

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

This is our fourth week of monitoring 1st cutting for quality in 2019. 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!

On average the alfalfa height increase was greater this week with an average height of 21 inches, an increase of 6 inches. We picked up some additional Growing Degree Days (GDDs) over the previous week so alfalfa was growing quickly.

At all locations 100 percent grass stands should be cut by now even at the highest elevations. On the other hand, note how high the %NDF is at some locations for pure grass stands. For making dairy quality feed 55% NDF should be given consideration as a cutoff point for all grass. Although we often push to harvest grass stands first to achieve high quality, fifty-five percent of the locations are already below dairy quality for all grass. Take the fields first that: 1) you can get on to and 2) have the highest quality which is likely to be alfalfa grass mixes and mostly alfalfa fields. By our next measurements on May 28 we would expect ninety percent of the locations the 50/50 mix stands will be ready for harvest and forty percent of the all alfalfa stands will be ready.

Summary of Alfalfa Height and Prediction of % NDF – May 21, 2019

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	23	56.9	44.0	34.6	5/14/19	5/20/19	5/27/19
Chenango	Bainbridge	East Keech Road	1000	24	57.7	44.9	35.3	5/13/19	5/19/19	5/26/19
Chenango	Bainbridge	Ives Settlement Road	1650	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/21/19	5/29/19	6/8/19
Chenango	Greene	County Road 32	950	26	59.5	46.6	36.7	5/11/19	5/17/19	5/23/19
Chenango	New Berlin	State Route 8	1060	25	58.6	45.8	36.0	5/12/19	5/18/19	5/25/19
Chenango	Sherburne	County Road 24	1350	16	50.8	38.0	29.7	5/20/19	5/28/19	6/6/19
Chenango	Sherburne	State Route 80	1190	22	56.0	43.2	33.9	5/14/19	5/22/19	5/29/19
Chenango	Smyrna	County Road 20	1190	24	57.7	44.9	35.3	5/13/19	5/19/19	5/26/19
Fulton	Ephratah	County Road 140	633	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/21/19	5/29/19	6/8/19
Fulton	Johnstown	State Route 67	765	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/18/19	5/26/19	6/3/19
Herkimer	Columbia	McKoons Road	1493	14	49.1	36.3	28.3	5/21/19	5/30/19	6/9/19
Herkimer	Danube	State Route 5S	437	27	60.3	47.5	37.4	5/10/19	5/16/19	5/22/19
Herkimer	Danube	Travis Road	1484	16	50.8	38.0	29.7	5/20/19	5/28/19	6/6/19
Herkimer	Fairfield	Hardscrabble Road	740	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/17/19	5/25/19	6/2/19
Herkimer	German Flatts	Kidney Road	405	Cut						
Herkimer	German Flatts	State Route 5S	389	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/18/19	5/26/19	6/3/19
Herkimer	Stark	Jordanville Road	1420	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/17/19	5/25/19	6/2/19
Herkimer	Warren	Jordanville Road	1582	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/18/19	5/26/19	6/3/19
Herkimer	Winfield	Babcock Hill Road	1332	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/18/19	5/26/19	6/3/19
Herkimer	Winfield	State Route 51	1195	16	50.8	38.0	29.7	5/20/19	5/28/19	6/6/19
Herkimer	Winfield	Walts Road	1426	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/17/19	5/25/19	6/2/19
Madison	Fenner	Nelson Road	1453	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/17/19	5/25/19	6/2/19
Madison	Georgetown	State Route 26	1391	23	56.4	43.6	34.3	5/14/19	5/21/19	5/28/19

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Madison	Lebanon	Geer Road	1508	16	50.4	37.5	29.4	5/20/19	5/29/19	6/7/19
Madison	Lincoln	Creek Road	666	28	61.2	48.3	38.1	5/9/19	5/15/19	5/20/19
Madison	Oneida	Middle Road	500	28	61.2	48.3	38.1	5/9/19	5/15/19	5/20/19
Madison	Smithfield	Swamp Road	1286	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/18/19	5/26/19	6/3/19
Madison	Stockbridge	Stockbridge Falls Road	1099	22	56.0	43.2	33.9	5/14/19	5/22/19	5/29/19
Montgomery	Amsterdam	Truax Road	650	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/16/19	5/24/19	6/1/19
Montgomery	Canajoharie	Maring Road	869	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/16/19	5/24/19	6/1/19
Montgomery	Florida	Cemetery Street	550	23	56.9	44.0	34.6	5/14/19	5/20/19	5/27/19
Montgomery	Florida	Mohr Road	820	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/15/19	5/23/19	5/30/19
Montgomery	Glen	State Route 55	290	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/18/19	5/26/19	6/3/19
Montgomery	Minden	Airport Road	653	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/22/19	5/31/19	6/10/19
Montgomery	Minden	River Road	417	23	56.9	44.0	34.6	5/14/19	5/20/19	5/27/19
Montgomery	Minden	State Route 80	610	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/18/19	5/26/19	6/3/19
Montgomery	Mohawk	Stoners Trail Road	570	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/16/19	5/24/19	6/1/19
Montgomery	Mohawk	Van Epps Road	470	22	56.0	43.2	33.9	5/14/19	5/22/19	5/29/19
Montgomery	St. Johnsville	Crum Creek Road	668	23	56.9	44.0	34.6	5/14/19	5/20/19	5/27/19
Otsego	Cherry Valley	Dugway Road	796	24	57.7	44.9	35.3	5/13/19	5/19/19	5/26/19
Otsego	Cherry Valley	State Route 166	1295	24	57.7	44.9	35.3	5/13/19	5/19/19	5/26/19
Otsego	Garratsville	County Road 51	1304	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/18/19	5/26/19	6/3/19
Otsego	Laurens	State Route 205	1121	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/19/19	5/27/19	6/5/19
Otsego	Middlefield	County Road 33	1241	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/15/19	5/23/19	5/30/19
Otsego	Middlefield	State Route 166	1256	22	56.0	43.2	33.9	5/14/19	5/22/19	5/29/19
Otsego	Milford	State Route 28	1208	25	58.6	45.8	36.0	5/12/19	5/18/19	5/25/19

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Otsego	Morris	County Road 10	1149	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/16/19	5/24/19	6/1/19
Otsego	Pittsfield	County Road 18	1137	25	58.6	45.8	36.0	5/12/19	5/18/19	5/25/19
Otsego	Richfield	Dugan Road	1559	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/19/19	5/27/19	6/5/19
Otsego	Schenevus	Muehl Road	1319	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/15/19	5/23/19	5/30/19
Otsego	Unadilla	State Route 41	1058	25	58.6	45.8	36.0	5/12/19	5/18/19	5/25/19
Saratoga	Charlton	Jockey Street	620	22	56.0	43.2	33.9	5/14/19	5/22/19	5/29/19
Saratoga	Galway	Crane Road	840	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/16/19	5/24/19	6/1/19
Saratoga	Northumberland	Callahan Road	280	25	58.6	45.8	36.0	5/12/19	5/18/19	5/25/19
Saratoga	Northumberland	Colebrook Road	250	25	58.6	45.8	36.0	5/12/19	5/18/19	5/25/19
Saratoga	Saratoga	County Road 68	440	24	57.7	44.9	35.3	5/13/19	5/19/19	5/26/19
Saratoga	Saratoga	County Road 71	440	26	59.5	46.6	36.7	5/11/19	5/17/19	5/23/19
Saratoga	Stillwater	State Route 423	480	24	57.7	44.9	35.3	5/13/19	5/19/19	5/26/19
Schoharie	Cobleskill	Lake Road	1297	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/17/19	5/25/19	6/2/19
Schoharie	Cobleskill	Warnerville Cutoff	944	24	57.7	44.9	35.3	5/13/19	5/19/19	5/26/19
Schoharie	Fulton	State Route 30	702	27	60.3	47.5	37.4	5/10/19	5/16/19	5/22/19
Schoharie	Middleburgh	Amelia Lane	626	27	60.3	47.5	37.4	5/10/19	5/16/19	5/22/19
Schoharie	Wright	Abrams Road	1149	22	56.0	43.2	33.9	5/14/19	5/22/19	5/29/19

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