



ACS

Agricultural Consulting Services
1st Cutting Newsletter 2017

Forage Scissor - Cut Results

Measuring is the only way to know where the true %NDF of your alfalfa stand is. This year this is true more than ever. We have lots of quick and easy tools that help us estimate where %NDF might be in the stand but this year our very cool spring peppered with frequent rain and overcast is days leaving us with tough decisions about which direction to go. Measured data to base these decisions on is more important now than ever.

On April 16th ACS fanned our people across the state and took forage samples from 65 fields in New York, 28 fields in Vermont and 1 field in New Hampshire. We also recorded plant height and stage data to calculate the PEAQ estimation for %NDF. The result of the measured Scissors Cut and data for the PEAQ estimation are shown in Table 1.

We also took a look at Base 41 Growing Degree Days, another tool for predicting cutting date for pure alfalfa. Using the weather station in Auburn, NY as an example, we had in 639 GDD in 2012, in 2013 - 463, in 2014 - 436, in 2015 - 496, in 2016 - 375 and this year we have 443 GDD on May 16th. With our current and projected weather patterns that predicts the target 680 GDD is 11 days away for pure alfalfa in Auburn area, Glen Falls NY 10 days away, Batavia NY was 6 days away, Burlington and VT was still 11 days away.



TABLE 1

County	Town	State	Crop	Growth Stage**	Plant Height	% NDF (NIR)
Cayuga	Auburn	NY	alfalfa	early bud	29	39.3
Genesee	Batavia	NY	alfalfa	early bud	22	35.3
Livingston	Avon	NY	alfalfa	early bud	26	34.5
Livingston	Avon	NY	alfalfa	early bud	26	37.3
Ontario	Clifton Spring	NY	alfalfa	early bud	26	37.5
Ontario	Clifton Spring	NY	alfalfa	late veg	24	29.6
Ontario	Seneca Castle	NY	alfalfa	early bud	23	33.5
Ontario	Seneca Castle	NY	alfalfa	early bud	28	33.7
Washington	Eagle Bridge	NY	alfalfa	late veg	25	30.1
Washington	Schagitoke	NY	alfalfa	late veg	25	30.9
Wyoming	Castile	NY	alfalfa	early bud	24	38.3
Cayuga	Genoa	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	18	36.8
Cayuga	Genoa	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	20	43.2
Cayuga	Genoa	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	22	33.9
Cayuga	Genoa	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	22	30.9
Cayuga	King Ferry	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	24	34.5
Cayuga	King Ferry	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	14	44.4
Cayuga	Lake Ridge	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	23	43.9
Cayuga	Ledyard	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	28	43.6
Cayuga	Ledyard	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	19	37.2
Cayuga	Locke	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	16	43.6
Cayuga	Poplar Ridge	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	20	26.3
Cayuga	Union Springs	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	18	46.3
Cayuga	Venice	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	24	40.9
Cayuga	Aurora	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	24	39.5
Cayuga	Fleming	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	24	46.1
Cortland	Harford	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	21	42.2
Cortland	Harford	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	20	40.0
Cortland	Virgil	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	18	36.9
Genesee	Bergen	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	20	34.0
Genesee	Byron	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	24	30.2
Genesee	Byron	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	22	32.7
Genesee	Elba	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	17	33.0
Livingston	Avon	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	26	48.2
Tompkins	Dryden	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	18	43.7
Tompkins	Freeville	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	21	36.7
Tompkins	Groton	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	21	37.7
Tompkins	Groton	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	14	38.2
Tompkins	Lansing	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	18	36.2
Washington	Eagle Bridge	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	23	43.7
Washington	Salem	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	26	40.2
Washington	Salem	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	27	36.0

Washington	Schagitoke	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	24	41.6
Wayne	North Rose	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	14	43.7
Wayne	Wolcott	NY	alfalfa/grass	late veg	20	34.7
Wyoming	Castile	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	26	33.0
Wyoming	Castile	NY	alfalfa/grass	early bud	24	28.1
Cortland	Harford	NY	clover/grass	late veg	16	39.2
Cortland	Harford	NY	clover/grass	late veg	20	43.8
Cortland	Harford	NY	clover/grass	late veg	17	35.0
Cortland	Harford	NY	clover/grass	late veg	19	31.1
Broome	Whitney Point	Ny	grass	early boot	16	46.3
Cayuga	Auburn	NY	grass	flag	31	52.2
Cayuga	Genoa	NY	grass	early boot	21	46.2
Cayuga	Genoa	NY	grass	early boot	23	51.1
Cayuga	King Ferry	NY	grass	early boot	14	51.7
Cayuga	Venice	NY	grass	boot	31	51.5
Tompkins	Lansing	NY	grass	early boot	29	49.6
Washington	Schagitoke	NY	grass	flag	29	50.0
Wayne	Red Creek	NY	grass	late veg	19	50.4
Wayne	Soth Butler	NY	grass	early boot	26	48.4
Washington	Greenwhich	NY	triticale	boot	23	49.3
Grafton	Haverhill	NH	grass	late veg	25	50.5

County	Town	State	Crop	Growth Stage**	Plant Height	% NDF (NIR)
Addison	Addison	VT	alfalfa/grass	early bud	27	22.7
Addison	Bridport	VT	alfalfa/grass	early bud	24	27.9
Addison	Orwell	VT	alfalfa/grass	early bud	24	33.8
Addison	Orwell	VT	alfalfa/grass	early bud	26	30.6
Addison	Panton	VT	alfalfa/grass	late veg	24	29.4
Addison	Shoreham	VT	alfalfa/grass	early bud	24	27.1
Chittenden	North Williston	VT	alfalfa/grass	late veg	21	18.9
Chittenden	Richmond	VT	alfalfa/grass	late veg	18	31.1
Chittenden	Richmond	VT	alfalfa/grass	late veg	17	21.9
Franklin	St. Albans	VT	alfalfa/grass	late veg	21	29.4
Franklin	St. Albans	VT	alfalfa/grass	late veg	21	37.6
Orange	Bradford	VT	alfalfa/grass	veg/flag	24/30	33
Washington	E. Montpelier	VT	alfalfa/grass	late veg	18	30.4
Addison	Addison	VT	grass	flag	29	51.1
Addison	Shoreham	VT	grass	flag	31	50.2
Addison	Starksboro	VT	grass	flag	21	48.8
Addison	Whiting	VT	grass	boot	32	53.5
Caledonia	Ryegate	VT	grass	late veg	28	43.8
Caledonia	Suton	VT	grass	late veg	23	43.6
Franklin	Bakersfield	VT	grass	late veg	20	43.9
Franklin	Enosburg Falls	VT	grass	late veg	17	39.2

Franklin	Sheldon	VT	grass	late veg	16	45.4
Franklin	Swanton	VT	grass	late veg	13	40.2
Orange	Bradford	VT	grass	flag	25	45.1
Orleans	Irasburg	VT	grass	veg	18	45.5
Orleans	North Troy	VT	grass	veg	16	44.3
Washington	Brookfield	VT	grass	flag	27	49.3
Washington	E. Montpelier	VT	grass	veg	12	28.7
Addison	Bridport	VT	rye	boot	35	50.8

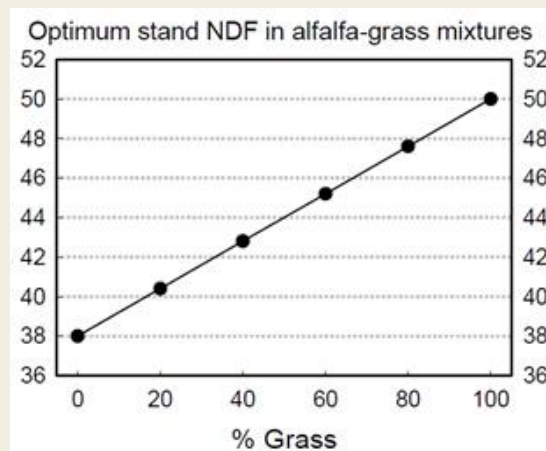
Result Summary

Forage samples collected on Tuesday May 16, 2017 show that alfalfa in the vegetative stage average 30.2%NDF and early bud stage 36.2%NDF. Alfalfa/grass mixes in late vegetative stage had 38.1%NDF and early bud stage had 38.6%NDF. Alfalfa/grass mixes were highly variable across farms and similiar within farms. Some farms forages were ready to mow and others were not. Grasses were in early boot stage and average 49.7%NDF. Triticale to grass.

We estimate 0.5 - 0.7 %NDF points per day and a %NDF goal of 43%-47% (see table below) for mixed stands which means on average 9 days until optimal harvest.

General %NDF guidelines for high quality dairy feed are as follows:

Stand Mixture	%NDF Goal
Pure Alfalfa	38% - 42%
Mixed Stands	43% - 47%
Grass Stands	48% - 55%



Optimum NDF varies depending on the percent of alfalfa and grass in the stand. (source: Cherney and Cherney, Grass of Dairy Cows)

In addition to the goal %NDF other factors must be considered to pick a start date for 1st cutting for the farm such as current farm inventories, weather windows and field conditions. Knowing the % NDF gives you one piece of information to guide one of the most important decisions you make in your forage program this year!

Remember to measure %NDF in your fields because it was very farm specific this year. If your forage needs more time, measure again. Call us if you want your fields measured too.

Happy spring and be safe!

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ACS recognizes the value of this timely information to our clients and subsidizes the cost of this project and works with area labs to negotiate a low-cost analysis in order to conduct this program. A special THANKS to the Dairy One Forage Lab for analyzing our New York samples and Poulin Grain for free analysis of our Vermont samples!



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