



MFGA Green Gold Report – June 9, 2021 – EASTERN/INTERLAKE

Reports for Optimum Alfalfa Harvest Date cover Manitoba’s Central, Western, Eastern and Interlake areas.

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Garson	180	287	10	22
Gimli	-	-	-	-
Grunthal	174	179	25	26
Headingley	-	-	-	-
RM of West St. Paul – Stony Mountain	193	197	20	23
Winnipeg	-	-	-	-
EASTERN AVERAGE	182	221	18	24

Some fields have water standing in them from the Wednesday's storms. Stands in some areas are still quite short. Within the 2 days, the RFV has increased by 10 pts or 5 pts/day in 2 days due to the moisture that was received. The optimum alfalfa harvest date for the Eastern/Interlake would be June 11.

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CONTACT: Terra Bergen, MFGA Green Gold Coordinator, e: <mailto:terra@mfga.net>, t: [@mbforages](https://twitter.com/mbforages)



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Looking at the information above the missing crop height information for the Central area is due to the crop still being too short to sample (less than 10"). The sites with missing RFV and CP information are due to not having that information at the time this report is being sent out.

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.

Rained-on Hay.

We needed rain to help this year's crop in the SE; unfortunately we didn't need it when it's harvest time. On the positive side it will definitely help the 2nd cut.

Rained-on hay causes many problems. It lowers the hay's feed value and, if baled or stacked too wet, can cause mold or heat damage. Sometimes a bigger problem, though, is the long-term damage to regrowing plants. Driving over the field repeatedly, trying to turn hay to hasten drying will injure regrowth and can cause soil compaction, especially if the ground is wet and soft. But, not driving on the field may result in an even bigger problem with the windrows. If they lay there too long, the plants underneath will be smothered. This not only lowers yield, it creates a terrible weed problem as grasses and broadleaves infest the killed strips. These weeds will contaminate all future cuttings. In addition, if rained-on hay windrows are left in the field until next cutting, they frequently will plug the mower, slow harvest, and provide lesser quality hay.

The best option is to remove wet hay any way you can. Bale it, chop it, and even blow it back on the ground as mulch. You may need to damage plants by driving on them to turn hay to speed drying and get sunlight to plants underneath. This may contribute to a short-term loss of young plants, but will prevent wet windrows from ruining the rest of your haying year. While there's no immediate payback to managing severely rained-on hay, ignoring it will be even more costly in the long run.

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