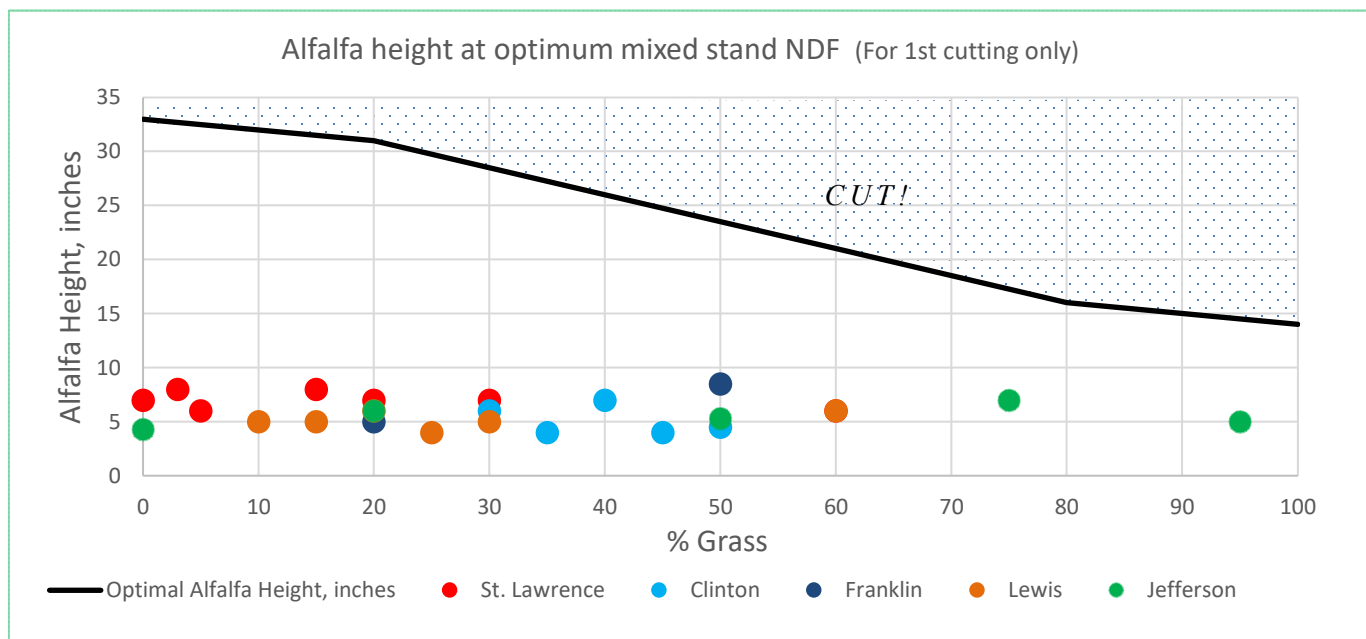


# 2021 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Progress Report

**May 4, 2022 Report**



## Check individual fields!

Notice the differences among these monitored fields. (Open circles show previous week's height for comparison.)

It is important to get out and measure alfalfa heights in your own fields to help judge rate of growth and maturity for best timing of 1st cutting.

Refer to table on page 2 for detailed information on each site.

**Fields on the graph with 0" alfalfa height have been mowed.**

The *North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Progress Report* is a Cornell Cooperative Extension project. Data collection by Lindsay Ferlito, Mike Hunter, Mellissa Spence, Joe Lawrence, Allen Wilder, Justin Tucker, Kolby Sample, Eric Bever, Jonathan Krauss, and Kitty O'Neil.

**Goal % NDF** - NDF (Neutral Detergent Fiber) content is the best predictor of forage quality for lactating dairy cows. NDF content of standing first cutting alfalfa and grasses is easily predicted by alfalfa height. The relationship between NDF content in an alfalfa-grass mix and alfalfa height only works for first cutting. Second and 3rd cuttings should simply be taken according to the calendar - at 28 to 35 day intervals.

**100% Grass** - Goal NDF (on a dry matter basis) is 50% (target range 48-55). Tallest alfalfa height will be 14-16 inches.

**100% Alfalfa** - Goal NDF is 40% (target range 39-43). Tallest alfalfa height will be 28-30 inches.

**Mixed stand** - for a 50:50 alfalfa:grass stand, the goal NDF is 43%. Tallest alfalfa height will be 22-23 inches.

Begin harvest early enough so that most of your crop is harvested within the "ideal" range. Typically NDF increases about 0.5 to 0.7/day for alfalfa and about 0.8 to 1.2/day for grass. Expect the lower end of that range in cooler weather and the higher end in warm.

## Weekly Tips and Observations

- Alfalfa growth has been slow and a bit behind so far this spring, due to cool temperatures. Average height was 5.8" this week. Accumulation of GDD<sub>41</sub> so far this spring is a bit behind 15-year averages. Over the past 5 years, alfalfa heights during this first week of May have averaged 9.2", 6.6", 6.8", 5.6", 10.1". GDD<sub>41</sub> are behind average, but they can catch up fast.
- Winter damage to alfalfa, from ice sheeting, lack of snow cover or severely cold temperatures appears to be minimal this spring.
- Field moisture has been dry enough for lots of manure application progress across the region. Rain over the past few days has slowed field work.
- Nitrogen should be applied to grass fields (if less than 50% legume and no manure history) very soon, if it's not already on. Ideally, N application should be timed just prior to the increase in plant demand to limit risk of losses to ground and surface water and to the atmosphere. (Risk of volatilization is higher for urea applied to sods than to tilled soils, but when applied just before a 0.5" rain, or with a urease-inhibitor, N loss can be minimized.)

## 2021 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Progress Report

County	Town/Field	Elevation (feet)	Soil		Alfalfa Height, inches						
			Type	% Grass	2-May	9-May	16-May	23-May	31-May	6-Jun	13-Jun
St. Lawrence	Canton	570	Muskellunge	30	7						
St. Lawrence	Depeyster	350	Malone	15	8						
St. Lawrence	Lisbon	380	Hogansburg	3	8						
St. Lawrence	Waddington	300	Hogansburg	20	7						
St. Lawrence	Dekalb	450	Heuvelton	60	6						
St. Lawrence	Lawrence	460	Depeyster	5	6						
St. Lawrence	Parishville	670	Nicholville	0	7						
Franklin	Bombay	190	Covington	20	5						
Franklin	Moira	490	Walpole	50	8.5						
Clinton	AuSable	400	Appleton	30	6						
Clinton	AuSable	400	Bombay	40	7						
Clinton	Chazy	185	Pinconning	35	4						
Clinton	Ellenburg	1400	Fahey	50	4.5						
Clinton	Ellenburg	1100	Schroon	45	4						
Lewis	Lowville	750	Kars	20	6						
Lewis	Lowville	1240	Herkimer	30	5						
Lewis	Lowville	1060	Amenia	60	6						
Lewis	Denmark	862	Galway	15	5						
Lewis	West Turin	1310	Herkimer	10	5						
Lewis	Leyden	1240	Nellis	25	4						
Jefferson	Rodman	860	Galway	20	6						
Jefferson	Champion	1160	Manlius	50	5.3						
Jefferson	Champion	1140	Manlius	0	4.3						
Jefferson	Cape Vincent	305	Plainfield	75	7						
Jefferson	Philadelphia	540	Hudson	95	5						

AVERAGE

5.9