

MFGA Green Gold Report – May 24, 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	223	252	14	29
Bruxelles	232	-	17	27
Bruxelles	-	-	-	-
Kalieda	216	252	14	30
MacGregor	248	268	12	28
St.Claude	242	244	15	28
Treherne	239	277	12	32
CENTRAL AVERAGE	233	258	14	29

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What I am seeing:

- The alfalfa plant is in fair condition despite light frost on the top leaves of the plant.
- The field conditions vary between areas due to hail damage in some parts of the region.
- Increasing growth in the last week due to the warm weather.
- There is no insect damage currently.

Alfalfa Quality

When alfalfa is subjected to drought conditions, the feed quality often increases. This is because plants respond by decreasing the stem number and their elongation, inadvertently increasing the leaf to stem ratio. This results in an increase in forage quality (higher crude protein and digestibility, especially ADF). Additionally, photosynthetic activity continues during the early phase of drought, allowing nutrients to accumulate while growth slows. It should be noted, that although quality is increasing, dry conditions also reduce nodule formation and nitrogen fixation, therefore extended dry conditions will eventually reduce plant metabolism.

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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