

Green Gold Report – June 1, 2016 – CENTRAL

Hay Day delayed. Looking at the results for this area we see that the areas with a shorter crop have some time before reaching the Optimum RFV of 170 for hay.

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Newton	160 est	179	25	23 est
Plum Coulee	213	222	17	29
Mather	197	197	20	31
AVERAGE	190	199	21	28

The lab results for Newton were delayed therefore an estimate of 3pts/day drop in RFV has been applied. Alfalfa throughout the area is in the early to late bud stage. Crops in the area continue to grow about 1 inch/day.

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Hay in a Day

The drying rate of hay crops is influenced the most by sunlight reaching the forages, which in turn increases the swath temperature and reduces humidity. A full width swath increases the drying surface of the swath by 2.8 times. In many trials, it has been shown that moisture reductions from 85% to 60% can be reached in as little as 5 to 7 hours, hence the term “Haylage in a Day”. The bottom line is that the forage produced with minimal respiration results in higher nutrient content of the forage.



1Early bud- Vern Wiebe

Rained-on Hay.

Rained-on hay causes many problems. It lowers the hay's feed value and, if baled or stacked too wet, can cause mold or heat damage. Sometimes a bigger problem, though, is the long-term damage to re-growing plants.

Driving over the field repeatedly, trying to turn hay to hasten drying will injure regrowth and can cause soil compaction, especially if the ground is wet and soft. But, not driving on the field may result in an even bigger problem with the windrows. If they lay there too long, the plants underneath will be smothered. This not only lowers yield, it creates a terrible weed problem as grasses and broadleaves infest the killed strips. These weeds will contaminate all future cuttings. In addition, if rained-on hay windrows are left in the field until next cutting, they frequently will plug the mower, slow harvest, and provide lesser quality hay.

The best option is to remove wet hay any way you can. Bale it, chop it, even blow it back on the ground as mulch. You may need to damage plants by driving on them to turn hay to speed drying and get sunlight to plants underneath. This may contribute to a short-term loss of young plants, but will prevent wet windrows from ruining the rest of your haying year.

While there's no immediate payback to managing severely rained-on hay, ignoring it will be even more costly in the long run.

What Happens to Forage Quality If I Cut Later?

If you wait until your hay is more mature before cutting it, you will get higher yields. However, the material will be much lower quality.

Forage Quality of Alfalfa and Brome Hay Cut at Different Stages of Maturity			
Species	Stage of Maturity	% Crude Protein	% TDN
Alfalfa	Bud	21.5	63
	Early Bloom	18.4	59
	Mid-Bloom	15.9	55
	Full-Bloom	13.5	51
Brome	Early Boot	15.0	63
	Early Heading	10.5	58
	Early Milk	8.0	54
	Mature	6.0	48

Adapted from: NDSU. Minimizing Hay Losses and Waste. AS 1190. March 2000.