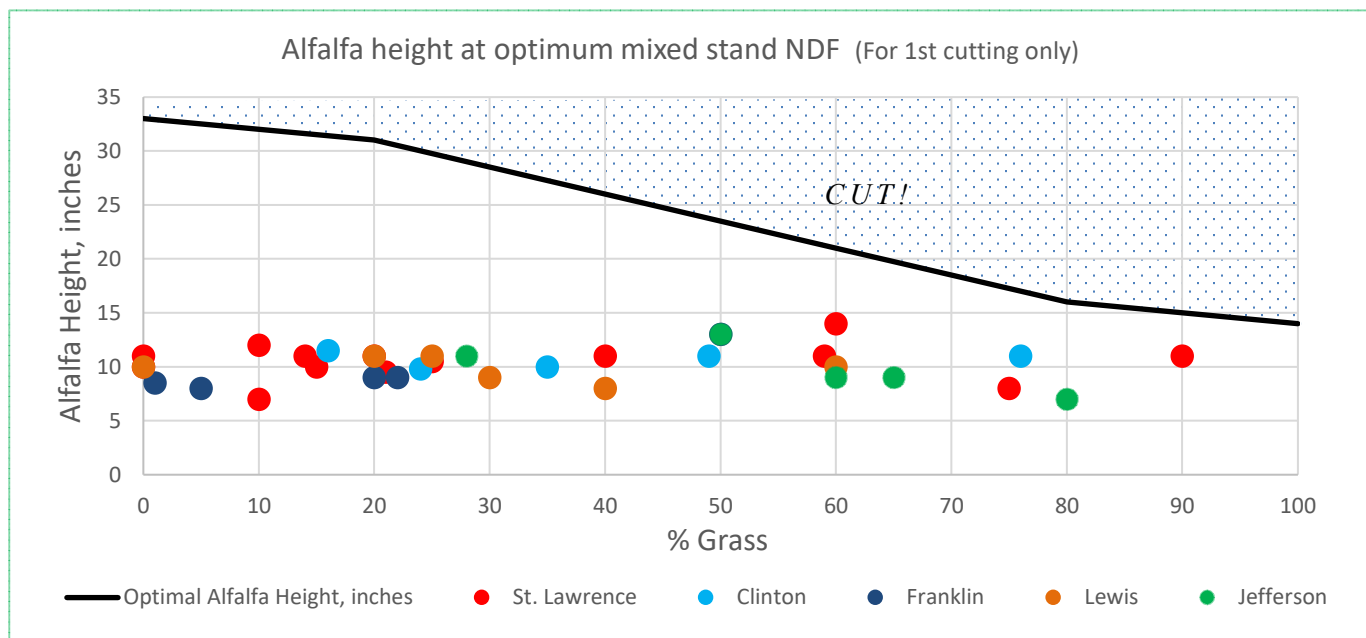


## 2021 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Quality Monitor

**May 3, 2021 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, Allen Wilder, Eric Bever, Jonathan Krauss, Casey 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 and grasses are progressing really well early this spring. Average alfalfa height is a little over 10" this week, compared with 5.7" this week in 2020 and 6.6", 6.8", 9.2" and 6.2" in 2019, 2018, 2017 and 2016.
- The first fields to reach peak quality will be 100% grass fields - and they are getting close. Peak quality for these fields occurs when alfalfa is about 14-16" tall.
- Winter damage to alfalfa, from ice sheeting or lack of snow cover, appears to have been minimal this spring.
- Nitrogen should be applied to grass fields (if less than 50% legume and no manure history) very soon, 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.

## 2021 North Country 1st Cutting Alfalfa-Grass Quality Monitor

County	Town/Field	Elevation (feet)	Soil		Alfalfa Height, inches							
			Type	% Grass	3-May	10-May	17-May	25-May	31-May	7-Jun	14-Jun	
St. Lawrence	Morristown	350	Nehasne	15		10						
St. Lawrence	Oswegatchie	300	Muskellunge	14		11						
St. Lawrence	DePeyster	350	Malone	60		14						
St. Lawrence	Lisbon	340	Kalurah	59		11						
St. Lawrence	Canton	340	Flackville	40		11						
St. Lawrence	Canton	400	Nehasne	0		11						
St. Lawrence	Lisbon	350	Hogansburg	25		10.5						
St. Lawrence	Lisbon	320	Muskellunge	10		7						
St. Lawrence	Lisbon	380	Hogansburg	90		11						
St. Lawrence	Waddington	300	Hogansburg	20		11						
St. Lawrence	Waddington	280	Hogansburg	0		10						
St. Lawrence	Stockholm	490	Nicholville	75		8						
St. Lawrence	Hopkinton	830	Malone	21		9.5						
St. Lawrence	Lawrence	530	Kalurah	10		12						
Franklin	Bombay	190	Covington	20		9						
Franklin	Fort Covington	200	Grenville	50		13						
Franklin	Malone	700	Colton	1		8.5						
Franklin	Burke	900	Brayton	5		8						
Franklin	Chateaugay	1050	Empeyville	22		9						
Clinton	AuSable	400	Appleton	49		11						
Clinton	AuSable	400	Bombay	76		11						
Clinton	Beekmantown	160	Muskellunge	35		10						
Clinton	Peru	440	Appleton	16		11.5						
Clinton	Chazy	200	Mooers	24		9.8						
Lewis	Turin	1190	Howard	60		Fescue	10					
Lewis	Lowville South	1030	Nellis	20		Fescue	11					
Lewis	Martinsburg	1240	Homer	30		Orchardgrass	9					
Lewis	Castorland	820	Rhinebeck	0		10						
Lewis	Lowville North	860	Galway	25		Fescue	11					
Lewis	Denmark	1000	Farmington	40		Fescue	8					
Jefferson	Rodman	860	Galway	60		9						
Jefferson	Adams	410	Collamer	65		9						
Jefferson	Ellisburg	500	Amenia	50		13						
Jefferson	Cape Vincent	305	Plainfield	28		11						
Jefferson	Philadelphia	540	Hudson	80		7						