MFGA Green Gold Report – May 26, 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	190	216	18	24
Bruxelles		-		
Bruxelles	-	-	-	-
Kalieda	227	216	18	30
MacGregor	215	229	16	25
St.Claude	230	229	16	26
Treherne	231	243	14	28
CENTRAL AVERAGE	**218**	**226**	**16**	**26**

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What we are seeing:

- The plants have begun the early bud phase.
- Increasing growth is due to the recent warm weather.
- There is some insect activity shown along the edges of the leaves.

Watch for Alfalfa Weevil

Although there are no reports of alfalfa weevil damage to the crop as of May 26, forecast is 25-40% emergence of the 1st larval stage of the weevil. Continued warm weather will only increase the emergence. The thing to watch for is that if your harvest is delayed due to a short crop you may find the weevil feeding on what little forage you have as they rapidly advance thru the various larval stages.

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.

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.

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