

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops

Field Crop Update Week of May 16, 2022

1. First Cutting Forage Quality

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This is our third week of monitoring 1st cutting for quality in 2022. 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 when nearby alfalfa is 14" tall to achieve the desired 50% NDF.

Begin cutting 50/50 alfalfa/grass stands when nearby alfalfa is 22" tall for the desired 44% NDF.

Begin cutting 100% alfalfa stands when alfalfa is 28" tall for the desired 40% NDF.

*To achieve the desired NDF it is necessary to **begin cutting at NDF values slightly lower than the desired value** assuming some harvest and storage losses which the above alfalfa height values reflect. For example 28 inch tall alfalfa is closer to 38% NDF but you will need to start then to end up at 40% NDF.*

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. See the following fact sheet for more details: [Predicting Spring Fiber Content of Forages](#) (folks receiving the snail mail version of our First Cutting Forage Quality Update will receive this fact sheet in print).

Below is this week's chart, but 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!

County	Town	Road	Elev. (ft)	Alfalfa ht (in)	Estimated % NDF			Predicted Cut Date		
					Grass	50/50 Mix	Alfalfa	Grass	50/50 Mix	Alfalfa
Chenango	Bainbridge	I. Settlement Rd	1660	<i>missed this week</i>	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early	Too Early
Chenango	Greene	Co Rd 32	950	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/13/22	5/21/22	5/29/22
Chenango	N. Norwich	Co Rd 23	1092	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/18/22	5/27/22	6/7/22
Chenango	Otselic	B. Brown Rd	1220	14	49.1	36.3	28.3	5/16/22	5/25/22	6/4/22
Chenango	Oxford	NY-12	984	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/14/22	5/22/22	5/31/22
Chenango	Sherburne	NY-80	1150	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/11/22	5/19/22	5/27/22
Chenango	Smyrna	Co Rd 20	1190	16	50.8	38.0	29.7	5/15/22	5/23/22	6/1/22
Fulton	Johnstown	NY-67	715	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/16/22	5/24/22	6/3/22
Fulton	Oppenheim	Kennedy Rd	778	16	50.8	38.0	29.7	5/15/22	5/23/22	6/1/22
Herkimer	Columbia	Kingdom Rd	1598	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/18/22	5/27/22	6/7/22
Herkimer	Danube	Johnny Cake Rd	620	14	49.1	36.3	28.3	5/16/22	5/25/22	6/4/22
Herkimer	Danube	Travis Road	1489	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/18/22	5/27/22	6/7/22
Herkimer	Fairfield	Hardscrabble Rd	1308	10	45.6	32.8	25.5	5/20/22	5/30/22	6/10/22
Herkimer	Germ Flatts	Kidney Rd	403	17	51.7	38.8	30.4	5/14/22	5/22/22	5/31/22
Herkimer	Schuyler	Carder Lane Rd	449	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/16/22	5/24/22	6/3/22
Herkimer	Stark	Puskerenko Rd	1555	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/17/22	5/26/22	6/5/22
Herkimer	Warren	Atswell Rd	1551	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/19/22	5/28/22	6/8/22
Herkimer	Warren	Parmwood Rd	1617	15	50.0	37.1	29.0	5/16/22	5/24/22	6/3/22
Madison	Fenner	Larkin Rd	1613	14	49.1	36.3	28.3	5/16/22	5/25/22	6/4/22
Madison	Lenox	Palmer Rd	1266	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/17/22	5/26/22	6/5/22
Madison	Madison	Lake Moraine Rd	1175	19	53.4	40.6	31.8	5/12/22	5/20/22	5/28/22

County	Town	Road	Elev. (ft)	Alfalfa ht (in)	Estimated % NDF			Predicted Cut Date		
					Grass	50/50 Mix	Alfalfa	Grass	50/50 Mix	Alfalfa
Madison	Nelson	Eaton Brook Rd	1576	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/17/22	5/26/22	6/5/22
Madison	Oneida	Middle Rd	551	22	56.0	43.2	33.9	5/9/22	5/17/22	5/24/22
Madison	Oneida	Mt Hope Ave	819	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/11/22	5/19/22	5/27/22
Madison	Stockbridge	Co Hwy 35	631	18	52.6	39.7	31.1	5/13/22	5/21/22	5/29/22
Madison	Sullivan	Clock Rd	821	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/10/22	5/18/22	5/25/22
Madison	Sullivan	Tuscarora Rd	433	22.5	56.4	43.6	34.3	5/9/22	5/16/22	5/23/22
Montgomery	Amsterdam	Swart Hill Road	546	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/10/22	5/18/22	5/25/22
Montgomery	Florida	Cemetery Drive	566	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/11/22	5/19/22	5/27/22
Montgomery	Florida	Youngs Corners Rd	696	16	50.8	38.0	29.7	5/15/22	5/23/22	6/1/22
Montgomery	Glen	Van Epps Rd	522	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/18/22	5/27/22	6/7/22
Montgomery	Glen	Youngs Corners Rd	692	12	47.4	34.5	26.9	5/18/22	5/27/22	6/7/22
Montgomery	Hallsville	Freybush Road	597	14	49.1	36.3	28.3	5/16/22	5/25/22	6/4/22
Montgomery	Mohawk	Route 5	279	22	56.0	43.2	33.9	5/9/22	5/17/22	5/24/22
Otsego	Cherry Valley	Keller Road	1379	14	49.1	36.3	28.3	5/16/22	5/25/22	6/4/22
Otsego	Milford	Co Hwy 33	1211	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/17/22	5/26/22	6/5/22
Otsego	Otsego	Co Rd 26	1236	11	46.5	33.7	26.2	5/19/22	5/28/22	6/8/22
Otsego	Pittsfield	Co Rd 13	1246	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/17/22	5/26/22	6/5/22
Saratoga	Ballston	NY-67	478	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/10/22	5/18/22	5/25/22
Saratoga	Charlton	Dawson Road	505	23	56.9	44.0	34.6	5/9/22	5/15/22	5/22/22
Saratoga	Northumberland	Callahan Road	276	23	56.9	44.0	34.6	5/9/22	5/15/22	5/22/22
Saratoga	Northumberland	Rugg Road	305	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/11/22	5/19/22	5/27/22

County	Town	Road	Elev. (ft)	Alfalfa ht (in)	Estimated % NDF			Predicted Cut Date		
					Grass	50/50 Mix	Alfalfa	Grass	50/50 Mix	Alfalfa
Saratoga	Saratoga	County Road 70	456	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/10/22	5/18/22	5/25/22
Saratoga	Saratoga	State Route 29	207	21	55.1	42.3	33.2	5/10/22	5/18/22	5/25/22
Saratoga	Saratoga	Wagmans Ridge Rd	324	26	59.5	46.6	36.7	5/6/22	5/12/22	5/18/22
Saratoga	Stillwater	County Road 67	365	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/11/22	5/19/22	5/27/22
Schoharie	Cobleskill	Lake Road	1374	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/11/22	5/19/22	5/27/22
Schoharie	Cobleskill	Warnerville Cutoff	933	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/11/22	5/19/22	5/27/22
Schoharie	Middleburgh	Amelia Lane	626	25	58.6	45.8	36.0	5/7/22	5/13/22	5/20/22
Schoharie	Sharon Springs	Route 20	1417	13	48.2	35.4	27.6	5/17/22	5/26/22	6/5/22
Schoharie	Wright	Abrams Road	935	20	54.3	41.4	32.5	5/11/22	5/19/22	5/27/22

**Alfalfa measured by Dave Balbian, Craig Brown, Ashley McFarland, Erik Smith, Ken Smith, Rich Taber, and Nicole Tommell*

Some folks with mixed stands should be ready to harvest by the end of this week. We began the season a few weeks behind last year's development, **but with the warm weather, we've all but caught up to last year's schedule.** Hopefully you've planted your corn, because alfalfa harvest time is here.

Winter forages are ready to head out, so please check on your fields' development to ensure you're able to harvest.

Still no leafhoppers, but **I have seen some alfalfa weevil damage in a few fields** that were farther along. The corn pheromone traps I've already set yielded a few cutworm/armyworm this week, so we'll be keeping an eye on corn as it pops up. I'll begin to report those numbers next week if we have any.

To summarize and maybe make it easier for those whose locations aren't listed, here's a chart showing the relationship between elevation and alfalfa heights across our region. If your location isn't listed, you can roughly estimate alfalfa's height within a few inches based on the field's elevation; just follow the line. **The effect of elevation on alfalfa height is getting more pronounced each week, with alfalfa height decreasing by about an inch for every ~170 ft rise in elevation. So get out there and check!**

Alfalfa Height Inches vs. Elevation

