Green Gold Report – June 1, 2017 – WESTERN / CENTRAL

Hay Day is June 4th

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Portage	152	195	23	19
Winkler	216	195	23	29
CENTRAL AVERAGE	**184**	**195**	**23**	**24**
Roblin	216	277	11	26
Brandon North	189	258	12	23
Virden	149	193	22	25
Virden North	174	193	22	26
WESTERN AVERAGE	**182**	**230**	**16.75**	**25**

RFVs are dropping approximately 6 pts/day, which should put Hay Day on/or around June 4th.

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What I am Hearing

As of Wednesday most fields were in the early bud stage. Fields in the Virden and Central areas have grown on average 2 inches over the past 3 days. Monday and Tuesday were cool which slowed the growth.
From the reports that I am getting Monday AM June 5th the alfalfa has jumped in some areas but 5-6 inches from Wednesday last week giving us over 1 inch of growth/ day.

Early Bud Stage

Below is a shot of alfalfa in the early bud stage. For the Green Gold program and PEAQ early bud is considered as1 to 2 nodes having visible buds. Buds may be hidden by leaves. To check for presence of buds pinch stem tip with fingers. Presence of a small, hard "ball" means that a bud is present.

Haying Started

On Sunday I heard from the Sweetnam's that they had started cutting. Hay Day is still a few days away but looking at the May 29th report and the weather cutting early was a good option.

If you have grass in your mixture 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.

Producers that are cutting alfalfa early maybe focusing on getting the first cut off soon enough to take advantage of second and sequential cuts. Operations requiring top quality feeds for the milking herd focus on quality rather than quantity.

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 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, 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.