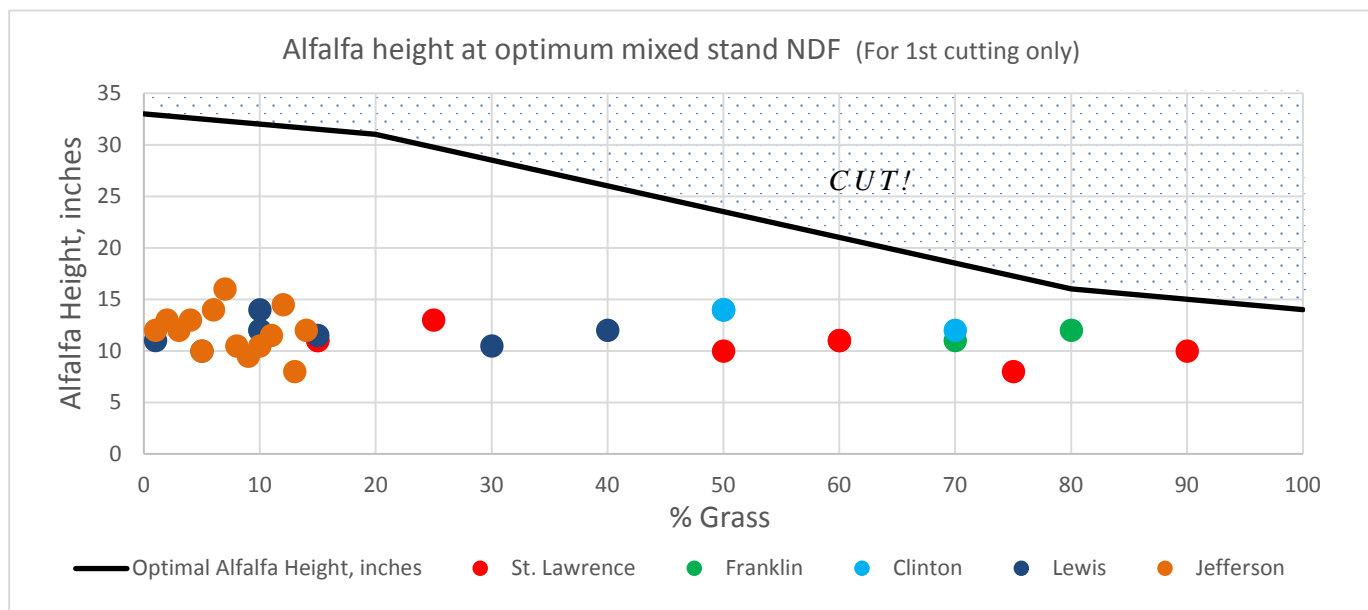


2017 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa Quality Monitor



The North Country 1st Cutting Forage Quality Monitoring Program is made possible by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Data collection by Ron Kuck, Alyssa Couse, Melissa Spence, Joe Lawrence, Harry Fefee, Sara Bull, Eric Bever, Jonathan Kraus, Bill Bullock and Kitty O'Neil.

May 9, 2017 REPORT

Check your fields!

Notice the differences among these monitored 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.

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

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 1.0/day for grass.

Weekly Tips and Observations

Alfalfa and grass have both grown slowly this week, due to cool temps and cloudy skies. Alfalfa heights are still ahead of where they were this week in 2016, however. Many fields again had standing water this week from heavy rains from May 2 to 9. Once fields are past their prime (grasses first) send them to the bottom of the mowing order. Prioritize fields where quality is still high, then go back to the rest. Consider storing lower quality 1st cut separately, to optimize its use with non-lactating animals.

With this wet weather delay, consider skipping new hay seedings this spring to move directly on to corn planting. Hay fields can still be seeded in late summer, but corn has to be planted ASAP.

Monitor winter cereals closely - they may head quickly when we get some warmer, drier weather, making optimal harvest even more difficult.

2017 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	DeKalb	450'	Heuvelton	60	Perennial Ryegrass	9	11			
St. Lawrence	Depeyster	364'	Kalurah	90	Timothy	7	10			
St. Lawrence	Depeyster	340'	Adjidaumo	50	Reed Canarygrass	7	10			
St. Lawrence	Hopkinton	710'	Pyrites	25	Perennial Ryegrass	5	13			
St. Lawrence	Madrid	340'	Hogansburg	15	Reed Canarygrass	9	11			
St. Lawrence	Parishville	750'	Roundabout	15		8	11			
St. Lawrence	Stockholm	560'	Coveytown	75	Reed Canarygrass	6	8			
St. Lawrence	Waddington	260'	Croghan	60		7	11			
Franklin	Bangor	760'	Moira	70		8.5	11			
Franklin	Moira	450'	Croghan	10	Perennial Ryegrass	8	12			
Franklin	Moira	460'	Rhinebeck	80		8.5	12			
Clinton	Mooers	225'	Halesboro	70		7	12			
Clinton	Plattsburgh	375'	Halesboro	50		12	14			
Clinton	Peru	420'	Appleton	50	Reed Canarygrass	12	14			
Clinton	Peru	480'	Hogansburg	50	Reed Canarygrass	12	14			
Lewis	Leyden	1254	Nellis	40	Orchardgrass	10	12			
Lewis	Turin	840	Kars	10	Orchardgrass	11	14			
Lewis	Martinsburg1	1095	Herkimer	10	Tall Fescue	11	12			
Lewis	Martinsburg2	1255	Herkimer	5	Reed Canarygrass	9	10			
Lewis	Lowville	733	Duane	1	-	10	11			
Lewis	Denmark1	1010	Plainfield	30	Reed Canarygrass	9	10.5			
Lewis	Denmark2	915	Nellis	15	Tall Fescue	9.5	11.5			
Jefferson	Ellisburg E	440	Madrid	10	TBA	11	12			
Jefferson	Ellisburg W	330	Collamer	10	TBA	11	13			
Jefferson	Ellisburg N	420	Galway	10	TBA	11	12			
Jefferson	Henderson	260	Rhinebeck	50	TBA	10	13			
Jefferson	Hounsfield W	276	Niagara	50	TBA	8	10			
Jefferson	Hounsfield N	482	Galway	10	TBA	11	14			
Jefferson	Adams	350	Collamer	50	TBA	12	16			
Jefferson	Carthage	710	Elmridge	5	TBA	10	10.5			
Jefferson	Clayton	253	Rhinebeck	TBD	TBA	7.5	9.5			
Jefferson	Evans Mills	470	Farmington	50	TBA	10	10.5			
Jefferson	Evans Mills	470	Farmington	10	TBA	9.5	11.5			
Jefferson	Evans Mills N	400	Covington	20	TBA	9	14.5			
Jefferson	Philidelphia	520	Rhinebeck	10	TBA	6	8			
Jefferson	Watertown	510	Collamer	40	TBA	9.5	12			