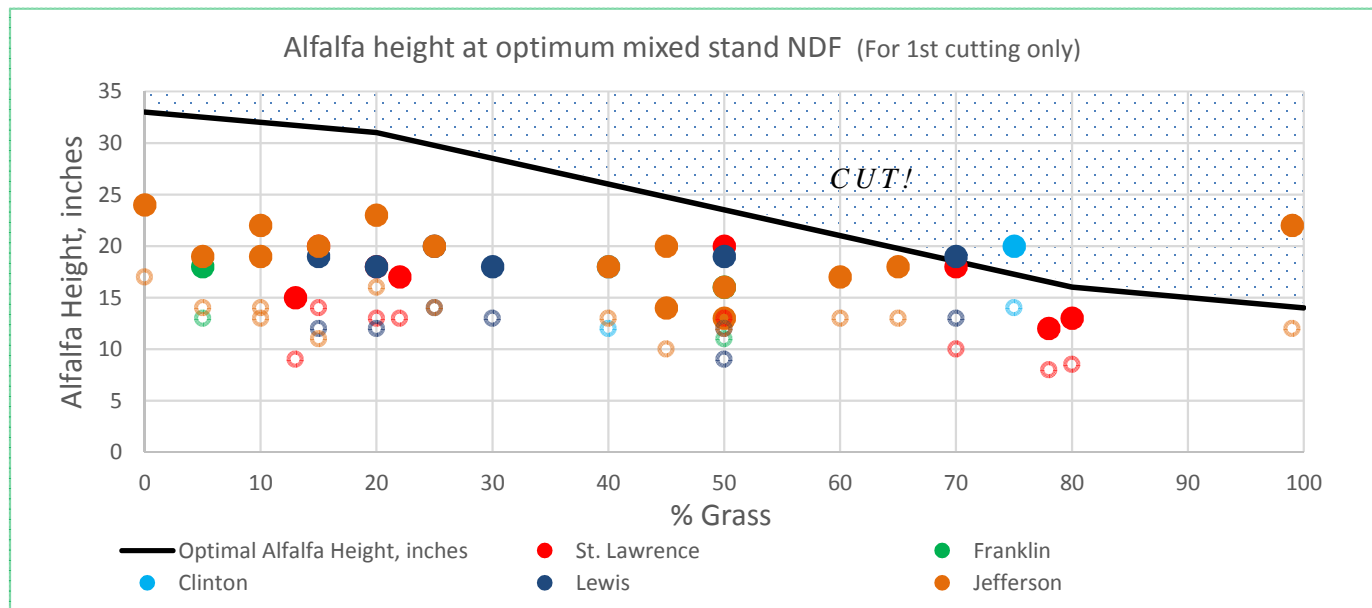


# North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Quality Monitor

**May 21, 2018 REPORT**



## 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.

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

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, Jessica Prosper, Sara Bull, Eric Bever, Bill Bullock 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

## Weekly Tips and Observations

- Alfalfa gained about 6" this week, which is similar to last week's gains. Grasses are making good progress. Earlier heading grasses, such as native species and orchardgrass, are flowering in many fields. 90 to 100% Grass fields are now at or above target NDF and are declining in quality. Check each of your grass fields to assess maturity - it will vary slightly from field to field and from grass species to species.

- Mixed stands with 40-60% grass or more will be at peak quality within the week.

- It's too late to fertilize grass hay fields with N for first cutting. Fertilize with N for 2nd cutting immediately after 1st cutting. Once grasses have reached later phases of vegetative growth, they will not respond to N well and the investment in fertility will not yield a good return.

- Mike Baker, Cornell Beef Cattle Extension Specialist, says now is the time to mow grass fields for ideal forage for finishing beef cattle on an all-forage diet.

## North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Quality Monitor

County	Town/Field	Elevation (feet)	Soil Type	% Grass	Grass Species	Alfalfa Height, inches				
						7-May	14-May	21-May	28-May	4-Jun
St. Lawrence	Depeyster	320	Adjidaumo	13	Reed Canarygrass	5.5	9	15		
St. Lawrence	DeKalb	420	Heuvelton	78		4.5	8	12		
St. Lawrence	Hermon	509	Wegatchie	80		4	8.5	13		
St. Lawrence	Morristown	329	Raquette	22	Orchardgrass		13	17		
St. Lawrence	Lisbon	371	Hogansburg	70	Perennial Ryegrass		10	18		
St. Lawrence	Waddington	302	Hogansburg	15	Reed Canarygrass		14	20		
St. Lawrence	Lawrence	487	Depeyster	50			13	20		
St. Lawrence	Parishville	730	Roundabout	20	Reed Canarygrass		13	18		
Franklin	Moira	450	Croghan	50		7	11	16		
Franklin	Malone	707	Adams	5		9	13	18		
Clinton	Mooers	225'	Hailesboro	40		6	12	18		
Clinton	Beekmantown	375'	Hailesboro	75		8	14	20		
Lewis	Leyden	1254	Nellis	50	Orchardgrass	6	12	19		
Lewis	Turin	840	Dunkirk	25	Tall Fescue	8	14	20		
Lewis	Martinsburg1	1080	Galway	70	Tall Fescue	7	13	19		
Lewis	Martinsburg2	1255	Herkimer	20	Reed Canarygrass		12	18		
Lewis	Denmark1	900	Nellis	30	Reed Canarygrass	5.5	13	18		
Lewis	Denmark2	954	Nellis	15	Tall Fescue	6	12	19		
Jefferson	Champion	1035	Galway	50	Tall Fescue		9	13		
Jefferson	Ellisburg	440	Madrid	50		6	12	16		
Jefferson	Ellisburg	330	Collamer	25		8	14	20		
Jefferson	Ellisburg	420	Collamer	10		8	13	22		
Jefferson	Hounsfield	276	Benson	65		8	13	18		
Jefferson	Hounsfield	276	Niagara	99		6	12	22		
Jefferson	Hounsfield	482	Galway	10		8	14	19		
Jefferson	Rodman	550	Galway	0		9	17	24		
Jefferson	Carthage	700	Elmridge	5		8	14	19		