



MFGA Green Gold Report – June 8, 2022 – WESTERN

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

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Cartwright	214	193	22	29
Inglis	-	-	-	-
Laurier	203	210	19	26
McCreary	209	216	18	31
Miniota	236	-	-	30
Oak River	209	244	15	29
Ochre River	201	-	-	30
Souris	279	199	21	34
WESTERN AVERAGE	221	215	18	29

Areas of the western section have developed early buds with the recent heat. Wind damage has occurred on some of the plant leaves. The RFV gained 4 points in 48 hours.

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What is Hay Day?

Hay Day is the estimated day that alfalfa will reach a Relative Feed Value (RFV) of 170. Past experience has shown that approximately 20 points are lost during the haying process and the time taken to get the entire crop cut, cured and baled. Silage shortens this process and therefore the quality can be higher. Grass/alfalfa mixes can and do reduce the RFV by 20-30 points depending on the % of the blend. Nutritionists like to target hay in the 135-150 RFV towards Dairy cows in the 1st trimester and towards dairy calves. The hay at 125-140 RFV is fed to the dairy cows in the last 200 days and heifers 12-18 months of age. Hay at 115-130 makes excellent feed for beef cows and for heifers 12-18 months old and hay at 100-115 RFV is good for the dry cows and heifers between 18 and 24 months.

What is Relative Feed Value (RFV)?

Over the years we often get the question about Relative Feed Value (RFV). RFV is an excellent measure of alfalfa quality because it reflects the digestibility - Acid Detergent Fiber (%ADF) - and the intake potential - Neutral Detergent Fiber (%NDF) - of alfalfa. The guideline is 20-30-40, based on forage testing 30 percent ADF and 40 percent NDF, RFV would be 150 with 20 percent crude protein. Producers use this guideline when buying alfalfa and on the alfalfa they grow to determine quality. Obviously the more mature the alfalfa at harvest the higher the percent of ADF and NDF (lower RFV). 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 RFV does not include the protein percent of the alfalfa! Astute dairy producers who purchase alfalfa not only utilize the chemical analysis and RFV, they also buy small quantities and feed it to the cows voluntarily to see if they readily consume it before deciding to purchase larger quantities.

Although the [MFGA 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 our program, you can follow the decline in RFV and time your harvest based on the quality desired.

Producer Support Always Welcome to Help MFGA Make a Difference

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