

## Green Gold Report – June 4, 2015 – EASTERN

RFV are dropping at 7 pts/day which puts HAY DAY still on track for JUNE 7<sup>th</sup> for hay and June 9<sup>th</sup> for silage. Note that the areas in the eastern part of the SE are about 2 days ahead.

| SITE           | RFV NIR       | RFV PEAQ      | Height       | CP           |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Il de Chene    | 208           | 229           | 16           | 22           |
| St Pierre      | 201           | 229           | 16           | 27           |
| Grunthal       | 200           | 216           | 18           | 25           |
| Kleefeld south | 197           | 204           | 20           | 23           |
| Kleefeld east  | 230           | 229           | 16           | 27           |
| Steinbach      | 183           | 182           | 23           | 22           |
| Giroux         | 186           | 169           | 26           | 27           |
| NewBothwell    | 214           | 187           | 22           | 25           |
| <b>AVERAGE</b> | <b>200.71</b> | <b>208.29</b> | <b>19.29</b> | <b>24.71</b> |

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 3<sup>rd</sup> cut and take a cut every 28-35 days you need to count backwards from August 15<sup>th</sup> to see if you can get that 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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

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## **What I am Seeing**

While sampling Thursday AM I noticed that there were some fields that were cut. Now Hay Day is still a few days away but when I stopped at this field I could see that it was an alfalfa/grass mix and was at about 17 inches.

As I have mentioned before typically with a mix, depending on percentages, you could see a 20-35% drop in RFV between pure vs mixed. Cutting 4-6 days earlier could help keep the RFV of the feed closer to a 150 target.



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Talking with another producer that was cutting pure alfalfa he was focusing on getting the first cut off so that he could take advantage of his second and sequential cuts. His operation requires top quality feeds for the milking herd and although the crop maybe short quality is more important than quantity. He also mentioned that he thought that he had a weather window of opportunity which could reduce the risk of losing quality.

## **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](#)