

Green Gold Report – May 14, 2015 – EASTERN

Here is the second release for the Green Gold program for 2015. Continued cool conditions have slowed development this week.

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Il de Chene			5	
St Pierre			7	
Grunthal	332	287	10	30
Kleefeld south	289	287	10	27
Kleefeld east			7	
Steinbach	302	277	11	28
Giroux	289	268	12	30
NewBothwell	314	287	10	28
AVERAGE	303	279.75	8.86	28.75

Looking at GDD accumulations for the area over the past week shows that we have only added about 5 units where normal accumulations should be close to 40 units. Because each spring is unique in temperature, precipitation and growing degree days (GDD), the date hay is ready for a first cut can vary as many as three weeks from year to year. It typically takes 300 to 350 GDD to reach RFV of 180 for the first cut. If we look at the accumulation to date, we are at about 125 GDD which is close to normal. This indicates that any gains we had with the early spring have been lost at this point.

➡ [Access all 2015 Green Gold Reports](#)

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What I am Seeing

This is presently the early/late vegetative stage that we are seeing in the alfalfa fields throughout the Southeast.

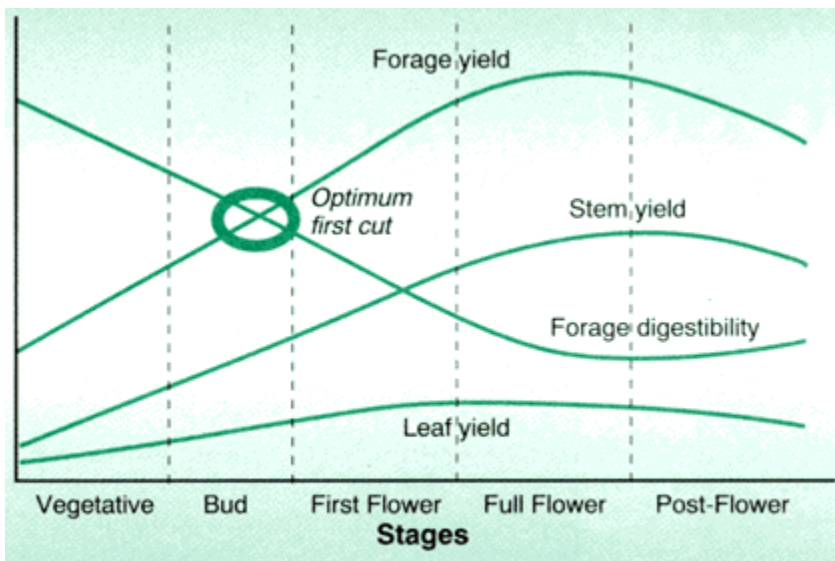


Growing Degree Days

GDD are a measure of heat unit accumulation. Because early season growth of alfalfa is related to the sum of heat units accumulated, monitoring GDD is an easy and effective way to determine when to harvest to optimize forage quality of first cutting alfalfa. Michigan State University Extension recommends that dairy hay should be harvested at the mid-bud stage of growth which will normally provide 40 percent Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF) to maximize the yield and quality of feed to lactating dairy cows. Delaying harvest after the recommended harvest time of 40 percent NDF will result in higher yields, higher fiber, lower NDF digestibility and lower protein. Harvest of dairy quality alfalfa that will be stored in horizontal bunkers should begin at 375 GDD. Haylage that will be stored in a vertical silo can be harvested at 400 GDD. If you are considering dry hay you might, depending on harvest management target 350 GDDs. To get GDD accumulations for your area click on [Growing Degree Days](#)

Optimum Cutting Time

Looking at the graph below you can see how as the plants mature the quality decreases and the quantity increases. The type and class of livestock you have will determine the quality of forage you will want to put up this year. Depending on your needs, the optimum first cut may not always be a RFV of 150. Having a quality target in mind helps determine when you should start cutting.



The optimum time for first cut may not be at late-bud, early-flower stage.