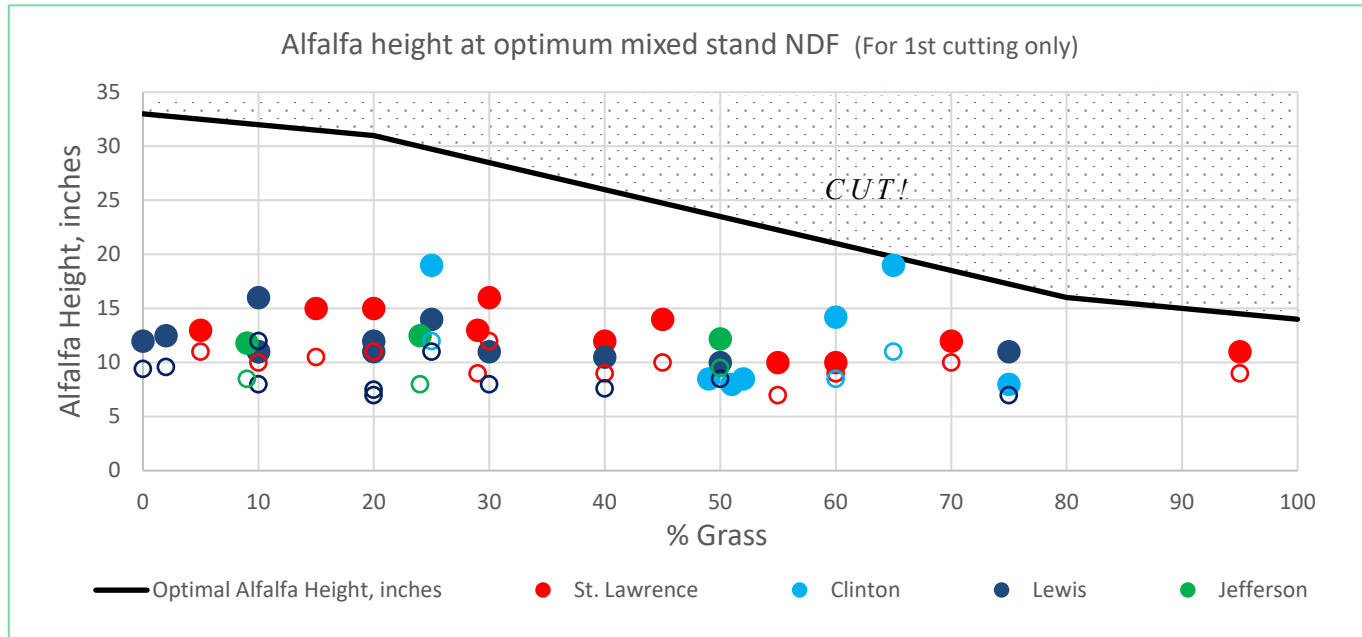


2023 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Progress Report



Week of May 8, 2023

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 L Ferlito, M Hunter, A Jantzi, M Spence, J Lawrence, K. Gugin, M. Jordan, A Wilder, J Tucker, K Sample, E Bever, J Krauss, and K 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 and grass grew slowly this past week, except for southern Clinton County. Alfalfa grew an average of 3" this past week and grasses remain vegetative. Average alfalfa height was 12.3" and ranged from 8" to 19". Fields with the highest proportion of grass reach ideal maturity first, so ready the mowers for grass.
- Some of our neighbors to the south are talking about mowing grass fields soon, but be wary. Check where the grass head is inside the stem of cool season grasses. Most of our grass heads are still low in the stem. Mowing early risks missing the seed head and this will cause quick heading of grasses for 2nd cut, reducing quality.
- GDD₄₁ are about 30 to 60 GDD ahead of the 15-year average across the NNY region, ranging from about 250 to 300 since April 1. Since that unseasonably warm week in April, cool weather has resulted in a much slower pace of GDD₄₁ accumulation.
- There's still time to get 30-50 lbs of N on established grass fields but it will be late enough soon that it will help 2nd cutting more than 1st. Nitrogen is NOT recommended for any field with 25% legume or more as this will favor the grass at the expense of legume in the stand, so there is no economical advantage.

2023 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Progress Report

County	Town/Field	Elevation (feet)	Soil		Alfalfa Height, inches							
			Type	% Grass	1-May	8-May	15-May	22-May	30-May	5-Jun	12-Jun	
St. Lawrence	Dekalb	450	Depeyster	60		9	10					
St. Lawrence	Depeyster	350	Malone	30		12	16					
St. Lawrence	Oswegatchie	300	Muskellunge	5		11	13					
St. Lawrence	Lisbon	330	Hogansburg	15		10.5	15					
St. Lawrence	Madrid	340	Hogansburg	40		9	12					
St. Lawrence	Madrid	330	Grenville	95		9	11					
St. Lawrence	Lawrence	540	Kalurah	20		11	15					
St. Lawrence	Hopkinton	820	Kalurah	70		10	12					
St. Lawrence	Parishville	660	Hailesboro	10		10	11					
St. Lawrence	Canton	550	Pyrities	29		9	13					
St. Lawrence	Canton	520	Hailesboro	45		10	14					
St. Lawrence	Canton	530	Depeyster	55		7	10					
Clinton	AuSable	460	Appleton	25		12	19					
Clinton	AuSable	280	Waddington	65		11	19					
Clinton	Chazy	185	Malone	60		8.5	14.2					
Clinton	Ellenburg	1550	Schroon	51			8					
Clinton	Ellenburg	1610	Sunapee	49			8.5					
Clinton	Ellenburg	1130	Bice	52			8.5					
Clinton	Ellenburg	1380	Schroon	75			8					
Lewis	Lowville	980	Nellis	20		7	11					
Lewis	New Breman	740	Adams	30		8	11					
Lewis	Denmark	862	Galway	20		7.5	12					
Lewis	West Turin	1310	Herkimer	10		8	11					
Lewis	Turin	1205	Howard	75		7	11					
Lewis	Constableville	1200	Herkimer	25		11	14					
Lewis	Lyons Falls	830	Kars	10		12	16					
Lewis	Turin	1280	Farmington	50		8.5	10					
Lewis	Martinsburg	1270	Herkiimer	40		7.6	10.5					
Lewis	Denmark	1180	Herkimer	0		9.4	12					
Lewis	Champion	1160	Manlius	2		9.6	12.5					
Jefferson	Rodman	860	Galway	9		8.5	11.8					
Jefferson	Adams	410	Collamer	24		8	12.5					
Jefferson	Ellisburg	305	Hamlin	50		9.5	12.2					

9.3 12.3