017 Eastern Green Gold reports. So far we have had a fairly good harvest period for those opting for Dairy quality hay.

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Grunthal	143	157	29	21
Ile de Chene	172	182	23	21
Landmark	150	169	26	20
New Bothwell	187	187	22	23
Steinbach	137	161	28	19
Stonewall				
EASTERN AVERAGE	**158**	**171**	**25.6**	**21**

With the warm weather the alfalfa 3 inches since Monday. RFV continue to drop and we are now

As we wind up the Green Gold Program for 2017 I would like to thank Allan Grenko for taking and submitting alfalfa samples this year and Cliff Banman, Richard Boonstoppel, Nyhof Dairy, Calvin Grienke, and Ty Plett for allowing us to use their fields to help provide the information that we have put into the Green Gold reports for 2017.

Access all 2017 Green Gold Reports
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What I am seeing

On Monday I saw one field where I thought that the alfalfa was very close to flowering, stopping by that field on Thursday I couldn't find any flowers but the field had been cut.
All of the fields that I was monitoring are now cut and most of them are in the bunker.
Early yield estimates have the hay crop at about 3 t/ac as silage, this should but us at about 1.5 t/ac of dry hay equivalent. The yield range is 2-5 t/ac.

Alfalfa Flowering

As mentioned none of the fields sampled in the Eastern area are flowering. Once alfalfa starts to flower it usually indicates that it is time to cut your hay no matter want type of livestock you are feeding. Alfalfa beyond full bloom doesn't generally increase your tonnage of harvested material and as it matures it loses lower leaves rapidly (below), decreasing its feed value.

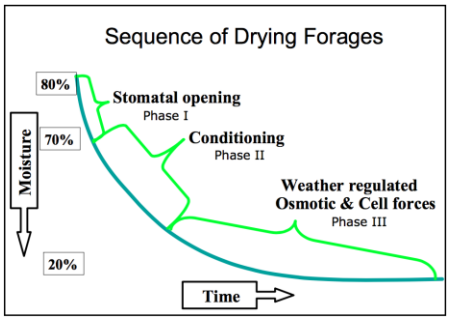
Normally fields that are cut in early June, with rains and warm weather start to initiate new growth at the crown. What you should be planning for is that in 28-35 days you should be looking at taking your second cut. With haying in this area starting around the 5th of June you might expect second cut to start around July 17th.

This will enable you to look at 3 cuts before the critical fall period and a 4th cut sometime in late September early October. It is always a good idea to have at least one cut go to flower. This practice enables your alfalfa to establish good root reserves so that it can recover somewhat from any past damage and go into winter in as good a shape as possible, allowing the crop to flower will insure that the root reserves are full. If you miss the second cut window you might want to consider letting the 2nd cut flower or let the 3rd cut flower and take it after the critical period. For information on the Critical cutting date and managing that last cut contact your Mb Ag Forage Specialist or myself.

How does forage dry?

If we understand and use the biology and physics of forage drying properly, not only does the hay dry faster and have less chance of being rained on, but the total digestible nutrients (TDN) of the harvested forage are higher.

The general pattern of drying forages is shown in the figure at right. When forage is cut, it has 75 to 80 percent moisture, which must be dried down to 60 to 65% moisture content for haylage and down to 14 to 18% moisture content for hay (lower figures for larger bales).



The ***first phase of drying*** is moisture loss from the leaves through the stomates. Stomates are the openings in the leaf surface that allow moisture loss to the air to cool the plant and carbon dioxide uptake from the air as the plant is growing. Stomates open in daylight and close when in dark. Cut forage laid in a wide swath maximizes the amount of forage exposed to sunlight, keeping the stomates open and encouraging rapid drying which is crucial immediately after cutting. Plant respiration continues after the plant is cut and gradually declines until plant moisture content has fallen below 60%. Therefore, rapid initial drying to lose the first 15% moisture will reduce loss of starches and sugars and preserve more dry matter and total digestible nutrients in the harvested forage. This initial moisture loss is not affected by conditioning.
The ***second phase of drying*** (II) is moisture loss from both the leaf surface (stomates have closed) and from the stem. At this stage conditioning can help increase drying rate. Conditioning to break stems every two inches allows more opportunities for water loss since little water loss will occur through the waxy cuticle of the stem.
The ***final phase of drying*** (III) is the loss of more tightly held water, particularly from the stems. Conditioning is critical to enhance drying during this phase.