



## MFGA Green Gold Report – May 31, 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	0	0	0	0
Forrest-Brookdale Station - MBFI	0	0	0	0
Forrest	0	0	0	0
Grandview	0	0	0	0
Oak River	222	268	12	30
Miniota	0	0	0	0
Reston	0	0	0	0
Roseland	0	0	0	0
Souris	215	277	11	36
<b>WESTERN AVERAGE</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>32</b>

Since Wednesday, Western fields are slow in coming with colder evenings and lack of moisture. No early buds. Shorter stage with late vegetative.

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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.

### **Best stage to cut my grass or legume hay?**

The best stage partly depends on the nutritional needs of the animals to be fed and if you want to maximize the amount of protein harvested per acre. The best stage of maturity to accomplish this goal is at the late bud to 10% bloom stage for alfalfa, at the 10% to 20% bloom stage for clovers, and between the late boot and early heading stages for grasses. Alfalfa-grass mixtures should be cut based on the stage of maturity of the alfalfa. Clovergrass mixtures should be cut based on the stage of the grass.

### **What is Relative Feed Value?**

Over the years we often get the question about RFV. Relative Feed Value is an excellent measure of alfalfa quality because it reflects the digestibility (% ADF) and the intake potential (% NDF) of alfalfa. The guideline was 20-30-40. That was based on forage testing 30% ADF (acid detergent fiber) and 40% NDF (neutral detergent fiber) would be 150 RFV with 20% crude protein. Producers use it when buying alfalfa and on the alfalfa they grow to determine quality. Obviously the more mature the alfalfa at harvest the higher the percent ADF and NDF (lower Relative Feed Value). However, rain damaged hay will also be higher in ADF and NDF because the soluble sugars and carbohydrates can be leached out. Rain damaged hay is also less palatable. Notice that Relative Feed Value does not include the protein percent of the alfalfa!! Astute dairy producers who purchase alfalfa not only utilize the chemical analysis and relative feed value, they also buy small quantities and feed some of it free choice to see if the cows readily consume it before purchasing larger quantities.

Although the Green Gold program targets a RFV of 150 as the optimum stage to put up alfalfa, many producers want higher quality hay for their livestock or the hay market. Through MFGA's program you can follow the decline in RFV and time your harvest based on the quality of hay you are targeting.

### **Producer Support Always Welcome**

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