

Green Gold Report – June 3, 2015 – CENTRAL

RFV are still dropping at about 7 pts/day which puts HAY DAY still on track for JUNE 7th for hay and June 9th for silage. Unfortunately I am missing one of the NIR results but felt that the report needed to get out this afternoon.

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Brunkild				
Gnadenenthal		161	28	
Minnedosa	220			27
Newton	157	188	23	20
Plum Coulee	208	208	18	27
Portage	214	235	15	28
AVERAGE	199.75	198	21	25.5

For those of you that think your crop is too short remember you can gain 250 lbs/ inch of growth but lose 4-5 pts of RFV for each day you delay. With that type of drop and the promise of good weather the trade off of lbs of hay versus quality comes into question. If you are planning on a 3rd cut and take a cut every 28-35 days you need to count backwards from August 15th to see if you can get that 3rd cut off before you need to rest your alfalfa till after a fall killing frost. Once a first cutting is made, bud stages on the re-growth generally occurs again about every 30 days after cutting, allowing four bud-stage, dairy quality cuttings per season. Your most critical decision then, is when to make that first cutting.

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What I am Hearing

Most of the fields in the Central area are in the early bud stage. Plum Coolee reports alfalfa there is late bud. Gnadenthal area reports cool temp and wet conditions are not providing the seasonal push we would like see. High moisture levels will prevent us from getting in the fields at optimum harvest time.

In the Eastern area haying has started but mostly on alfalfa grass fields. I did a GGNIR sample on a field that was being cut and found that the NIR results were about 30-35 pts lower than comparative pure alfalfa samples. If you have grass in your alfalfa fields you may want to consider cutting 5-6 days earlier if you are looking for hay quality similar to alfalfa cut at the same stage.



Time of Day

The time of cutting affects the nutritional composition of hay. Plant leaves accumulate sugar through photosynthesis during daytime and break down the sugars through respiration. This means plant sugars are lowest in the morning and highest in the evening. Though hay cut late in the day has higher sugar and energy content, this can be lost when the drying effect of the sun is missed and the cut hay continues respiring through the night. Farmers must pay attention to weather conditions because warm nights can cause severe dry matter losses. Hay at 70 per cent moisture can lose almost two per cent of its dry matter in a 12-hour night at 20 C. At 30 C, dry matter losses can reach three per cent in one night. Silage producers, who are not so dependent on a fast dry down, can capitalize on the increased sugar by cutting forage in the afternoon.

Shorting Drying Times

Understanding how cut hay dries and how losses occur during cutting, conditioning, raking and baling is the first step in choosing techniques for maintaining the quality of cut hay. Rain is most detrimental to hay quality if it occurs in the first day or two after cutting when danger of leaching losses is higher. Two inches of rain in a single event is less detrimental than a half-inch of rain over four days, because wet plants respire longer, compromising quality and dry matter.

A cut plant continues to respire losing sugars until it drops to below 40% moisture so shorting the time it takes to go from 80 to 40% increases the energy content of the hay. Techniques like wide swaths, conditioning the hay and time of day can speed the drying process and enable you to put up hay in better condition. For more information on making better quality hay click on [High Quality Hay Management](#)