

1st Cutting Forage Quality Update

Alfalfa fields increased height dramatically in the past five days. Fields were 4-7 inches taller today but that should probably not be unexpected. Unlike corn and soybeans that have a Growing Degree Day (GDD) base of 50F which means we only count temperatures above 50F, alfalfa has a GDD base of 41F. Last week was warm enough to move the alfalfa along and with a little warmer rain at the end of the week it grew quickly.

Although we seem to be back to the saturated soils again today after seeing dust fly last week we can only encourage that when the soil dries out you look at your 1st cutting forages and make an assessment. Most grass fields should be cut at this time and many mixed stand should also be cut. The current weather conditions are making for difficult management decisions but consider stop trying to plant corn and work on dairy quality first cutting when weather allows. If there is still quality there to be harvested it may be best to take it. Although the corn planting window is getting smaller it is still there. However it cannot be stressed enough that each farm and field is different so know your conditions.

Here are three numbers that are helpful using alfalfa height as an indicator of NDF content:

Begin cutting 100% grass stands when nearby alfalfa is **14** inches tall for 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.

Summary of Alfalfa Height and Prediction of % NDF - May 16, 2011

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	Bainbridge	Ives Settlement	1400	12	48.2	34.5	26.9	5/17/11	5/27/11	6/7/11
Chenango	Brisben	State Route 12	919	20	55.2	41.4	32.5	5/10/11	5/19/11	5/27/11
Chenango	Earlville	Williams Road	1075	22	56.9	43.2	33.9	5/9/11	5/17/11	5/24/11
Chenango	Lincklaen	Lincklaen Center Road	1270	12	48.2	34.5	26.9	5/17/11	5/27/11	6/7/11
Chenango	New Berlin	County Road 18	1109	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Chenango	Nineveh	County Road 26	966	17	52.6	38.8	30.4	5/13/11	5/22/11	5/31/11
Chenango	Oxford	State Route 220	1509	14	50.0	36.3	28.3	5/16/11	5/25/11	6/4/11
Chenango	Oxford	County Road 32	980	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Chenango	S. Oxford	County Road 32	956	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Chenango	Sherburne	Furman Mills Road	1292	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Chenango	Sherburne	West Hill Road	1364	20	55.2	41.4	32.5	5/10/11	5/19/11	5/27/11
Chenango	Sherburne	Bingham Road	1109	23	57.7	44.0	34.6	5/8/11	5/15/11	5/22/11
Chenango	Sherburne	State Route 12 South	1046	23	57.7	44.0	34.6	5/8/11	5/15/11	5/22/11
Chenango	Sherburne	County Road 24	1357	17	52.6	38.8	30.4	5/13/11	5/22/11	5/31/11
Chenango	Sidney	State Route 8	980	22	56.9	43.2	33.9	5/9/11	5/17/11	5/24/11
Chenango	Smyrna	County Road 20	1140	24	58.6	44.9	35.3	5/7/11	5/14/11	5/21/11
Fulton	Johnstown	Union Street	610	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Fulton	Oppenheim	Youkers Bush Road	965	20	55.2	41.4	32.5	5/10/11	5/19/11	5/27/11
Fulton	Perth	Noonan Road	700	24	58.6	44.9	35.3	5/7/11	5/14/11	5/21/11
Fulton	St. Johnsville	County Road 140	659	20	55.2	41.4	32.5	5/10/11	5/19/11	5/27/11
Herkimer	Danube	Cramer Road	693	22	56.9	43.2	33.9	5/9/11	5/17/11	5/24/11

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Herkimer	German Flatts	Robinson Road	1372	15	50.8	37.1	29.0	5/15/11	5/24/11	6/3/11
Herkimer	Norway	Elm Tree Road	1123	14	50.0	36.3	28.3	5/16/11	5/25/11	6/4/11
Herkimer	Schulyer	Minots Corners Road	716	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Herkimer	Winfield	North Winfield Road	1243	19	54.3	40.6	31.8	5/11/11	5/20/11	5/28/11
Madison	Bridgewater	State Route 8	1190	21	56.0	42.3	33.2	5/9/11	5/18/11	5/25/11
Madison	Cazenovia	East Road	1402	22	56.5	42.7	33.6	5/9/11	5/17/11	5/24/11
Madison	Chittenango	Quarry Road	640	24	58.2	44.5	35.0	5/7/11	5/15/11	5/22/11
Madison	DeRuyter	Quaker Basin Road	1365	19	54.3	40.6	31.8	5/11/11	5/20/11	5/28/11
Madison	Earlville	Excell Road	1300	20	55.2	41.4	32.5	5/10/11	5/19/11	5/27/11
Madison	Fenner	Fenner Road	1304	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Madison	Hamilton	Eaton Street	1180	19	54.3	40.6	31.8	5/11/11	5/20/11	5/28/11
Madison	Hubbardsville	Wickwire Road	1224	21	56.0	42.3	33.2	5/9/11	5/18/11	5/25/11
Madison	Lebanon	River Road	1134	19	54.3	40.6	31.8	5/11/11	5/20/11	5/28/11
Madison	Lebanon	Jantzen Road	1394	24	58.6	44.9	35.3	5/7/11	5/14/11	5/21/11
Madison	Madison	Center Road	1219	21	56.0	42.3	33.2	5/9/11	5/18/11	5/25/11
Madison	Smithfield	Gill Road	1196	22	56.5	42.7	33.6	5/9/11	5/17/11	5/24/11
Montgomery	Canajoharie	Old Sharon Road	818	16	51.7	38.0	29.7	5/14/11	5/23/11	6/1/11
Montgomery	Florida	Pattersonville Road	367	24	58.6	44.9	35.3	5/7/11	5/14/11	5/21/11
Montgomery	Florida	Buhrmaster Road	800	21	56.0	42.3	33.2	5/9/11	5/18/11	5/25/11
Montgomery	Minden	Schuyler Road	590	21	56.0	42.3	33.2	5/9/11	5/18/11	5/25/11
Montgomery	Minden	River Road	435	23	57.7	44.0	34.6	5/8/11	5/15/11	5/22/11
Montgomery	Mohawk	Pavlus Road	400	24	58.6	44.9	35.3	5/7/11	5/14/11	5/21/11

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Montgomery	Palatine Bridge	Dygert Road	492	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Montgomery	St. Johnsville	Walrath Road	538	16	51.7	38.0	29.7	5/14/11	5/23/11	6/1/11
Otsego	Cherry Valley	Dugay Road	763	22	56.9	43.2	33.9	5/9/11	5/17/11	5/24/11
Otsego	Cooperstown	County Road 33	1532	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Otsego	Garrettsville	State Route 51	1254	16	51.7	38.0	29.7	5/14/11	5/23/11	6/1/11
Otsego	Otego	State Route 7	1072	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Otsego	Portlandville	County Road 35	1200	16	51.7	38.0	29.7	5/14/11	5/23/11	6/1/11
Otsego	Richfield	State Route 20	1712	15	50.8	37.1	29.0	5/15/11	5/24/11	6/3/11
Otsego	Plainfield	County Road 18	1118	21	56.0	42.3	33.2	5/9/11	5/18/11	5/25/11
Otsego	Worcester	County Road 40	1450	20	55.2	41.4	32.5	5/10/11	5/19/11	5/27/11
Schoharie	Fulton	State Route 30	668	24	58.6	44.9	35.3	5/7/11	5/14/11	5/21/11
Schoharie	Richmondville	Warnerville Cutoff	953	22	56.9	43.2	33.9	5/9/11	5/17/11	5/24/11
Schoharie	Schoharie	Abram Road	971	24	58.6	44.9	35.3	5/7/11	5/14/11	5/21/11
Schoharie	Seward	Loonenburg Road	1174	17	52.6	38.8	30.4	5/13/11	5/22/11	5/31/11
Schoharie	Sharon Springs	Maring Road	728	19	54.3	40.6	31.8	5/11/11	5/20/11	5/28/11
Schoharie	Sharon Springs	Briggs Road	1220	18	53.4	39.7	31.1	5/12/11	5/21/11	5/29/11
Schoharie	Wright	Sheldon Road	1330	19	54.3	40.6	31.8	5/11/11	5/20/11	5/28/11
Schoharie	Wright Town	Kump Road	1043	24	58.6	44.9	35.3	5/7/11	5/14/11	5/21/11

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