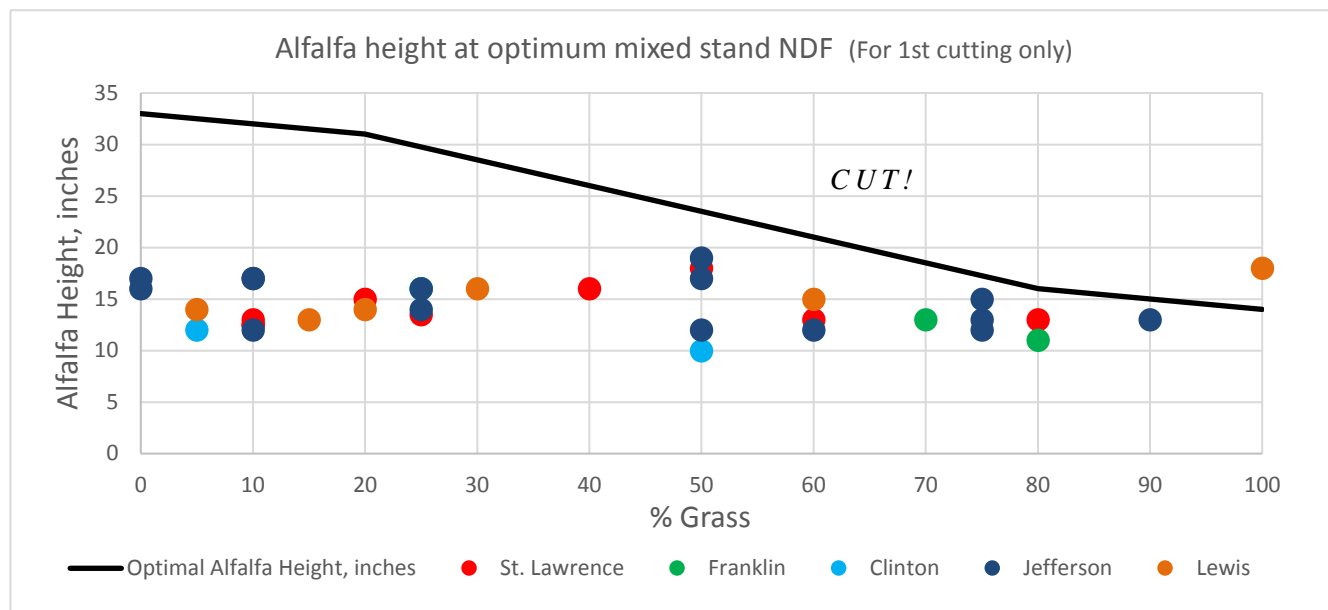


2016 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa Quality Monitor



Check your fields!

Notice the differences among these listed fields.

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.

Field Background

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

The *North Country 1st Cutting Forage Quality Monitoring Program* is made possible by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Data collection by Ron Kuck, Joe Lawrence, Harry Fefee, Sara Bull, Eric Bever, Jonathan Kraus 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 Observations

Our weather has been great for cool season grass growth (some orchardgrasses are in boot stage now), but alfalfa height is a little shorter than normal. In 2015, alfalfa averaged 21" by now. March temperatures were warmer than normal, but April cooled off and alfalfa growth has slowed. Jerry Cherney, Cornell Professor, updated this week: "Alfalfa growth is generally stunted this spring, while grass is moving along, probably heading about normally, but probably shorter than normal." He cautions that alfalfa has continued to mature and decline in quality despite its slowed growth upward. He suggests harvesting 50-100% grass fields as normal, <25% grass fields can wait for a bit more growth on the alfalfa though the grasses will be more mature, and 25-50% grass fields can be managed in-between.

Find additional resources at: <http://www.ccenny.com/index.php/field-crops/crops/first-cutting-harvest-management/>

2016 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa Quality Monitor

County	Town/Field	Elevation (feet)	Soil Type	% Grass	Grass Species	Alfalfa Height, inches				
						2-May	9-May	16-May	23-May	30-May
St. Lawrence	Edwards	580'	Depeyster	80		5	6.5	13		
St. Lawrence	Depeyster	364'	Kalurah	40	Timothy	7	10	16		
St. Lawrence	Depeyster	352'	Hogansburg	50	Timothy	7	10	18		
St. Lawrence	Depeyster	340'	Adjidaumo	10		6	9	12.5		
St. Lawrence	Canton	400'	Malone	10	Reed Canarygrass	7	9.5	13		
St. Lawrence	Madrid	340'	Hogansburg	20	Reed Canarygrass	7	11	15		
St. Lawrence	Waddington	260'	Croghan	60		7	10.5	13		
St. Lawrence	Lawrence	460'	Depeyster	10		5	8	12.5		
St. Lawrence	Hopkinton	800'	Malone	25		5	8.5	13.5		
Franklin	Moira	460'	Rhinebeck	80		3.5	8.5	11		
Franklin	Bangor	760'	Moira	70		4.5	10.5	13		
Clinton	Mooers	225'	Haillesboro	50		5	7	10		
Clinton	Plattsburgh	375'	Haillesboro	5		7	12	12		
Clinton	Peru	420'	Appleton	25	Reed Canarygrass	5	8.5	16		
Clinton	Peru	480'	Hogansburg	25	Reed Canarygrass	5	8.5	16		
Jefferson	Hounsfield	276'	Galway	10		7	12	17		
Jefferson	Ellisburg	365'	Bombay	50	Orchardgrass	8	13	19		
Jefferson	Ellisburg	308'	Collamer	25	Orchardgrass	7	11	16		
Jefferson	Ellisburg	240'	Gallway	50	Bluegrass	7	13	17		
Jefferson	Adams	446'	Niagara	75	Orchardgrass	7	11	15		
Jefferson	Pamelia	262'	Niagara	90	Bromegrass	5	9	13		
Jefferson	Rodman	879'	Galway	25		7	10	14		
Jefferson	Rodman	801'	Galway	10		6	9	12		
Jefferson	Adams	705'	Phelps	10		8	12	17		
Jefferson	Lorraine	581'	Blasdell	0		7	11	16		
Jefferson	Champion	1129'	Farmington	60		5	9	12		
Jefferson	Champion	712'	0	0		8	12	17		
Jefferson	Philadelphia	482'	Hudson	50	Bromegrass		9	12		
Jefferson	Clayton	340'	Rhinebeck	75			7	12		
Jefferson	Orleans	413'	Wilpoint	75			8	13		
Lewis	Martinsburg	1072	Galway	30	Tall Fescue	7	12	16		
Lewis	Martinsburg	1105	Galway	100	Orchardgrass	7	11	18		
Lewis	Turin	840	Kars	5	Orchardgrass	6	11	14		
Lewis	Denmark	883	Farmington	20	Reed Canarygrass	5.5	9	14		
Lewis	Denmark	943	Nellis	15	Tall Fescue	6.5	8.5	13		
Lewis	Denmark	1189	Galway	60	Tall Fescue	5	10	15		

Find additional resources at: <http://www.ccenny.com/index.php/field-crops/crops/first-cutting-harvest-management/>