

May 2019



From Field to Barn

UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

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Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed. Please do so as early as possible prior to the program or activity so that proper arrangements can be made.

It's Alfalfa Time...Oh Yeah!

It's now May, and hopefully some warmer weather and alfalfa time! As we progress through planting and first crop haylage seasons, keep safety in mind for yourself, your family, and your employees. First crop is always important, but even more so this year for many of our farms in the area. Make sure your harvest window hits your quality needs by using PEAQ evaluation on your fields and checking in with the Fond du Lac County Forage Council's Alfalfa Quality Watch Project with the Scissor Cut Analysis!

And make time to get away on June 19th for the annual Fond du Lac County Forage Council Annual Twilight Meeting! A great time to reconnect, and reset ourselves for the summer work! 🐮

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Farmer to Farmer-Forage & Corn List

The **Farmer to Farmer Hay, Forage and Corn List** puts Wisconsin farmers in touch with one another for the purpose of buying and/or selling corn silage, high moisture corn, haylage, straw and other forages. Search just one county or several counties at the same time. Extension assumes no responsibility in the transaction of buying or selling the items listed on the website. All transactions and negotiations are handled directly between buyers and sellers.



- Add a listing
- Search listings
- Browse listings
- Remove my listing

Listings remain active for 60 days or until a request to remove is made. 🐮

<http://farmertofarmer.uwex.edu>



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Pricing 2019 Standing Alfalfa



One of the challenges when pricing standing hay is the lack of a formal commodity market like we have for corn or soybeans. Another challenge is multiple cuttings during the same growing season versus a single year-end harvest for grain crops often with more

variation in quality, as well as yield. As a result, the price for standing hay is often different from farm to farm, even between fields. Here’s one example for pricing a field of standing hay in 2019.

Example: assume 4-5 ton dry matter (DM)/acre for the entire year of dairy quality alfalfa hay worth \$200 to \$250/ton baled (\$0.11 to \$0.14 / lb DM); half the value is credited to the owner for input costs (land, taxes, seed, chemical and fertilizer) and half the value is credited to the buyer for harvesting, field loss, weather and price risk.

To estimate total annual dry matter yield potential, determine average stems per square foot at several locations in the field, then calculate using this formula: $(0.10 \times \text{stems}/\text{ft}^2) + 0.38$. Wait until stems are at least 4-6 inches and count only stems tall enough to be cut by

the mower. Actual yield could be less due to environmental conditions and harvest management practices.

Using yield distribution estimates from ongoing UW-Extension field research for both three-cut (40% / 30% / 30%) and four-cut (35% / 25% / 20% / 20%) harvest systems, the following price range (rounded to the nearest \$5) may offer a starting point for buyers and sellers to negotiate the sale of good to premium quality standing alfalfa in 2019:

Price range for 2019 good to premium quality standing		
	4 cut system	3 cut system
	— price per acre —	
1st crop	\$155-\$245	\$175-\$280
2nd crop	\$110-175	\$130-\$210
3rd crop	\$90-\$140	\$130-\$210
4th crop	\$90-\$140	n/a

In this example, the sale or purchase price for all cuttings the entire year would range from \$440 to \$700/acre. 🐄

Source: Greg Blonde, Extension Waupaca County Agriculture Agent

An App Makes It A Snap!



To help farmers and landowners better evaluate their options when it comes to pricing standing hay, Extension Waupaca County Agriculture Agent Greg Blonde developed a mobile app for pricing standing hay.

It offers quick access to baled hay reference values with projected sale/purchase price for each cutting using your own yield and harvest cost information.

The Android app is free to download at the Google Play store (search for **Hay Pricing**) or by going to:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.smartmappsconsulting.haypricing>. 🐄

When Do I Cut? Predicting Pre-Harvest Alfalfa Quality



No doubt, in most dairy farmers' minds, forage quality is an important determinant of farm profitability. Poor quality forages increase feed costs and limit milk production.

The most important factor affecting quality of alfalfa is maturity at harvest. As alfalfa matures digestibility of dry matter and fiber decrease and fiber content increases. However, harvesting too early reduces the yield of alfalfa and results in alfalfa that is difficult to feed because its quality is too high. In addition, harvesting too early can reduce stand life of alfalfa. Although it is impossible to always harvest alfalfa at the optimum maturity because Mother Nature doesn't always cooperate, there are methods to help you come closer to your goal.

The scissors cut/clip method for monitoring forage relative feed value (RFV) of first cutting alfalfa is a proven method that's been around for over 15 years.

The Fond du La County Forage Council will be hosting an Alfalfa Quality Watch Program to help farmers determine the best time to harvest alfalfa for optimal quality. This year, the PEAQ (Predicated Equation for Alfalfa Quality) and Alfalfa Scissors Cut Analysis will be used to monitor alfalfa quality for first cutting. 🐮

Locations:

Alfalfa scissors-cut samples and PEAQ Stick readings for alfalfa quality will be taken from four fields this year (Malone, Brownsville, Byron, and Ripon). Both conventional and low-lignin fields will be sampled.

Dates:

Estimates of alfalfa quality RFV in the field using the PEAQ Stick and Alfalfa Scissor Cut Analysis will be conducted on Mondays with results on Tuesday afternoon.

Estimates of alfalfa quality RFV in the field using PEAQ stick reading will be conducted on Thursdays. Results will be available on Thursday afternoon.

Information Available:

Alfalfa Forage Quality Watch Information will be updated on Monday and Friday mid to late afternoons and available via:

Web: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/fdlag/alfalfa>

Email: Email tina.kohlman@wisc.edu to ensure you are on the list for an email blast!



Image source: A. Bjurstrom

May 13, 2019 Hay Market Report

Hay Grade	Bale type	----- Price (\$/ton) -----		
		Average	Minimum	Maximum
Prime (> 151 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$235.00	\$195.00	\$320.00
	Large Square	\$253.00	\$175.00	\$318.00
	Large Round	\$180.00	\$135.00	\$220.00
Grade 1 (125 to 150 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$192.00	\$160.00	\$224.00
	Large Square	\$202.00	\$120.00	\$385.00
	Large Round	\$170.00	\$110.00	\$245.00
Grade 2 (103 to 124 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	No Reported Sales		
	Large Square	\$165.00	\$100.00	\$225.00
	Large Round	\$154.00	\$70.00	\$215.00
Grade 3 (87 to 102 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	No Reported Sales		
	Large Square	\$130.00	\$100.00	\$160.00
	Large Round	\$108.00	\$50.00	\$210.00



Estimating Alfalfa RFV in the Field Using PEAQ

Step 1: Choose a representative 2-square-foot area in the field.

Step 2: Determine the most mature stem in the 2-square-foot sampling area using the criteria shown in the table at right.

Step 3: Measure the length of the tallest stem in the 2-square-foot area. Measure it from the soil surface (next to plant crown) to the tip of the stem (NOT to the tip of the highest leaf blade). Straighten the stem for an accurate measure of its length. The tallest stem may not be the most mature stem.

Step 4: Based on the most mature stem and length of the tallest stem, use the chart at the right to determine estimated RFV content of the standing alfalfa forage.

Step 5: Repeat steps 1 to 4 in four or five representative areas across the field. Sample more times for fields larger than 30 acres.

NOTE: This procedure estimates alfalfa RFV content of the standing crop. It does not account for changes in quality due to wilting, harvesting, and storage. These factors may further lower RFV content by 10 to 25 units, assuming good wilting and harvesting conditions. This procedure is most accurate for good stands of pure alfalfa with healthy growth.

Height of Tallest Stem (from soil surface to stem tip)	Stage of Most Mature Stem		
	LATE VEGETATIVE	BUD STAGE	FLOWER STAGE
	Vegetative (>12") No buds visible	1 or more nodes with visible buds. No flowers visible	1 or more nodes with open flower(s)
-inches-	-----Relative Feed Value-----		
16	237	225	210
17	230	218	204
18	224	212	198
19	217	207	193
20	211	201	188
21	205	196	183
22	200	190	178
23	195	185	174
24	190	181	170
25	185	176	166
26	180	172	162
27	175	168	158
28	171	164	154
29	167	160	151
30	163	156	147
31	159	152	144
32	155	149	140
33	152	145	137
34	148	142	134
35	145	139	131
36	142	136	128
37	138	133	126
38	135	130	123
39	132	127	121
40	129	124	118
41	127	122	115
42	124	119	113

The PEAQ system for estimating alfalfa quality in the field was developed by agronomists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

For Fond du Lac County PEAQ readings, please visit <https://fyi.uwex.edu/fdlag/alfalfa/>

Managing During Stressful Times

Working in agriculture is accompanied by managing a variety of stresses on a regular basis. Learning to control events, attitudes, and responses day-in and day-out will help farmers and ranchers to management those hectic stressful times.

Perhaps you have noticed some farmers struggle under the pressures of events you find easy to handle. Or perhaps you have wondered how other farmers can go on in spite of the stress load they carry.

Why is it some farmers can handle lots of stress and others very little? Researchers who have examined differences between successful and unsuccessful stress managers have identified three key factors.

- **Individuals vary in their capacity to tolerate stress.** For example, prolonged exertion and fatigue that would be only mildly stressful to a young farmer may prove very difficult for an older farmer or someone with a heart defect.
- **Feeling in control.** Successful stress managers know how to accept those stressors out of their control – the weather, stock market fluctuations – and how to effectively manage those stresses within their control.
- **The attitudes, perceptions, and meanings people assign to events determine a large part of their stress levels.** A person has to perceive a situation as stressful or threatening in order to experience stress.

Stress can be defined as energy in a chaotic state. Individuals should seek to develop calm, free-flowing energy that promotes harmony and balance in a person's body, psyche and soul. To relax and manage stresses well during peak farm/ranch stress seasons – planting and harvesting – takes discipline and daily practice at controlling events, attitudes and responses. Following are some techniques individuals may adopt to gain control.

Control events

To reduce the pile-up of too many stressful events at one time, farmers can control some situations.

- Plan ahead. Don't procrastinate. Replace worn machinery parts during the off season.
- Before the harvest discuss who can be available to run for parts, care for livestock, etc.


- Set priorities about what has to be done today and what can wait until tomorrow. Plan your time.
- Say no to extra commitments.
- Simplify your life.

Control attitudes

How farm family members view situations is a key factor in creating or eliminating unwanted stress.

- See the big picture.
- List all the stresses you now have. Identify those you can change; accept the ones you cannot change.
- Shift your focus from worrying to problem solving.
- Turn your challenges into opportunity.
- Notice what you have accomplished rather than what you failed to do.

Control responses

- Focus on relaxing your body and mind. Whether you are walking, driving or phoning, do it slowly and relax.
- Tune in to your body. Notice any early signs of stress and let them go.
- Take care of your body. Exercise regularly and eat well-balanced meals.
- Avoid smoking cigarettes, using alcohol or other drugs, or using tranquilizers or sleeping pills.
- If your health allows, tense and then relax each part of your body from toes to head, one part at a time.
- Shake away tension as you work by vigorously shaking each of your limbs.
- Take a break. Climb down from your tractor and do a favorite exercise.
- Take three deep breaths – slowly, easily. Let go of unnecessary stress.
- Think positive thoughts: "I can and will succeed."
- Look for the humor in things that you do.
- Balance your work and your play. Do both well.
- Find someone with whom you can talk about your worries and frustrations.
- Seek help when you need it. There are times when all of us can benefit from professional help or support. 

Source: <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/farm-stress-fact-sheets-stress-management-for-farmers-ranchers>



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Mark Your Calendars for Upcoming Agricultural Events

May 2019

- 28 Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) Certification-All Ages**
7:00 pm | UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

June 2019

- 16 Ripon FFA Alumni 32nd Annual Farm Breakfast**
8:30 am to 12:30 pm | D&D Sunny Side Beef, LLC | 7435 Sportsman Road, Ripon
- 19 Fond du Lac County Forage Council Twilight Meeting**
7:00 pm Grain Bin Demonstration | 7:30 pm Program | 8:15 pm Fellowship | Dinner Bell Farms (Dale & Adam Grahl Family) | N4599 Pine Road, Eden
- 23 Envision Greater Fond du Lac Agri-Business Council Breakfast on the Farm**
8 am to 12 noon | Loehr Farms, LLC | W1851 Mushroom Road, Eden



Image source: A. Bjurstrom



Image source: T. Kohlman

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