

Green Gold Report – May 18 , 2017 – EASTERN

Here is the first release for the Optimum Alfalfa Harvest Date for 2017. Once again, we will be reporting from various areas of the Province (Eastern, Central, Interlake, and Western).

SITE	RFV NIR	RFV PEAQ	Height	CP
Grunthal	220	244	15	29
Ile de Chene	247	268	12	28
Landmark	257	260	13	28
New Bothwell	283	268	12	29
Steinbach	247	252	14	29
Stonewall				
EASTERN AVERAGE	250.8	258.4	13.2	28.6

Fields through-out the South-east have experienced considerable winter kill due in part to the mild conditions this past winter and rains that may have reduced the insulating effect of the snow and/or caused icing that suffocated the alfalfa.

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Winter Kill

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 looks 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](#).



What is Relative Feed Value?

Over the years we often get the question about RFV. Relative Feed Value is an excellent measure of alfalfa quality because it reflects the digestibility (% ADF) and the intake potential (% NDF) of alfalfa. The guideline was 20-30-40. That was based on forage testing 30% ADF (acid detergent fiber) and 40% NDF (neutral detergent fiber) would be 150 RFV with 20% crude protein. Producers use it when buying alfalfa and on the alfalfa they grow to determine quality. Obviously the more mature the alfalfa at harvest the higher the percent ADF and NDF (lower Relative Feed Value). However, rain damaged hay will also be higher in ADF and NDF because the soluble sugars and carbohydrates can be leached out. Rain damaged hay is also less palatable. Notice that Relative Feed Value does not include the protein percent of the alfalfa!! Astute dairy producers who purchase alfalfa not only utilize the chemical analysis and relative feed value, they also buy small quantities and feed some of it free choice to see if the cows readily consume it before purchasing larger quantities.

Although the Green Gold program targets a RFV of 150 as the optimum time to cut alfalfa, many producers want higher quality hay for their livestock or the hay market. Through MFGA's program you can follow the decline in RFV and time your harvest based on the quality of hay you are targeting.

Is 150 RFV Good Enough Today?

Relative Feed Values we developed some 30 years ago. Today we have herds producing 50% more milk per cow per year than 30 years ago. Relative Feed Value was changed to Relative Forage Quality or RFQ. The question in 2017 is: [Is 150 RFV high enough for high producing dairy cows today?](#) (Click on this link to learn more)

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