

MFGA Green Gold Report – May 18, 2023 – CENTRAL REGION

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

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Bagot	-	-	-	-
Bruxelles	-	-	-	-
Bruxelles	-	-	-	-
Kalieda	-	-	-	-
MacGregor	255	287	10	36
St.Claude	241	268	12	33
Treherne	-	-	-	-
CENTRAL AVERAGE	248	277.5	11	34.5

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



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What I am seeing:

- The alfalfa plant is in fair condition despite light frost to the top leaves of the plant. Increasing growth in the last week due to the warm weather.
- There is no insect damage currently.
- Fields in the central area are a week earlier than last year's crop.
- The field conditions vary between areas due to hail damage in some parts of the region.



Frost

Some parts of the province had received light frost overnight on May 2.

Here are some guidelines to see how your fields look:

- Light Freeze (-2.8 – 0.5° C): Alfalfa plants trifoliate leaves down the stem and some slight curling of the stem may be observed. Buds or growing points are somewhat better insulated and will continue to grow as normal. A majority of the terminal buds should still look green and alive 2 to 3 days after the freeze event.
- Moderate Freeze (-3.3-2.8° C): Upper part of the stem and terminal buds can be killed. Regrowth must occur from lower axillary buds on the stem or from new crown buds. Growth and first cutting will be delayed.
- Hard Freeze (-3.3° C and colder): Leaf, buds, and stem tissue will be killed and plants will re-grow from crown buds. First cutting will be delayed significantly.

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.

Producer Support Always Welcome

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