



**FORAGE QUALITY  
EXPRESSED AS  
DOLLARS**

**As Standing Hay:**

Alfalfa Leaving the Bud Stage & Grass Leaving the Boot Stage:

For Every Day Harvest is Delayed,  
NDF and ADF ↑ by 1%

- As NDF ↓ 1%:  
DMI ↑ .5 Lbs. and  
Milk ↑ 1 Lb.
- As ADF ↓ 1%:  
Milk ↑ .6Lbs.

**100 Cow Herd:**

- All Hay Diet on Forage Side of Ration
- This Cutting (1st) is 1/2 of Total Yield.

**Daily Milk Loss:**

- 1.6 Lbs./Cow/Day x 100 Cows = 160 lbs.
- 1.6 Cwt X \$15.00 =

**\$24.00/Day for every Day Harvest Delayed**

One Half of Hay Tonnage to be Fed:

183 Days of Feeding x \$24.00 Loss/Day =

**\$4392 Loss per Day of Delayed Harvest**



**Alfalfa Heights**

**Monitoring Alfalfa Heights to Target First Cutting Dates**

Forage quality is one of the cornerstones of dairy profitability. The higher the forage quality the lower the amounts of grain that are needed to balance a ration. Alfalfa heights have been proven to be a reliable method for predicting maturity and fiber levels for both alfalfa and grass stands as well as mixed stands. To help farmer's target high quality hay crop forage at harvest for first cutting this spring, Betsy and Janice provided reports to local producers on haycrop progress toward maturity by taking height measurements weekly throughout the 4 county region.

This spring fields were slow to green; snow persisted in drifts late into April and in shaded spots until early May. Each year weather and soil conditions dictate how fast alfalfa and grass hay fields will grow. First cutting can fall anytime from early to mid May and alfalfa in late May to early June. The team identified 20 fields to measure weekly until first cutting. Results were compiled and distributed weekly via email and text messages to producers and agriservice personnel. Local agriservice professionals were able to multiple the impact by using the weekly information to closely advise their clientele as demonstrated by the following feedback, "Thanks for putting this together. My customers have been finding it very helpful. Appreciate your efforts!"

The potential economic benefit of meeting recommended quality targets are outlined to the left.



**Cheese Demonstration**  
**June 18, 2015**  
**Marathon Senior Center**



**Soil Health Trailer**

**New York Soil Health Demonstration Trailer Helping Farmers Manage the Risks of Climate Change**

Farmers in New York as well as around the world are facing new risks associated with climate change. An obvious risk is the increase in rainfall events (<2 inches) which have increased over the last 35 years as well as extended dry periods. The risk of these two weather events can severely jeopardize farmer's crops and livestock. Healthy soil can provide a defense to these risks.

To help educate farmers to understand the components of healthy soil, the NY Grazinglands Coalition partnered with four other states to receive a trailer equipped with soil health demonstration equipment. The trailer will travel the state taking part in educational events.

The trailer is equipped with:

- A large Rainfall Simulator which can deliver varied amounts of rain to up to 6 samples of soils managed differently.
- Active Carbon testing equipment which measures biological activity in a soil.
- Three Penetrometers which can be used by participants to measure the compaction of a soil.

In addition to climate change, soil health is being identified as the limiting factor to productivity on many farms. Seed companies and agronomist have done an excellent job of improving seed and the nutrient or chemical composition of crop growing soils but now realize they need to also focus on the physical structure and biological life in the soil to make the most of seed genetics and nutrients. The demonstrations will help farmers visualize the importance of the chemical, physical, and biological components and their impact on the function of soil.

The trailer is part of a three year \$280,000 USDA-NRCS Grant. New York's grant is \$54,000 and will be administered by Fay Benson.

South Central NY Dairy Team collaborated with Cortland County Area Agency on Aging to demonstrate the process of making cheese and connecting dairy products as a healthy way for seniors to increase their calcium intake.

Fay Benson has worked with Trinity Valley Dairy to put on cheese making classes at Trinity Valley's Store for the past 2 years. One of the classes was attended by the manager of the Marathon Sr. Center. She approached Susan Prier who is the nutritionist for Cortland County's Area Agency on Aging. Susan and Fay worked out a description of a demonstration to make mozzarella cheese at the senior center. The description was designed to be an entertaining demonstration while at the same time stress the importance of calcium and how dairy products are a good source for seniors.

More than 30 seniors attended the demonstration. The mozzarella produced was tasted at the event and what was remaining was going to be added to the next day's lunch menu. In addition to the demonstration the seniors were enthusiastically sharing their memories of dairy in the area. Fay was surprised to learn the number of cheese factories in Cortland County in the past.

**Fay Benson-Cheese Demo.**



**2015 By the Numbers**

- 77 active participants in farmer-to-farmer learning groups
- 50 meetings and workshops with 1230 participants totaling 2696 contact hours
- 150 consultations providing in-depth, personalized troubleshooting, evaluation, information and advice
- 500 responses to phone & email inquiries