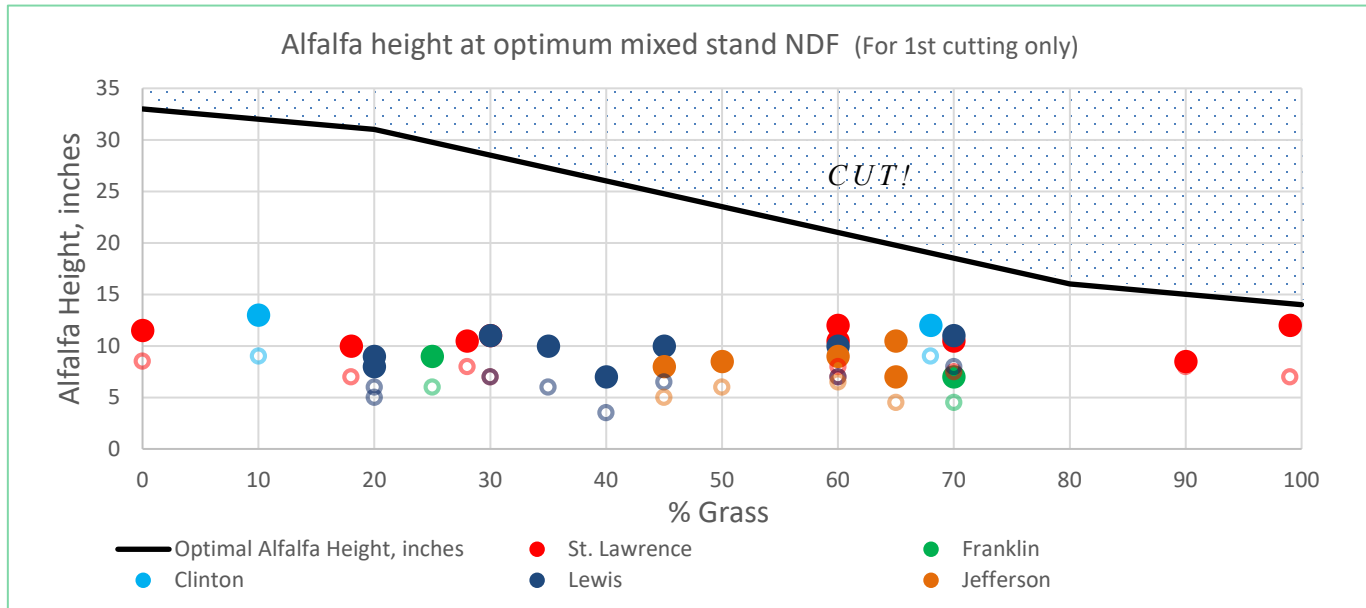


# 2020 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Quality Monitor

**May 18, 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 improved a bit with warmer temperatures this week, but is still well behind 2018 and 2019 averages. We stand at an average height of 9.9" across NNY this week, compared with 18.5" in 2018 and 15.1" last spring, despite the cool temps of early 2019.
- GDD accumulations for the past week are better, and the forecast for the next week should bring good alfalfa growth. Grasses will grow more too, as long as they aren't about to head. Feel some grass stems, or cut them open, to see how far up the stem those flowers are.
- It's really too late now to apply N to grass fields (if less than 50% legume and no manure history). At this point, urea or manure should go on after first cutting.
- 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 maturity. Grasses will head at about the same time as previous years, but the yield will likely be lower. Watch your fields to capture quality of grass or mostly-grass fields at good quality. Grass quality at late boot is likely to be better than a normal year at late boot because of the slow accumulation of GDD.

## 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	10.5				
St. Lawrence	Oswegatchie	300	Muskellunge	30	7	7	11				
St. Lawrence	Lisbon	400	Hogansburg	60	6	7	10.5				
St. Lawrence	Morristown	350	Raquette	90	6	8	8.5				
St. Lawrence	Dekalb	450	Salmon	99	4	7	12				
St. Lawrence	Canton	350	Swanton	70	5	7.5	10.5				
St. Lawrence	Lawrence	490	Kalurah	60	6	8	12				
St. Lawrence	Hopkinton	820	Malone	18	5	7	10				
St. Lawrence	Potsdam	520	Adams	0	7	8.5	11.5				
Franklin	Moira	450	Kars	25	5	6	9				
Franklin	Bangor	425	Coveytown	70	4	4.5	7				
Clinton	AuSable	400	Appleton	10	7	9	13				
Clinton	AuSable	400	Bombay	68	7	9	12				
Lewis	West Turin	1230	Amenia	60	6	7	10				
Lewis	Turin	840	Dunkirk	70	8	8	11				
Lewis	Martinsburg	1255	Herkimer	30	6	7	11				
Lewis	Denmark 1	950	Amenia	20	6	6	9				
Lewis	Denmark 2	1000	Farmington	35	5.5	6	10				
Lewis	Copenhagen	1170	Herkimer	40	3.5	3.5	7				
Lewis	Lowville 1	977	Nellis	45	5.5	6.5	10				
Lewis	Lowville 2	738	Granby	20	5	5	8				
Jefferson	Rodman	860	Galway	60	6.5	6.5	9				
Jefferson	Adams	410	Collamer	65	6.5	7	10.5				
Jefferson	Ellisburg	500	Amenia	50	5.5	6	8.5				
Jefferson	Cape Vincent	340	Rhinebeck	65	3	4.5	7				
Jefferson	Philadelphia	540	Hudson	45	3	5	8				