

Green Gold Report – May 25, 2017 – EASTERN

Here is the first release for the Optimum Alfalfa Harvest Date for 2017.

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Grunthal	199	224	18	28
Ile de Chene	243	252	14	29
Landmark	240	244	15	25
New Bothwell	246	244	15	28
Steinbach	207	230	17	24
Stonewall	230	224	18	29
EASTERN AVERAGE	228	236	16	27

With the return to some good growing conditions we have seen the alfalfa jump 1 inch over the past 2 days. Looking at the RFV we see that there has been almost no change. Presently we are dropping 3 pts/day; this would put Hay Day around the 6th of June. I suspect that this date will move closer to the beginning of June if we continue to see ideal growing conditions. Mondays testing should give us a better idea.

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What I Am Seeing

We have seen some rapid growth over the past 2 days, with the alfalfa growing another inch in most fields. In most of the shorter fields this new growth consisted of a lot of new leaves which would account in the slight increase in RFV.



I also observed what looks like frost damage on some of the top leaves of these alfalfa plants. This area had a -2.4 C frost on May 19th. As with most frost events there can be variation within an area so this field likely approached closer to -4 C. Although there is no real damage to the plant, frost can set plants back and affect RFV's

Stubble in Alfalfa

This past week I got the question on what effect last year's alfalfa stubble could have on first cut. Alfalfa stubble consists mostly on the stems left from not taking a final cut in the fall after the critical period. From year to year and field to field the amount left can vary greatly so it becomes difficult to put an exact number on the decrease in quality.

I checked with Dan Undersander to see if they had done any studies in Wisconsin. What I did find out is that they generally consider that the difference between with and without residue is about 15 to 20 pts RFQ and about 1% crude protein. What this equates to is about one inch of growth.

There can be a huge variation depending on the amount of stubble left. Looking at a Pioneer study out of NE Wisconsin done last week they show a difference of 42 pt of RFQ but the range is from 12 to 56.

If you are concerned about the amount of stubble you have in your field, you can cut earlier, maybe target a RFV of 180, or raise your cutting height slightly.

What is Hay Day?

Hay Day is the estimated day that alfalfa will reach a RFV of 170. Past experience has shown that approximate 20 points are lost during the haying process and the time taken to get the entire crop cut, cured and baled. Silage shortens this process and therefore the quality can be higher. Grass/alfalfa mixes can and do reduce the RFV by 20-30 points depending on the % of the blend.

Nutritionist like to target hay in the 135-150 RFV towards Dairy cows in the 1st trimester and towards dairy calves. The RFV hay from 125-140 is fed to the dairy cows in the last 200 days and heifers 12-18 months of age. Hay at 115-130 makes excellent Beef cow and heifer 12-18 month old feed and any from 100-115 is good for the Dry cow and heifer between 18 and 24 month.