

DAIRY AND FIELD CROPS NEWS

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Management Check-off List

- Assess your forage inventories, both what is in storage and what is in the field.**
- Look for opportunities to secure quality local forages before the end of the growing season if you are short.**
- Understand the value of any hay crop purchases**
- Scout for leafhopper, soybean aphid and corn root-worm.**
- Be aware of soybean rust movement and be prepared to monitor and treat as needed.**

How is your 2005-2006 forage supply?

Kevin H. Gano

Lack of rainfall and hot weather continue to drive concerns about the growing season. The rainfall has been variable over our six counties and ranges from almost drought conditions to at times too much rain as this is written. With adequate rainfall corn has good height and color but as of last Friday there was corn in the western Montgomery County area rolled up (Figure 1) and gray.

Early planted corn has started to tassel over the past week and some folks are noticing it tasseling out shorter than they had hoped where rainfall has been short. My observation is that in general we have a good corn crop out there, not a bumper crop. I encourage you to cruise your fields and get some sense of what your losses might be. If you are growing corn for silage and you know that your corn has lacked for water, even if it has not shown much visible sign of stress I would suggest you start assessing your corn situation as we head into late July-early August. If you have got good plant height and ear development great, but don't get caught short in case you don't. Grain yields are most affected by drought stress the two weeks before and after silking. Plants shortened due to early dry conditions may still have good grain yields but you can not make up the grain yield loss if plants are water deficient around silking time.



Rolled corn on July 15

In general first cutting forage yields were lower than normal and second cutting has been fair to nonexistent in some situations. Early cut first cutting grass fields have had enough moisture to make a fair second but those harvested later had a scorched-earth look. The upside is that quality should be high this year.

If you appear to be short of forage now is the time to check with neighbors and make a few phone call to line up some additional acres, not in September. Here are a few suggestions for coming up with some extra feed:

- Look for opportunities to buy some good quality standing second or third cutting from someone who makes hay on extra acres. It is possible they would rather have you harvest it and than go through the effort of putting up hay or have it just stay in the field.
- There is still time to apply nitrogen to grass fields to receive more yield. Grasses suffer as much from heat as they do from dry so conditions have really not been favorable for grass growth. But this may change with cooler temperatures in late summer and especially if we receive more rainfall.
- Consider purchasing corn silage to meet some of your forage needs. If this an option and local supplies are tight you should lock in the amount you need now.

What's that haylage/baleage/hay worth?

David R Balbian

This is a common question that we get at this time of year. I'd like to give you some info that relates to the value of this feed for lactating dairy cows. This value **is not** the same as the priced paid for the following hay crop uses: horses, bedding, dry cows, heifers, mulch, mushroom production, etc. The demand for those hay crop uses may make the price worth more than the value for making milk. Also keep in mind that the pricing of forages may be very local. A standing hay field with no one looking to harvest it may have forage value but command a low price in the open market. In this situation there is just not enough demand to justify much of a price. Equally if several people in your area need feed and you would like to harvest a field of your neighbor's nice third cutting alfalfa, the price is probably going to be higher than you might have hoped.

The first issue is that the value of a standing hay crop is very dependent on two primary things, the yield per acre and the quality of the feed. So unless you know (or can estimate fairly closely) the yield we can't come up with a value. Oftentimes people will agree on a price per ton (corrected to a standard dry matter). Then a couple of wagons or trucks will be weighed. From there the number of loads are counted to come up with a quantity. Quality is something we can deal with more easily.

Below is a table that came from a haycrop pricing program (runs on Excel) that uses formulas I developed a few years back to price haycrop on dry matter, adjusted crude protein, and NDF for lactating cows. The program was designed to value quality, yet provide enough room for someone to make a reasonable margin when it was fed to lactating cows. Copies of the program are available free of charge, just give me a call. There are three sets of quality parameters for each of the haycrop descriptions. I got these from 5 years of data from the Dairy One Forage Lab for haycrop silage. They depict the high end of the normal range, the average, and the low end of the normal range in quality. Also, you'll see that I standardized dry matters at 35%, 65%, and 85%. This is an attempt to standardize the values to depict haylage, baleage, and dry hay. **Dry matter differences can make a huge difference in the per ton value of this feed. Be sure to use your dry matters!** Don't hesitate to call if you need help making a dry matter conversion.

The values shown would be for feed delivered or put into storage. If the feed is standing in the field you need to subtract the harvesting costs. Harvesting costs are different for everyone. However, I believe you'll find that for most people it will cost between \$15 and \$20 per ton to harvest haylage (based on 35% DM). If we take those same harvest costs and translate them for baleage (based on 65% DM) we'll come up with a range of \$27.86 to 37.14 per ton. For dry hay (at 85% DM) the numbers would range from \$36.43 to \$48.57 per ton. You can see that for the poorer quality feed it's value for lactating cows is most often less than the harvest cost. Buyers of standing hay also need to consider that they are the ones taking the weather risk and need to make a slight adjustment in price for that.

Haycrop price per ton given quality and DM					
Type	% ACP	% NDF	@ 35% DM	@ 65% DM	@ 85% DM
Legume	23.7	39.1	\$43.25	\$80.33	\$105.04
Legume	20.8	45.0	\$29.97	\$55.65	\$72.77
Legume	17.9	50.9	\$16.68	\$30.98	\$40.52
MMLeg.	21.6	43.5	\$41.69	\$77.43	\$101.25
MMLeg.	18.7	49.7	\$27.77	\$51.58	\$67.45
MMLeg.	15.7	55.9	\$13.85	\$25.73	\$33.64
MMGrass	18.5	50.8	\$33.93	\$63.01	\$82.40
MMGrass	15.3	57.0	\$19.79	\$36.76	\$48.07
MMGrass	12.0	63.3	\$5.65	\$10.49	\$13.72
Grass	18.2	52.0	\$39.52	\$73.40	\$95.98
Grass	14.4	58.9	\$24.01	\$44.60	\$58.32
Grass	10.7	65.7	\$8.50	\$15.79	\$20.65

Notes from the field: pest management issues

Kevin H. Ganoë

Potato leafhoppers are present and I am finding a few fields above threshold. Don't wait for a general "outbreak" of leafhoppers to check fields as that won't happen at this point in the season. What you will get is various fields under leafhopper pressure as fields are harvested and the leafhoppers move to more succulent alfalfa. Many people get fooled into thinking that the alfalfa is stunted from drought stress but most often it is potato leafhopper. Warm dry conditions will also move leafhoppers through their life cycle quicker producing new generations. Harvest works as a control measure because adults move to other fields and nymphs, which can not fly, die. Harvest any alfalfa that is more than 12 inches tall and in the bud to flower stage that is over threshold or is showing visible signs of leafhopper "yellows" and stunting. I really encourage you to watch new alfalfa seedings for potato leafhopper. New seedings may have had leafhoppers for sometime and with new seedings lower leaves remain after harvest meaning leafhoppers may stick around instead of moving off. Remember only lambda-cyhalothrin Warrior is labeled for alfalfa/grass stands. For more info on potato leafhoppers go to: <http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/publications/plh.pdf>.

Soybean aphids (Figure 1) numbers have been increasing but I still have not found enough in anyone field to justify control. Most any soybean plant will have a few, I have seen a few fields at 40-50 per plant, one plant maxed out at 200 in one field. The threshold is an average 250 per plant from beginning bloom to beginning pod stages. Check 20-30 plants. Lady beetles are a predator and are a great indicator of soybean aphids being present.

Soybean rust to this point has still not moved out of Alabama and Florida. For more info go to the New York State Soybean Rust Information Center website: <http://www.ppath.cornell.edu/soybeanrustny/default.htm>

There are several diseases present on soybeans such as Brown spot (Septoria leaf spot) where symptoms appear first on lower leaves as small irregular brown spots on upper and lower leaf surfaces. Downy mildew appears as early yellowish spots on the upper surface and a gray mycelium on the underside of the leaf. These diseases typically don't cause economic damage.

Lastly as we approach corn tasseling, injury from corn rootworm has begun to show up. Recent rains have loosened the soil and without a good root system from the rootworm feeding the plants have become top heavy and tip over. The curved stalk (goose necking) is the result of the plant trying to grow upright.



Soybean aphids on the underside of a soybean leaf.



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