

1st Cutting Forage Quality Update **Cornell Cooperative Extension** | Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops

Today begins our monitoring of 1st cutting for quality this year. If you are not familiar with our procedures we use alfalfa height to predict Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF) for alfalfa, alfalfa/grass mixed and grass stands. Alfalfa height has proven to be a reliable indicator of NDF values in the field.

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

Begin cutting 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.

In the attached tables locations around the region are listed where we have measured alfalfa height. You can use the location and elevation as a guide to conditions that may be similar to your own. Always check your fields to verify your heights and conditions!

Our growth for 2018 is considerably behind 2017, especially for May 8. An alfalfa height of 9 inches or less is too low to be used by the equations we have which is why you see "Too Early". In 2018 on May 8 alfalfa is averaging 9 inches tall and 59 percent of the fields are 9 inches or less. In 2017 on May 2 the alfalfa averaged 13 inches tall and 17 percent of the fields were 9 inches or less. Quite a difference!

The tables indicate no grasses are be ready to cut today. But pay attention to locations near you for predictions for grass ready to harvest coming into this weekend. With continued warm temps through the weekend and some rain in the forecast to push growth these predictions warrant some attention! If you are at a higher elevation, have alfalfa and or mixed stands then you have time yet. Some years we have to say stop planting corn and cut, but this isn't one of them!

Next report will be May 15.

Summary of Alfalfa Height and Prediction of % NDF - May 8, 2018

County	Town	Road Name	Elevation	Alfalfa Height Inches	Predicted Grass % NDF	Predicted 50/50 Mix % NDF	Predicted Alfalfa % NDF	Predicted Date to Cut Grass	Predicted Date to Cut Mix	Predicted Date to Cut Alfalfa
Chenango	Afton	State Route 41	1060	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/18	5/22/18	6/2/18
Chenango	Bainbridge	East Keech Road	1000	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/18	5/22/18	6/2/18
Chenango	Bainbridge	Ives Settlement Road	1457	5	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Chenango	Earlville	Williams Rd	1069	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Chenango	Greene	County Road 32	950	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Chenango	Sherburne	County Road 24	1350	5	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Chenango	Sherburne	State Route 12	1049	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/18	5/22/18	6/2/18
Chenango	Smyrna	County Road 20	1150	8	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Fulton	Ephratah	County Road 140	633	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Fulton	Johnstown	State Route 67	765	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Herkimer	Richfield Springs	State Route 20	1473	7	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Herkimer	Danube	Travis Road	1301	6	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Herkimer	Fairfield	Hardscrabble Road	1308	8	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Herkimer	Mohawk	Kingdom Road	1598	8	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Herkimer	Mohawk	Manning Road.	1638	7	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Herkimer	Stark	Jordanville Road	1420	7	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Herkimer	Warren	Jordanville Road	1555	7	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Herkimer	Warren	Jordanville Road	1546	5	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Herkimer	Winfield	State Highway 51	1195	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/18	5/22/18	6/2/18
Madison	Eaton	Eaton Road	1280	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Madison	Fenner	Nelson Road	1460	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/18	5/22/18	6/2/18
Madison	Lebanon	River Road	1100	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Madison	Lincoln	Colgrove Road	1450	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early

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Summary of Alfalfa Height and Prediction of % NDF - May 8, 2018

County	Town	Road Name	Elevation	Alfalfa Height Inches	Predicted Grass % NDF	Predicted 50/50 Mix % NDF	Predicted Alfalfa % NDF	Predicted Date to Cut Grass	Predicted Date to Cut Mix	Predicted Date to Cut Alfalfa
Madison	Nelson	Erieville Road	1440	5	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Madison	Smithfield	Williams Road	1240	7	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Madison	Stockbridge	Valley Mills Road	500	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Montgomery	Canajoharie	Maring Road	890	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/16	5/22/16	6/2/16
Montgomery	Florida	Cemetery Road	580	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/16	5/22/16	6/2/16
Montgomery	Florida	Mohr Road	830	8	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Montgomery	Glen	State Route 5S	290	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/16	5/22/16	6/2/16
Montgomery	Minden	Airport Road	653	8	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Montgomery	Minden	River Road	417	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/11/16	5/20/16	5/31/16
Montgomery	Minden	State Route 80	610	8	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Montgomery	Mohawk	Stoners Trail Road	570	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Montgomery	Mohawk	Van Epps Road	470	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Montgomery	Palatine	Dygart Road	584	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/16	5/22/16	6/2/16
Montgomery	St. Johnsville	Crum Creek Road	668	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Otsego	Cherry Valley	Dugway Road	796	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/16	5/22/16	6/2/16
Otsego	Maryland	Muehl Road	1320	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/18	5/22/18	6/2/18
Otsego	Middlefield	County Road 33	1236	8	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Otsego	New Lisbon	NY State Highway 51	1255	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/18	5/22/18	6/2/18
Otsego	Pittsfield	County Road 18	1137	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/11/18	5/20/18	5/31/18
Otsego	Richfield	County Road 24	1532	8	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Otsego	Springfield	Briar Hill Road	1638	7	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Otsego	Unadilla	County Road 1	1058	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Saratoga	Charlton	Jockey Street	643	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/11/18	5/20/18	5/31/18

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Saratoga	Galway	Crane Road	833	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Saratoga	Northumberland	Callahan Road	282	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/10/18	5/19/18	5/30/18
Saratoga	Northumberland	State Route 32	268	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/9/18	5/18/18	5/28/18
Saratoga	Saratoga	County Road 67	362	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/11/18	5/20/18	5/31/18
Saratoga	Saratoga	Southard Road	320	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/10/18	5/19/18	5/30/18
Saratoga	Stillwater	State Route 423	475	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/10/18	5/19/18	5/30/18
Schoharie	Middleburgh	Middle-Fort Road	625	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/10/18	5/19/18	5/30/18
Schoharie	Middleburgh	State Route 30	635	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/10/18	5/19/18	5/30/18
Schoharie	Richmondville	Warnerville Cutoff	925	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/18	5/22/18	6/2/18
Schoharie	Seward	Bush Street	1150	7	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Schoharie	Wright	Abram's Road	1050	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/12/18	5/22/18	6/2/18

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