

MFGA Green Gold Report – June 15, 2020 – EASTERN

2020 Reports for Optimum Alfalfa Harvest Date cover Eastern, Central and Western Manitoba.

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
St.Pierre E	188	190	19	23
Beausjour	162	182	23	24
Ste.Anne	168	187	22	23
New Bothwell	171	186	21	23
Stony Mountain				
EASTERN AVERAGE	176	186	21	23

Fields in the Eastern area are in the late bud to late flowering stage. From Thursday fields have added 2 inches of growth and moved up at least one stage. As of today 3 of the fields have been harvested. Looking at the RFV we see that it is continuing to decrease at 4-5pt/day. Depending on the quality of alfalfa hay you are targeting this may give you some indication as to timing of cutting. Adding grass to the mixture can decrease RFV's by 20-30 pts and harvest losses due to drying in the field can also decrease RFV by 10-20 pts (silage vs dry hay).



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CONTACT: John McGregor, MFGA Green Gold Coordinator, e: john@mfga.net, t: [2047541234](tel:2047541234), [@mbforages](https://www.facebook.com/mbforages)

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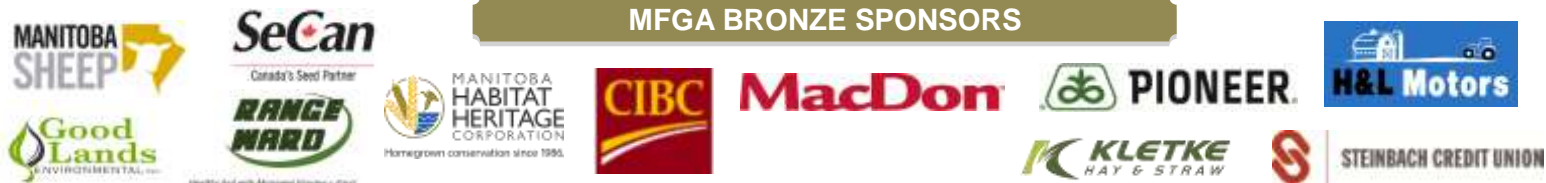
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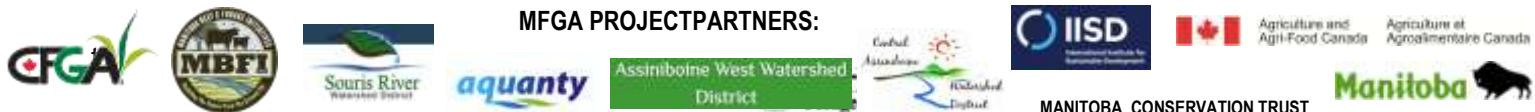
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What I am seeing

As the alfalfa in the Eastern area moves into the flowering stage and the grasses start to head producers looking to maximize quality for dairy have begun to harvest their hay.

Producers following a 28-35 day cutting regime after first cut typically are targeting a 2nd, 3rd and the possibility of a 4th cut. With first cut being a little later this year (June 12-15) hitting 3rd cut prior to the [critical harvest](#) period maybe difficult and plans will be needed to manage the longevity of the alfalfa stand.



Rain on Alfalfa

There are many studies on this and they have determined that a one inch rain 24 hours after being cut can cause losses of up to 22% in dry matter. Whereas a 1.6 inch rain over several day caused a loss of 44%.

The loss is due to leaching of nutrients like the carbohydrates and plant respiration which occurs until the plant reaches 30-40% moisture and each time it gets rained on. It is interesting that the studies show that hay that is almost dry enough to be baled will lose more dry matter when rained on than hay that has just been cut.

Crude protein doesn't seem to be affected by rain but digestibility is lower due to the leaching of the carbohydrates and the ADF and NEF will increase.

Grass hay often will not experience the same degree of loss as alfalfa hay. The majority of yield loss in alfalfa hay is due to leaf loss. Grass leaves are not as easily lost.

Last Report for 2020

The Green Gold program has been around in Mb for 25 years and over that time I have had the pleasure and privileged of working with many producers and Mb Ag staff to provide timely information on managing alfalfa to maximize quality and quantity.

As MFGA's Green Gold program winds up for 2020 I would like to take this opportunity to thank the producers that provided fields and/or submitted samples so that we could put together an overview of how alfalfa was progressing across the province for other forage producers in the province.

For the **Eastern** area: Thanks to Richard Boonstoppel, Daniel Messerli, Jeremy Dueck, Cliff Banman and Jacob Roehle.

For the **Central** area: Thanks to Harold Pott, Clarence Doerksen, Happyrock Dairy. Jill Verway, and Luc Bernard.

For the **Western** area: Thanks to Luke Muir, Ken Everson, Roger Richard, Corrine Devos, Tyson Gillis, Jean Born and Jordan Dickson at MBFI

Finally a **special thanks** to Pam Iwanchysko, Shawn Cabak and Tim Clarke with Mb Ag and Resource Development who continue to support and promote forage management throughout the province.

Finally

As MFGA winds down its Green Gold program for 2020 I would ask that you give us some feedback as to how useful the program was for you and your operation this year. What you liked, and what you think needs to be improved.

Also as you get your first cut off I would really appreciate hearing how first cut fared as to yield and quality. Please email me with your comments at john@mfga.net include where you are located in the province if you don't mind.