



MFGA Green Gold Report – June 2, 2021 – WESTERN

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

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Bellevue	-	-	-	-
Forrest-Brookdale Station - MBFI	234	268	12.5	28
Forrest	-	-	-	-
Grandview	-	-	-	-
Oak River	-	-	-	-
Miniota	-	-	-	-
Reston	-	-	-	-
Roseland	-	-	-	-
Souris	237	250	13	32
WESTERN AVERAGE	236	259	13	30

Shorter staged alfalfa is being recorded due to the lack of moisture. The heat will drive the fields to grow without much moisture so the height of the alfalfa is starting to end up being about the same height. The RFV has dropped by 7 pts or 1.4 pts/day in 5 days.

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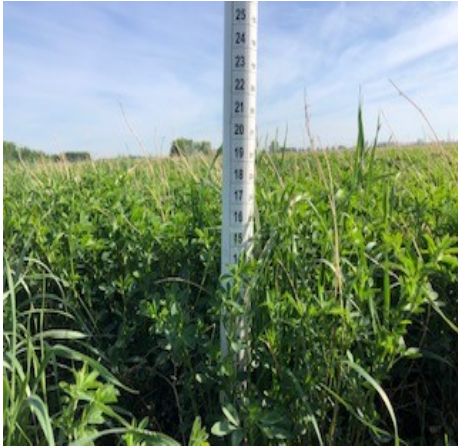


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Looking at the information above the missing crop height information for the Central area is due to the crop still being too short to sample (less than 10"). The sites with missing RFV and CP information are due to not having that information at the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

A Steep Decline

Nutritionists like to target hay in the 135-150 RFV towards Dairy cows in the 1st 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.

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