



SOUTHWEST NEW YORK FIELD CROP CHRONICLE

Compiled by Katelyn Miller - Field Crops Specialist, SWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Program

716-640-2047

km753@cornell.edu

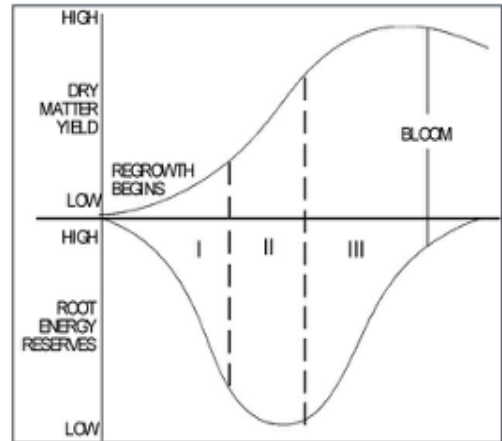
September 3, 2022

Fall 4th Cutting Management

Excerpt by Jodi Letham, NWNYS Field Crops & Soils Specialist

Throughout the late summer and early fall, alfalfa plants are preparing for winter by developing cold resistance and storing energy reserves in their roots. Timing of fall harvest may interfere with this process. Harvesting alfalfa at a time that allows only a few weeks of regrowth before frost kill, greatly reduces energy reserves in the roots. Late harvesting also removes stubble, which catches snow and insulates plants from extremely cold air temperatures. Both circumstances increase the risk of alfalfa winter-kill. Risks to stand persistence can be minimized by:

1. Taking at least one harvest during the summer at 1/10 bloom or greater.
2. Fall harvesting young stands because young stands are less susceptible than old stands to winter injury.
3. Maintaining high soil fertility levels.
4. Fall harvesting alfalfa varieties that have a good disease resistance and winter hardiness.



Changes that occur in dry-matter yields and root energy reserves during growth periods of an alfalfa crop. Stage 1 is early crop growth, Stage 2 is the crop at 6-8 inches tall, and Stage 3 is at crop maturity. Source: Penn State Extension Agronomy Facts 7 "Cutting Management of Alfalfa, Red Clover, and Birdsfoot Trefoil"

Optimum soil fertility levels enhance the storage of energy reserves in alfalfa roots. Maintaining high reserves of energy in the roots as winter begins does improve the ability of alfalfa to overwinter and support good spring growth. Applying fertilizer after the plant goes dormant for the winter does not benefit energy reserve storage. Contact your local extension agent or co-op to discuss fertility needs of your stands after 4th cutting. For additional information visit: <https://extension.psu.edu/cutting-management-of-alfalfa-red-clover-and-birdsfootrefoil>

You're Invited to a Cover Crop Field Day!

Friday, September 9, 2022
12:30pm – 2pm

5701 Burton Road, Orchard Park NY

Reservations are encouraged but not required. Please call or email Katelyn Miller at (716) 640-2047 or km753@cornell.edu for more information. 1.5 CCA credits are available!

Join the SWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crop Program for a cover crop field day! Three cover crop plots consisting of sorghum sudangrass, teff, and buckwheat were seeded in mid-July, and this field day will evaluate their performance to date and provide the opportunity to:

- Walk through the test plots of sorghum sudangrass, teff, and buckwheat
- Learn from experts about integrating these crops into your system for:
 - Diversifying your cropping system
 - Weed suppression in-between crops
 - Soil health
 - Value as a livestock feed
- Connect with other local farmers looking to use these cover crops

HELPING YOU PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

The SWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Program offers educational programming and research based information to agricultural producers, growers, and agribusinesses. Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and education recognized for valuing AA/EO, Protected Veterans, and Individual with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities. For more information, please contact Katelyn Miller 716-640-2047 or km753@cornell.edu.