

Green Gold Report – May 25, 2017 – WESTERN / CENTRAL

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

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Portage	281	224	18	30
Winkler		217	19	
CENTRAL AVERAGE	281	221	18.5	30
Brandon				
Brandon North	209	277	11	26
Virden	228	237	16	28
Virden North	209	222	17	28
WESTERN AVERAGE	215	229	15	27

The Central area has seen a huge jump in crop height of 2.5 inches/day. The Western area is a repeat of the May 23rd report as samples were taken only once in the Virden area and the Brandon N area saw no change in height.

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For more info: John McGregor, MFGA Green Gold Coordinator
e: john@mfga.net, w: www.mfga.net or follow us on [Twitter!](#) 

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Stubble in Alfalfa

This past week I got the question on what effect last year's alfalfa stubble could have on one 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. Nutritionists 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.