

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

This is our third 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 slowed this week with an average height of 15 inches an increase of only 3 inches. Although growth has slowed with the cold damp weather that same weather doesn't allow for catching up on any field work. As we suggested last week if weather becomes more favorable remember to prioritize harvesting those fields left that are that still dairy quality. This may be a year of cutting first and planting corn second, having separate crews working on both and or having some custom work done.

We would expect all but two locations would have 100 percent grass stands ready to harvest by next week. Remember with all grass stands once you hit 50% NDF you have about 4-5 days to cut as NDF is accumulating at a rate of 1 percentage point a day. Our predictions would indicate 48 percent of the 50/50 mixed stands could be ready by or on our next cutting date, May 21. There may be several locations where pure alfalfa stands should be at a height to be cut by then.

Summary of Alfalfa Height and Prediction of % NDF – May 14, 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	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Chenango	Bainbridge	East Keech Road	1000	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Chenango	Bainbridge	Ives Settlement Road	1650	9	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Chenango	Greene	County Road 32	950	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/8/19	5/16/19	5/23/19
Chenango	New Berlin	State Route 8	1060	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/10/19	5/18/19	5/26/19
Chenango	Sherburne	County Road 24	1350	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/16/19	5/25/19	6/5/19
Chenango	Sherburne	State Route 80	1190	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Chenango	Smyrna	County Road 20	1190	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/10/19	5/18/19	5/26/19
Fulton	Ephratah	County Road 140	633	12	46.9	34.1	26.6	5/17/19	5/26/19	6/5/19
Fulton	Johnstown	State Route 67	765	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/17/19	5/26/19	6/6/19
Herkimer	Columbia	McKoons Road	1493	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/17/19	5/26/19	6/6/19
Herkimer	Danube	State Route 5S	437	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/12/19	5/20/19	5/29/19
Herkimer	Danube	Travis Road	1484	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/17/19	5/26/19	6/6/19
Herkimer	Fairfield	Hardscrabble Road	740	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/14/19	5/22/19	6/1/19
Herkimer	German Flatts	Kidney Road	405	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/14/19	5/22/19	6/1/19
Herkimer	German Flatts	State Route 5S	389	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/15/19	5/24/19	6/3/19
Herkimer	Stark	Jordanville Road	1420	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/16/19	5/25/19	6/5/19
Herkimer	Warren	Jordanville Road	1582	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/16/19	5/25/19	6/5/19
Herkimer	Winfield	Babcock Hill Road	1332	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/18/19	5/28/19	6/8/19
Herkimer	Winfield	State Route 51	1195	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/15/19	5/24/19	6/3/19
Herkimer	Winfield	Walts Road	1426	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/15/19	5/24/19	6/3/19
Madison	Fenner	Nelson Road	1453	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/15/19	5/24/19	6/3/19
Madison	Georgetown	State Route 26	1391	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/12/19	5/20/19	5/29/19

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Madison	Lebanon	Geer Road	1508	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/15/19	5/24/19	6/3/19
Madison	Lincoln	Creek Road	666	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/10/19	5/18/19	5/26/19
Madison	Oneida	Middle Road	500	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/8/19	5/16/19	5/23/19
Madison	Smithfield	Swamp Road	1286	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/15/19	5/24/19	6/3/19
Madison	Stockbridge	Stockbridge Falls Road	1099	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/12/19	5/20/19	5/29/19
Montgomery	Amsterdam	Truax Road	650	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/14/19	5/22/19	6/1/19
Montgomery	Canajoharie	Maring Road	869	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/14/19	5/22/19	6/1/19
Montgomery	Florida	Cemetery Street	550	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Montgomery	Florida	Mohr Road	820	16	50.8	38.0	29.7	5/13/19	5/21/19	5/30/19
Montgomery	Glen	State Route 55	290	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/15/19	5/24/19	6/3/19
Montgomery	Minden	Airport Road	653	8	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Montgomery	Minden	River Road	417	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/14/19	5/22/19	6/1/19
Montgomery	Minden	State Route 80	610	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/17/19	5/26/19	6/6/19
Montgomery	Mohawk	Stoners Trail Road	570	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/17/19	5/26/19	6/6/19
Montgomery	Mohawk	Van Epps Road	470	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/16/19	5/25/19	6/5/19
Montgomery	St. Johnsville	Crum Creek Road	668	14	49.1	36.3	28.3	5/14/19	5/23/19	6/2/19
Otsego	Cherry Valley	Dugway Road	796	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/10/19	5/18/19	5/26/19
Otsego	Cherry Valley	State Route 166	1295	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Otsego	Garratsville	State Route 51	1304	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/17/19	5/26/19	6/6/19
Otsego	Laurens	State Route 205	1121	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/17/19	5/26/19	6/6/19
Otsego	Middlefield	County Road 33	1241	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Otsego	Middlefield	State Route 166	1256	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Otsego	Milford	State Route 28	1208	22	56.0	43.2	33.9	5/7/19	5/15/19	5/22/19

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Otsego	Morris	County Road 10	1149	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/16/19	5/25/19	6/5/19
Otsego	Pittsfield	County Road 18	1137	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Otsego	Richfield	Dugan Road	1559	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/16/19	5/25/19	6/5/19
Otsego	Schenevus	Muehl Road	1319	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Otsego	Unadilla	State Route 41	1058	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/10/19	5/18/19	5/26/19
Saratoga	Charlton	Jockey Street	620	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/12/19	5/20/19	5/29/19
Saratoga	Galway	Crane Road	840	14	49.1	36.3	28.3	5/14/19	5/23/19	6/2/19
Saratoga	Northumberland	Callahan Road	280	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Saratoga	Northumberland	Colebrook Road	250	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/10/19	5/18/19	5/26/19
Saratoga	Saratoga	County Road 68	440	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/12/19	5/20/19	5/29/19
Saratoga	Saratoga	County Road 71	440	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/10/19	5/18/19	5/26/19
Saratoga	Stillwater	State Route 423	480	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/11/19	5/19/19	5/27/19
Schoharie	Cobleskill	Lake Road	1297	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/12/19	5/20/19	5/29/19
Schoharie	Cobleskill	Warnerville Cutoff	944	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/10/19	5/18/19	5/26/19
Schoharie	Fulton	State Route 30	702	23	56.9	44.0	34.6	5/7/19	5/13/19	5/20/19
Schoharie	Middleburgh	Amelia Lane	626	23	56.9	44.0	34.6	5/7/19	5/13/19	5/20/19
Schoharie	Wright	Abrams Road	1149	16	50.8	38.0	29.7	5/13/19	5/21/19	5/30/19

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