

MFGA Green Gold Report – May 29, 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	163	182	23	24
Bruxelles	170	190	24	23
Bruxelles	-	-	-	-
Kalieda	166	187	23	23
MacGregor	174	204	20	25
St.Claude	163	193	22	22
Treherne	181	229	16	28
CENTRAL AVERAGE	169	197	21	24

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What we are seeing:

- The plants have begun the early bud phase.
- The increased warm weather drastically decreased the RFV NIR.
- 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.

Maturity

Maturity of the forage is one of the most important factors when considering forage quality. Plants continuously change in quality as they mature. As the plant reaches full maturity, crude protein and digestibility will decrease, reducing the overall quality of the forage. If forages reach full maturity, additional yield will be gained, but higher amounts of forage will have to be fed to meet the same quality. Knowing when to harvest will help producers improve forage quality and digestibility and therefore improve profitability. The ideal stage for harvesting would be the late boot stage for grasses and small grains, late bud for alfalfa, and late boot and soft dough for wheat.

What is Optimum Alfalfa Harvest Date?

Optimum Alfalfa Harvest Date is the estimated day that alfalfa will reach a Relative Feed Value (RFV) of 170. 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 RFV makes excellent feed for beef cows and for heifers 12-18 months old while hay at 100-115 RFV is good for dry cows and heifers between 18 and 24 months.

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