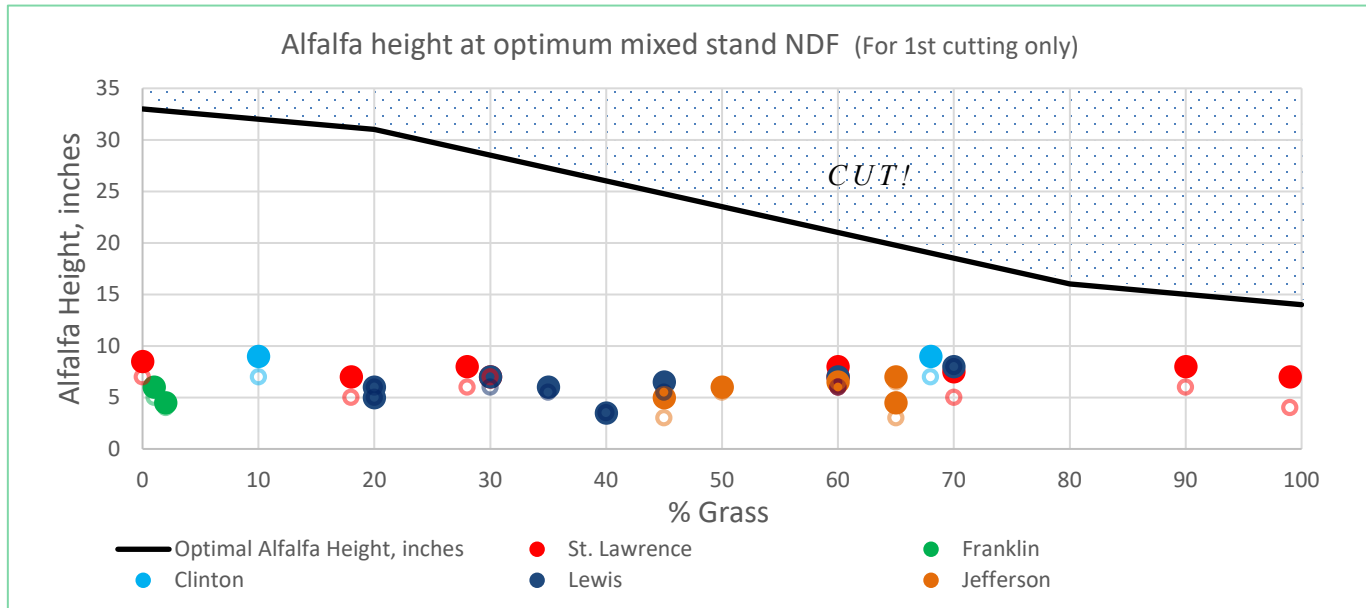


2020 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Quality Monitor

May 11, 2020 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 Lindsay Ferlito, Mike Hunter, Mellissa Spence, Joe Lawrence, Jessica Prosper, Eric Bever, Jonathan Krauss, Csey Havekes 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 Tips and Observations

- Alfalfa growth continued to be slow this week, and is still well behind 2018 and 2019 averages. We stand at an average height of 6.7" across NNY this week, compared with 12.4" in 2018 and 9.8" last spring, despite the cool temps of early 2019.
- GDD accumulations for the past week are close to nil, but the forecast for the next several days should add a few and stimulate some alfalfa and grass growth.
- Nitrogen should be applied to grass fields (if less than 50% legume and no manure history) by now. Cool temps have stretched this window, but get it on now if it's not already on. Ideally, N should be timed just prior to increase in plant demand to limit risk of losses to ground and surface water and to the atmosphere.
- Watch grass fields for signs of maturity and developing quality. Flowering for most grass species occurs in response to day length, so lack of GDD does not slow that progress. Grasses will begin to head at the same general times as previous years, but the yield will be lower. Watch your fields to capture quality of grass or mostly-grass fields accordingly.

2020 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Quality Monitor

| County | Town/Field | Elevation (feet) | Soil | | Alfalfa Height, inches | | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------|---------|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|--|
| | | | Type | % Grass | 4-May | 11-May | 18-May | 25-May | 1-Jun | 8-Jun | 15-Jun | |
| St. Lawrence | Lisbon | 330 | Hogansburg | 28 | 6 | 8 | | | | | | |
| St. Lawrence | Oswegatchie | 300 | Muskellunge | 30 | 7 | 7 | | | | | | |
| St. Lawrence | Lisbon | 400 | Hogansburg | 60 | 6 | 7 | | | | | | |
| St. Lawrence | Morristown | 350 | Raquette | 90 | 6 | 8 | | | | | | |
| St. Lawrence | Dekalb | 450 | Salmon | 99 | 4 | 7 | | | | | | |
| St. Lawrence | Canton | 350 | Swanton | 70 | 5 | 7.5 | | | | | | |
| St. Lawrence | Lawrence | 490 | Kalurah | 60 | 6 | 8 | | | | | | |
| St. Lawrence | Hopkinton | 820 | Malone | 18 | 5 | 7 | | | | | | |
| St. Lawrence | Potsdam | 520 | Adams | 0 | 7 | 8.5 | | | | | | |
| Franklin | Moir | 450 | Kars | 25 | 5 | 6 | | | | | | |
| Franklin | Bangor | 425 | Coveytown | 70 | 4 | 4.5 | | | | | | |
| Franklin | Chateaugay | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | |
| Clinton | AuSable | 400 | Appleton | 10 | 7 | 9 | | | | | | |
| Clinton | AuSable | 400 | Bombay | 68 | 7 | 9 | | | | | | |
| Lewis | West Turin | 1230 | Amenia | 60 | 6 | 7 | | | | | | |
| Lewis | Turin | 840 | Dunkirk | 70 | 8 | 8 | | | | | | |
| Lewis | Martinsburg | 1255 | Herkimer | 30 | 6 | 7 | | | | | | |
| Lewis | Denmark 1 | 950 | Amenia | 20 | 6 | 6 | | | | | | |
| Lewis | Denmark 2 | 1000 | Farmington | 35 | 5.5 | 6 | | | | | | |
| Lewis | Copenhagen | 1170 | Herkimer | 40 | 3.5 | 3.5 | | | | | | |
| Lewis | Lowville 1 | 977 | Nellis | 45 | 5.5 | 6.5 | | | | | | |
| Lewis | Lowville 2 | 738 | Granby | 20 | 5 | 5 | | | | | | |
| Jefferson | Rodman | 860 | Galway | 60 | 6.5 | 6.5 | | | | | | |
| Jefferson | Adams | 410 | Collamer | 65 | 6.5 | 7 | | | | | | |
| Jefferson | Ellisburg | 500 | Amenia | 50 | 5.5 | 6 | | | | | | |
| Jefferson | Cape Vincent | 340 | Rhinebeck | 65 | 3 | 4.5 | | | | | | |
| Jefferson | Philadelphia | 540 | Hudson | 45 | 3 | 5 | | | | | | |