

MFGA Green Gold Report – May 24, 2018 – EASTERN / INTERLAKE

Here is the first release for the 2018 Optimum Alfalfa Harvest Date. Reporting will be provided from various areas of the Province (Eastern, Central, Interlake, and Western).

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Grunthal	247	277	11	34
Kleefeld	199	268	12	27
Landmark	230	287	10	28
New Bothwell	236	260	13	32
Steinbach	242	252	14	34
St Pierre	245	277	11	30
EASTERN AVERAGE	233	270	12	31
INTERLAKE - Oak Point	0	0	0	0

Fields through-out the South-east experienced very little winter kill even though soil temperature in the south-east were getting down to the critical temperatures of -12C. This may in part be due to where the weather stations are located and that many of the fields in the area had considerable stubble left from last fall.

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What I am seeing



On May 17th I was checking fields for this year's program and the fields were in the 6-7 inch range. Today as you can see we have had between 4 and 6 inches of growth over the week part in due to the warm temperatures and a wonderful 1.5 inches of rain.

What I did see in some areas is some frost damage on the alfalfa. As you can see by the photo the damage was a few days ago and limited to only a few fields. Looking at the damage it appears to be very minimal and the loss is likely to be just a few leaves.



One question that I have had is **How late are we?**

Granted it has been dry and both alfalfa and the grasses are off to a slow start so I went back over the 22 years of data that I have collected working on the Green Gold program and in the SE the average date that the alfalfa is 10-12 inches tall is May 25th. The range is May 11th to June 1st.

Sampling Thursday we are averaging 12" so I would say that we are close to normal. If "normal" continues we are likely looking at June 7th to 11th as Hay Day

Winter Kill

Last year (2017) at this time of year we saw a lot of winterkill in the alfalfa fields in the SE. Over the winter soil temperatures at the SE weather stations were recording soil temperatures below the critical threshold of -12C, which could indicate the potential of winterkill to the crown. Looking at the fields selected for monitoring the Green Gold program there is very little damage present that I would consider new. I part this could be due to the selection process but it also looks like most of the fields had considerable stubble left that may have trapped snow providing some insulation to the colder weather or the stands were younger and therefore tend to be able to withstand lower temperatures.

Hopefully most of you have walked your alfalfa fields and assessed if you have any significant winterkill concerns. From the fields that I have visited in the South-East winterkill doesn't look to be a concern. Hopefully your fields look like photo 1 rather than photo 2. For more information on assessing alfalfa winter kill go to the [MFGA May newsletter](#).



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