



MFGA Green Gold Report – May 30, 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	224	260	13	32
Dauphin	-	-	-	-
Inglis	-	-	-	-
Laurier	-	-	-	-
McCreary	-	-	-	-
Miniota	-	-	-	-
Oak River	-	-	-	-
Ochre River	-	-	-	-
Souris	216	244	15	35
WESTERN AVERAGE	220	252	14	34

Fields are wet across the province but with the recent heat, the height increased by 3-4” in several areas.

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Rain on Alfalfa

There are many studies on the effects of rain on alfalfa and they have determined a one inch rainfall 24 hours after alfalfa is cut can cause losses of up to 22 percent in dry matter. Whereas a 1.6 inch rain over several days can cause a loss of 44 percent in dry matter.

The loss is due to leaching of nutrients like the carbohydrates and plant respiration which occurs until the plant reaches 30-40 percent moisture and each time it gets rained on. It's interesting to note that studies show 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 Acid Detergent Fiber (ADF) and Neutral Detergent Fiber (NEF) will increase.

Grass hay often will not experience the same degree as alfalfa hay. The majority of yield loss in alfalfa hay is due to leaf loss whereas grass leaves are not as easily affected



What is Relative Feed Value?

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 based on forage testing 30 percent ADF and 40 percent NDF would be 150 RFV with 20 percent crude protein. Producers use this guideline when buying and buying alfalfa to determine quality. 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. RFV does not include the protein percent of the alfalfa! Many dairy producers who purchase alfalfa 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.

The [MFGA Green Gold Program](#) targets a RFV of 150 as the optimum stage to put up alfalfa. Through our program you can follow the decline in RFV and time your harvest based on the quality.

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