Cornell Cooperative Extension Southwest Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Program

A partnership between Cornell University and the CCE Associations in these five counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Steuben Counties.

SWNY Field Crop Finds

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Harvesting 1st Cutting: Estimating NDF Values for Quality Feed

It is quite difficult to assess the quality of pure grass stands without analyzing samples. Alfalfa height has proven to be a reliable indicator of Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF) values in the field. **Below are height indicators for alfalfa and grass NDF content**:

- Begin cutting 100% grass stands when nearby alfalfa is 14" tall to achieve the desired 50% NDF.
- Begin cutting 50/50 alfalfa-grass stands when nearby alfalfa is 22" tall for the desired 44% NDF.
- Begin cutting 100% alfalfa stands when alfalfa is 28" tall for the desired 40% NDF.

Typically, NDF increases about 0.8 to 1.2/day for grasses and 0.4 to 0.7/day in alfalfa. Expect the lower end of that range in cooler weather and the higher end in warm weather. Use the chart below to help estimate the NDF value of your forage.

Max. alfalfa height, in.	%Grass in the stand (dry matter basis)								
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
14	23.5	26.7	29.9	33.1	36.3	39.5	42.7	45.9	49.1
15	24.3	27.5	30.7	33.9	37.1	40.3	43.5	46.7	49.9
16	25.1	28.3	31.5	34.7	37.9	41.1	44.3	47.5	50.7
17	25.9	29.1	32.3	35.5	38.7	41.9	45.1	48.3	51.5
18	26.8	30.0	33.2	36.4	39.6	42.8	46.0	49.2	52.4
19	27.6	30.8	34.0	37.2	40.4	43.6	46.8	50.0	53.2
20	28.4	31.6	34.8	38.0	41.2	44.4	47.6	50.8	54.0
21	29.2	32.4	35.6	38.8	42.0	45.2	48.4	51.6	54.8
22	30.1	33.3	36.5	39.7	42.9	46.1	49.3	52.5	55.7
23	30.9	34.1	37.3	40.5	43.7	46.9	50.1	53.3	56.5
24	31.7	34.9	38.1	41.3	44.5	47.7	50.9	54.1	57.3
25	32.5	35.7	38.9	42.1	45.3	48.5	51.7	54.9	58.1
26	33.4	36.6	39.8	43.0	46.2	49.4	52.6	55.8	59.0
27	34.2	37.4	40.6	43.8	47.0	50.2	53.4	56.6	59.8
28	35.0	38.2	41.4	44.6	47.8	51.0	54.2	57.4	60.6
29	35.8	39.0	42.2	45.4	48.6	51.8	55.0	58.2	61.4
30	36.7	39.9	43.1	46.3	49.5	52.7	55.9	59.1	62.3
31	37.5	40.7	43.9	47.1	50.3	53.5	56.7	59.9	63.1
32	38.3	41.5	44.7	47.9	51.1	54.3	57.5	60.7	63.9
33	39.1	42.3	45.5	48.7	51.9	55.1	58.3	61.5	64.7
34	40.0	43.2	46.4	49.6	52.8	56.0	59.2	62.4	65.6
35	40.8	44.0	47.2	50.4	53.6	56.8	60.0	63.2	66.4

Pheromone Trap Data

This year, black cutworm, western bean cutworm, true armyworm, and fall armyworm will be monitored. Traps have been deployed in 4 locations with more information to come.

It's the first Field Crop Finds of the year! Stay tuned for important field crop updates throughout the growing season.