

1st Cutting Forage Quality Update – May 8, 2012

This is our second week of monitoring of 1st cutting for quality in 2012. Warmer weather and significant rain have moved the maturity a long across much of the region. Pure or mostly grass stands at lower elevations (below 1000 feet) need cut at this time. At higher elevations the prediction would be we are still a week away from grass harvest. Pure to mostly alfalfa stands appear to be 2-3 weeks away from harvest. Because alfalfa has been set back by frosts in some fields usually at higher elevations, weed competition is greater than normal; in particular dandelion but winter annuals as well. At this point it appears this competition is having an effect on the alfalfa.

As always use information in the attached table as a guide to know when to harvest by checking your fields! Next report May 15!

Most locations have alfalfa and grass height measurements, but a few only have grass and some only alfalfa so you may see blank spaces in the tables. At some locations the alfalfa is really too short to fit the equations, under 13 inches, so you see “Too Early” indicated. If a farm has harvested you will see “Cut” indicated. If you want to do it yourself check <http://www.forages.org/joomla/index.php/tools> for Excel spreadsheets that will make predictions of current NDF content in the field from your own measurements. Our feeling is that many times these calculations are within the error of scissor cut or grab sample results sent to a lab so you are encouraged to make your own measurements.

Here are numbers that are helpful when using alfalfa and grass height as an indicator of NDF content:

Begin cutting 100% orchardgrass stands when they are 19 inches tall and 100% reed canary grass stands when they are 21 inches tall for the desired 50% NDF. In general we say 100% grass stands should be cut when nearby alfalfa is 14 inches tall to achieve the desired 50% NDF.

Begin cutting 50/50 mixed alfalfa and grass stands when nearby alfalfa is 22 inches tall for the desired 44% NDF.

Begin cutting 100% alfalfa stands when alfalfa is 28 inches tall for the desired 40% NDF.

The desired NDF for all grass fields is 50%, 50/50 mixed alfalfa and grass fields is 44%, and pure alfalfa stands is 40%. Predicted days to cut are based on daily NDF increases for grasses of 1% point, 50/50 mixed stands of .8% points and alfalfa of .5% point. Typically NDF increases about 0.8 to 1.2/day for grasses expecting the lower end of that range in cooler weather and the higher end in warm. Alfalfa NDF increases about 0.4 to 0.7/day again figuring the lower end of that range with cool temperatures and the higher in warm. Predictions are adjusted for the coming week's weather and right now we are assuming normal growth.

Summary of Alfalfa Height and Prediction of % NDF - May 8, 2012

County	Town	Road Name	Elevation	Grass Height Inches	Grass Species	Predicted Grass %NDF	Predicted Date to Cut Grass	Alfalfa Height Inches	Predicted Alfalfa % NDF	Predicted Date to Cut Alfalfa	Predicted 50/50 Mix % NDF	Predicted Date to Cut Mix
Chenango	Bainbridge	Ives Settlement Road	1400	12	Orchardgrass	40.5	5/17/12	7	Too Early			
Chenango	Brisban	State Route 12	919	15	Orchardgrass	44.1	5/13/12	7	Too Early			
Chenango	Earlville	Williams Road	1075					14	28.3	5/27/12	36.3	5/17/12
Chenango	New Berlin	County Road 18	1109	14	Reed Canarygrass	42.9	5/15/12	12	Too Early			
Chenango	Nineveh	County Road 26	966	14	Orchardgrass	42.9	5/15/12	9	Too Early			
Chenango	Oxford	County Road 32	1030	14	Orchardgrass	42.9	5/15/12	9	Too Early			
Chenango	Oxford	State Route 220	1509	14	Orchardgrass	42.9	5/15/12					
Chenango	Sherburne	Furmans Mills Road	1292	17	Orchardgrass	46.5	5/11/12	13	27.6	5/28/12	35.4	5/18/12
Chenango	Sherburne	West Hill Road	1364	16	Reed Canarygrass	45.3	5/12/12	12	Too Early			
Chenango	Sherburne	Bingham Road	1117					14	28.3	5/27/12	36.3	5/17/12
Chenango	Sherburne	County Road 24	1360	16	Orchardgrass	45.3	5/12/12	10	Too Early			
Chenango	Sherburne	State Rt 12	1080					15	29.0	5/26/12	37.1	5/16/12
Chenango	Sidney	State Route 8	980	13	Orchardgrass	41.7	5/16/12	12	Too Early			
Chenango	Smyrna	County Road 20	1122	18	Reed Canarygrass	47.7	5/10/12	15	29.0	5/26/12	37.1	5/16/12
Chenango	Smyrna	County Road 12B	1268					8	Too Early			
Chenango	South Oxford	County Road 32	956	17	Orchardgrass	46.5	5/11/12	11	Too Early			
Herkimer	Columbia	Jordanville Road	1586					9	Too Early			
Herkimer	Danube	Cramer Road	693	21	Orchardgrass	51.2	5/6/12	17	30.4	5/23/12	38.8	5/14/12
Herkimer	German Flatts	Robinson Road	1372	12	Reed Canarygrass	40.5	5/17/12	9	Too Early			
Herkimer	Norway	Elm Tree Road	1123	12	Orchardgrass	40.5	5/17/12	8	Too Early			

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Herkimer	Schulyer	Minots Corners Road	716	19	Orchardgrass	48.9	5/9/12	14	28.3	5/27/12	36.3	5/17/12
Herkimer	Winfield	North Winfield Road	1243					10	Too Early			
Madison	Brookfield	State Route 8	1195					11	Too Early			
Madison	Cazenovia	East Road	1421					11	Too Early			
Madison	DeRuyter	Crumb Hill Road	1329					8	Too Early			
Madison	Earlville	Excell Road	1332	20	Reed Canarygrass	50.1	5/7/12	13	27.6	5/28/12	35.4	5/18/12
Madison	Fenner	Cody Road	1522					11	Too Early			
Madison	Georgetown	State Route 26	1387	11	Reed Canarygrass	36.8	5/21/12	10	Too Early			
Madison	Hamilton	Eaton Street	1118	10	Reed Canarygrass	35.6	5/22/12	10	Too Early			
Madison	Hubbardsville	Wickwire Road	1205					11	Too Early			
Madison	Lebanon	River Road	1114					10	Too Early			
Madison	Lebanon	Jantzen Road	1378					11	Too Early			
Madison	Madison	Center Road	1342	10	Reed Canarygrass	35.6	5/22/12	8	Too Early			
Madison	Smithfield	Gill Road	1311					13	27.6	5/28/12	35.4	5/18/12
Madison	Sullivan	Quarry Road	602					19	31.8	5/20/12	40.6	5/12/12
Otsego	Cherry Valley	County Road 32A	787	18	Orchardgrass	47.7	5/10/12	18	31.1	5/21/12	39.7	5/13/12
Otsego	Cherry Valley	County Road 32	1105	14	Reed Canarygrass	42.9	5/15/12					
Otsego	Cooperstown	County Road 33	1532	12	Orchardgrass	40.5	5/17/12	8	Too Early			
Otsego	Garrettsville	State Route 51	1254	14	Orchardgrass	42.9	5/15/12	9	Too Early			

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Otsego	Maryland	St Rt. 7/Trump Road	1288					16	29.7	5/24/12	38.0	5/15/12
Otsego	Otego	State Route 7	1072	10	Orchardgrass	38.1	5/19/12	7	Too Early			
Otsego	Plainfield	County Road 18	1118	17	Orchardgrass	46.5	5/11/12	13	27.6	5/28/12	35.4	5/18/12
Otsego	Portlandville	County Road 35	1200	12	Orchardgrass	40.5	5/17/12	8	Too Early			
Otsego	Richfield	State Route 20	1712	12	Orchardgrass	40.5	5/17/12	8	Too Early			
Otsego	Springfield	Briar Hill Road	1520	12	Orchardgrass	40.5	5/17/12	10	Too Early			
Otsego	Worcester	County Road 40	1450	13	Orchardgrass	41.7	5/16/12	11	Too Early			
Schoharie	Fulton	St Rt 30/Church Street	668	19	Orchardgrass	48.9	5/9/12	19	31.8	5/20/12	40.6	5/12/12
Schoharie	Fulton	Mill Valley Road	1032	19	Orchardgrass	48.9	5/9/12					
Schoharie	Fulton	State Route 30	685	Cut								
Schoharie	Middleburgh	Amelia Lane	631	Cut								
Schoharie	Richmondville	Warnerville Cutoff	953	16	Orchardgrass	45.3	5/12/12	16	29.7	5/24/12	38.0	5/15/12
Schoharie	Richmondville	Warnerville Cutoff	953	16	Reed Canarygrass	45.3	5/12/12	16	29.7	5/24/12	38.0	5/15/12
Schoharie	Wright	Abrams Road	1023	18	Reed Canarygrass	47.7	5/10/12	17	30.4	5/23/12	38.8	5/14/12
Schoharie	Wright	Abrams Road	1023	20	Orchardgrass	50.1	5/7/12	17	30.4	5/23/12	38.8	5/14/12

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