

## MFGA Green Gold Report – June 3, 2020 – WESTERN / CENTRAL

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

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Elm Creek	153	205	21	24
Austin		179	25	
Gladstone		199	21	
PLP Southport	171	188	23	26
PLP South				
Newton	148	216	18	22
<b>CENTRAL AVERAGE</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>
Miniota N	207	230	17	25
Dauphin	196	204	20	27
Hartney	157	222	17	22
Fork River	222	252	14	28
Sifton	238	204	20	32
Souris	206	204	20	28
Brookdale/MBFI	198	243	14	20
<b>WESTERN AVERAGE</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>

Most fields are in the early bud stage but the shorter crop is still late vegetative.

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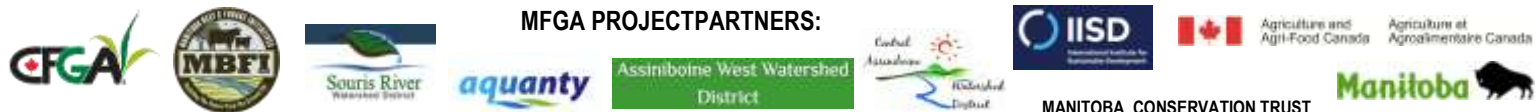
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## What I'm hearing

Looking at the results from the Western area we are seeing that the RFV is dropping at just over 5 pts/day. If you were targeting for a 170 RFV you would expect that it would be about 7 days or June 10<sup>th</sup>. Targeting for 170 and allowing for 10-20 RFV pts lost due to cutting and respiration (drying) losses would hit 150 RFV hay. Having grass in the sample could lower this by 20-30 pts.

## A Steep Decline

Nutritionists like to target hay in the 135-150 RFV towards Dairy cows in the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester and towards dairy calves. The RFV hay from 125-140 is fed to the dairy cows in the last 200 days and heifers 12-18 months of age. Hay at 115-130 makes excellent Beef cow and heifer 12-18 month old feed and any from 100-115 is good for the Dry cow and heifer between 18 and 24 month.

Though first-cutting offers the opportunity for harvesting the highest digestible fiber of the growing season, forage quality declines at a faster rate for first-cut compared to subsequent cuttings. This presents the possibility of also harvesting large quantities of very poor, low digestible forage once flowering stages are reached.

Hence, a timely first-cut is essential if high forage quality is the primary objective. To achieve a target forage quality, the spring harvest window is often narrower compared to subsequent growth cycles. This downhill ride in declining forage quality is accelerated by warm temperatures. It also becomes more dramatic if grass is present in the stand.

First-cut timing sets the pace for the rest of the growing season. In other words, the first-cut harvest date may dictate how many future cuttings will be taken, the interval between those cuttings, and/or how late into the fall the last cutting will be harvested. First-cutting is the only one of the year when there is no number of days since the previous harvest. The decision options are wide open, but the consequences of the decision impact the rest of the season. Forage quality and yield considerations aside, an earlier initial harvest date often provides for a better utilization of available soil moisture for the second-cutting and expands harvest options for the remainder of the season. An early-cut decision may also be more detrimental to a stand that was stressed the previous year or during the winter.

## Scout for Alfalfa Weevils



This week I spotted what I suspect is alfalfa weevil damage to some plants in the Eastern area of the province. We have accumulated enough degree days for alfalfa weevil larvae to be present. Although damage presently is minor, significant defoliation is possible, which impacts yield, quality and the health of the stand. Damage is typically seen in the first crop of alfalfa.

As of May 31<sup>st</sup> the map and table below show that at the 2 Manitoba sites that a significant number of weevils should be in the 2<sup>nd</sup> instar stage. As we are now 4 more hot days into June these percentages will be significantly higher.

For more on the Alfalfa Weevil check out the June 4<sup>th</sup> Green Gold report for the East

