

Green Gold Report – June 5, 2017 – WESTERN / CENTRAL

Hay Day is here and or past for the area as of the 5th of June.

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Portage	175	178	24	25
Winkler	cut			
CENTRAL AVERAGE	175	178	24	25
Roblin	160	252	14	23
Brandon North		210	19	
Virden	143	157	29	21
Virden North		161	28	
WESTERN AVERAGE	152	195	22.5	22

We are missing some samples from the area but as you can see for the ones that we have we are at the optimum time for Dairy and in some cases Beef hay.

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What I am hearing

As mentioned in the last report the Winkler area has harvested the field that was being monitored for the Green Gold program. We are missing a couple of areas but I felt that this report was already late so I opted to get it out.

One question that I had was that farmers are cutting in the Winkler area but that the last RFV from that area was 216 which is very high. Looking at the previous report May 29 I see that it was 210. To answer the question I usually try to explain that a sample for the field is coming from a sq meter area and that sampling variation can vary depending on what is in the grab sample that fills the bag, after that variation can come from the small sample that CTL takes from the larger sample.

Other factors that come into play is what type of feed the individual is looking for. If you want 150-170 RFV feed you need to cut when the alfalfa is 170-180 to allow for harvest loss. Then if you have grass in your mix you might want to target 20-30 pts higher to allow for the grass. Do this would have producers looking at starting cutting in the 200-210 range.

Hay in a Day- Weather Risk Trumps Timing

In past reports we have talked about sugar content but the greatest risk to hay curing and forage quality is rain damage. Weather prediction is, obviously, far from perfect in Manitoba. If the weatherman says there is no chance of rain in the 48-hour forecast, we have some reasonable amount of confidence that he'll be right more often than not. But, on that third day, and especially on those days beyond, we might as well flip a coin to judge what the weather will be. Here are a couple of links to improving your chances of putting up better quality hay and silage.

[Hay in a Day](#)

[5 Steps to High Quality Hay](#)

Shorting Drying Times

Understanding how cut hay dries and how losses occur during cutting, conditioning, raking and baling is the first step in choosing techniques for maintaining the quality of cut hay. Rain is most detrimental to hay quality if it occurs in the first day or two after cutting when danger of leaching losses is higher. Two inches of rain in a single event is less detrimental than a half-inch of rain over four days, because wet plants respire longer, compromising quality and dry matter.

A cut plant continues to respire losing sugars until it drops to below 40% moisture so shorting the time it takes to go from 80 to 40% increases the energy content of the hay. Techniques like wide swaths, conditioning the hay and time of day can speed the drying process and enable you to put up hay in better condition. For more information on making better quality hay click on [High Quality Hay Management](#)

Should I let the alfalfa blossom at least once during the summer?

If your goal is to keep the alfalfa in rotation as long as possible, then the plants should have the opportunity to reach one-tenth blossom at least once during the growing season. This is the point when the plants reach a full level of carbohydrate reserves in the roots.

Many times if the alfalfa stand has been damaged during winter and it has been slow to respond to warm weather, it is a good idea to let the plants build their root carbohydrate levels and reach one-tenth blossom at least once during the growing season. The best cutting to do this would be either second or third rather than first cutting when we have the highest yield.