

Green Gold Report – June 2, 2016 – EASTERN

Hay Day is May 30th. With the cool wet conditions since Hay Day we have seen the alfalfa slow in growth and stage development.

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Giroux	150	162	29	21
Grunthal	152	170	27	23
Kleefeld	162	178	24	23
La Broquerie	141	165	27	23
New Bothwell	184	173	25	26
Ste. Anne	167	184	24	25
Steinbach	153	139	33	22
Stonewall	179	169	26	25
AVERAGE	161	168	27	24

Fields in the area are still in the early to late bud stage. Even though the crop has slowed, RFVs continued to drop in most cases by 5 pts/day. Grasses in the mixed fields are fully headed. I have seen Alfalfa weevils in a second field but again it is very early and damage was minimal.

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What I am seeing

Since the May 30th report the SE has received between 1 and 2 inches of rain, temperatures have cooled and growth in the alfalfa has come to a halt. What I have seen is some lodging in fields where alfalfa height has exceeded 25 inches.



I found another field with alfalfa weevil larvae feeding. As mentioned previously, larvae emerge once we accumulate 167 degree days and therefore I suspect that we will likely start to see more feeding once we return to warmer temperatures and the larvae grow.

What I did find were some alfalfa plants that were starting to flower. This isn't general but in the lighter soils and in thinner areas there were a few flowers.



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.

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 regrowing 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, and 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.