

May 21, 2012 Alfalfa Harvest Alert / Scissors-Cut Information

Central Minnesota Forage Council, U of M Extension, Farm and Business Cooperators

Chart starts with all farms for most recent test - followed by all tests for individual farms.

Farms are listed somewhat from south to north. Watch 3-4 samples for trend line.

"Hgt" is height of tallest stems in 2 foot square sample area.

*** Last Data from a Previous Date.**

"Mat" is Maturity of most mature stem 1=Veg 2=Bud 3=Flower

| | Farm | County | Town | Hgt | Mat | PEAQ | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP |
|-----|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|------|-----------------------|-----|------|------|--------|--------------|
| 1 | Stocker | Scott | Jordan | 27 | bud | 168 | 206 | | 25.5 | 31.1 | | 24.1 |
| 2* | Lambrecht | Scott | Cologne | 28 | bud | 165 | 167 | | 29.6 | 36.7 | | 21.2 |
| 3* | Dreier | Carver | Norwood | 25 | bud | 175 | 197 | | 27.1 | 32 | | Cut <5/14 |
| 4* | Hoehn | Carver | Bongard | 22 | bud | 190 | 173 | | 30.3 | 35.1 | | 23.6 |
| 5* | Wandersee | Carver | Watertown | 26 | bud | 175 | 172 | | 29.1 | 35.9 | | 23.6 |
| 6* | Kreinke | McLeod | Lester Prairie | 27 | bud | 168 | 187 | 196 | 27.2 | 33.6 | | Cut 5/14 |
| * | Mohr | McLeod | Glencoe | 19-26 | 80%Bd | 185 | average tallest stems | | | 23.7 | | Cut 5/15 |
| * | Rickeman | McLeod | Hutchinson | 19.5 | veg | 213 | 209 | | 25.2 | 30.8 | | Cut 5/13 |
| 7 | Bohn | Meeker | Cedar Mills | 24.9 | bud | 177 | 146 | | 33.1 | 40.2 | | 20-30 inches |
| 8* | Poppler | Wright | Waverly | 24 | veg | 190 | 188 | 185 | 27.2 | 33.5 | | Cut 5/9 |
| 9* | Krause | Wright | W Buffalo | 30 | bud | 156 | 183 | | 27.3 | 34.4 | | At Chopping |
| 10* | Gathje | Stearns | Eden Valley | 24 | V/B | 190 | 222 | | 24.6 | 29.2 | | Cut 5/16 |
| 11 | Maus | Stearns | S Freeport | 24 | bud | 181 | 213 | | 25.4 | 30.2 | Lodged | 24.4 |
| 12* | Frericks | Stearns | N Melrose | 28 | bud | 164 | 199 | | 26.1 | 32.1 | | 21.9 |
| 13 | Winkelman | Benton | E Duelm | 23.5 | bud | 183 | 193 | 200 | 26.1 | 33.1 | 39.6 | 24.2 |
| 14 | Scapanski | Benton | NE Sauk Rapids | 24.5 | bud | 179 | 173 | 176 | 28.7 | 35.8 | 38.2 | 21.7 |
| 15 | | Spring Seeded 2011 | | 24.5 | bud | 179 | 193 | 195 | 26.7 | 32.9 | 38.4 | 22.5 |
| 16* | O & S Dairy | Benton | E Rice | 23 | bud | 185 | 193 | 201 | 26.2 | 32.9 | | Cut May 17 |
| 17 | | Field cut later last fall | | 24 | bud | 181 | 184 | 197 | 27.5 | 34.2 | 41.9 | 22 |
| 18* | Roerick | Morrison | SW of Upsala | 23 | bud | 185 | 223 | | 24.3 | 29.2 | | 25 |
| 19 | Hales | Mo.Co. | Little Rock/Buckman | 23.75 | bud | 182 | 183 | 187 | 27.8 | 34.2 | 38 | 24.6 |

*Data from previous sampling date yet as noted on pages below.

**As the new crop grows, we might expect old residue to be a smaller share of sample, and less significant

There is seldom a reason to remove old crop residue in the spring. Weeds can be an issue too.

Key Points:

For scissors-cut sampling the goal is to have at least **3 tests that are 3-4 days apart** to establish a trend that is more reliable than an one-time sample.

Hay or Haylage in the feed bunk can be expected to have an RFV that is 15 to 25 points lower than the fresh-cut sample test or what the PEAQ stick or chart indicates because of harvest and storage loss.

Harvest might start when a fresh-cut sample or PEAQ RFV numbers are 15 to 25 points higher than the feed target. The PEAQ RFV number indicates what we could expect to see in a fresh-cut lab test.

NDF might be 3 to 6 points higher for harvested feed. Harvest might start with **fresh-cut samples or PEAQ NDF is 3-6 points lower** than feed targets.

When alfalfa gets to be **22 to 24 to 26 inches tall, buds are likely** to start to form and dairy producers might watch for a good **weather window** to harvest.

Livestock producers will have **different quality targets** based on the type of animals, other ration ingredients, and **past experience** with harvest and feeding of hay products.

It can be useful for livestock producers who work with **nutrition advisor** to talk with their nutrition advisor about harvest targets and strategies.

Stocker - Scott - Jordan

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-------|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|---------------|
| 5/10 | 21 | prebd | 210 | 215 | | 24.3 | 30.2 | | 24.3 | | |
| 5/14 | 23 | veg | 198 | 228 | | 23.6 | 29 | | 24.4 | | Ave 2 Samples |
| 5/17 | 25 | bud | 175 | 182 | | 26.8 | 34.6 | | 20.8 | | |
| 5/21 | 27 | bud | 168 | 206 | | 25.5 | 31.1 | | 24.1 | | |

Lambrecht - Scott Co - Belle Plain

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|------|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| 5/3 | 22 | veg | 200 | 193 | | 28.1 | 32.4 | | 26.2 | | |
| 5/7 | 24 | veg | 190 | 172 | | 29.1 | 35.7 | | 24.0 | | |
| 5/10 | 26 | Ebud | 175 | 188 | | 28.1 | 33.1 | | 23.8 | | |
| 5/14 | 28 | bud | 165 | 167 | | 29.6 | 36.7 | | 21.2 | | |

Dreier - Carver Co - Norwood

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|-----------|
| 4/25 | 14 | veg | >240 | 284 | | 20.2 | 23.9 | | 26.1 | | |
| 4/30 | 16.5 | veg | 235 | 235 | 242 | 23.5 | 27.9 | 40.4 | 26.9 | | |
| 5/3 | 21 | veg | 207 | 186 | | 27.6 | 33.7 | | 25.8 | | |
| 5/7 | 24 | bud | 180 | 187 | | 27.8 | 33.4 | | 25.6 | | |
| 5/10 | 25 | bud | 175 | 197 | | 27.1 | 32 | | 23.0 | | Cut <5/14 |

Hoen - Carver Co - Bongard

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| 4/30 | 14 | veg | >240 | 264 | 274 | 21.5 | 25.4 | 40.4 | 27.8 | | |
| 5/3 | 17 | veg | 230 | 229 | | 23.5 | 28.6 | | 26.6 | | |
| 5/7 | 19 | bud | 210 | 191 | | 27.4 | 32.8 | | 26.0 | | |
| 5/10 | 20 | bud | 200 | 194 | | 27.4 | 32.5 | | 23.1 | | |
| 5/14 | 21 | bud | 195 | 205 | | 26.1 | 31.1 | | 24.3 | | |
| 5/17 | 22 | bud | 190 | 173 | | 30.3 | 35.1 | | 23.6 | | |

Wandersee - Carver - Watertown

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| 5/3 | 15 | veg | 245 | 201 | | 25.2 | 32.0 | | 24.7 | | |
| 5/7 | 19 | veg | 220 | 196 | | 26.3 | 32.5 | | 25.4 | | |
| 5/10 | 23.5 | veg | 190 | 217 | | 24.4 | 30.0 | | 24.6 | | |
| 5/14 | 26 | bud | 175 | 172 | | 29.1 | 35.9 | | 23.6 | | |

Kreinke - McLeod - Lester Prairie

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------------|
| 5/7 | 20 | veg | 220 | 231 | 245 | 22.7 | 28.7 | | 25.9 | | |
| 5/10 | 23 | veg | 200 | 269 | 283 | 20.8 | 25.3 | 40.7 | 24.9 | | |
| 5/14 | 26 | bud | 175 | 172 | | 29.1 | 35.9 | | 23.6 | | Cut May 14 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

Bohn - Meeker - Cedar Mills

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-------|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|--------------|
| 5/3 | 13.1 | Veg | >250 | 207 | | 25.1 | 31.1 | | 26.3 | | |
| 5/7 | 15 | veg | 227 | 197 | | 26.6 | 32.2 | | 25.5 | | Hgt 9-20 |
| 5/10 | 17.5 | veg | 224 | 208 | | 25.9 | 30.7 | | 24.3 | | |
| 5/14 | 19.3 | 60%Bd | 224 | 208 | | 25.9 | 30.7 | | 24.3 | | Hgt 11-24 |
| 5/17 | 21.3 | bud | 198 | 164 | | 30.5 | 37 | | 22 | | Hgt 12-27 |
| 5/21 | 24.9 | bud | 177 | 146 | | 33.1 | 40.2 | | 20.8 | | 20-30 inches |

Poppler - Wright Co - near Waverly

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|--|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|-----------|
| 4/30 | 18 | Veg | 224 | 270 | 275 | 20.9 | 25.0 | 40.5 | 29.1 | | |
| 5/7 | 24 | veg | 190 | 188 | 185 | 27.2 | 33.5 | 35.4 | 26.2 | | CUT May 9 |
| May 14 Harvested haylage sample tested 185 RFV and 24% Protein | | | | | | | | | | | |

Krause - Wright Co - west of Buffalo

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|---------------|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|----------------|
| 5/3 | 18 | veg | 224 | No Lab Sample | | | | | | | |
| 5/7 | 24 | veg | 190 | 170 | | 30.7 | 35.6 | | 23.9 | | |
| 5/10 | 27 | bud | 168 | 190 | | 27.6 | 33.1 | | 22.7 | | Cut 5/13 |
| 5/15 | 30 | bud | 156 | 183 | | 27.3 | 34.4 | | 24.9 | | After Chopping |

Gathje - Stearns Co- northeast of Eden Valley

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|--|--------|---------|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|----------|
| 5/3 | 18 | veg | 245 | 225 | | 24.9 | 28.7 | | 29.3 | | |
| 5/7 | 17.5 | veg | 227 | 215 | | 25.2 | 29.9 | | 27.3 | | |
| 2 minutes of marble size hail on Sat May 5 6:30 p.m. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5/10 | 20 | veg | 210 | 216 | | 24.9 | 29.9 | | 26.8 | | |
| 5/14 | 22 | veg | 200 | 203 | | 26.1 | 31.5 | | 25.1 | | |
| 5/16 | 24 | Veg/bud | 190 | 222 | | 24.6 | 29.2 | | 26.7 | | Cut 5/16 |

Maus - Stearns Co - south of Freeport

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|--------|------|-----|--------|
| 5/7 | 17 | VEG | 230 | 247 | | 23.0 | 26.8 | | 26.8 | | |
| 5/10 | 18 | VEG | 224 | 252 | | 21.7 | 26.5 | | 25.1 | | |
| 5/14 | 20.5 | veg | 209 | 224 | | 24.1 | 29.1 | | 23.9 | | |
| 5/17 | 22 | bud | 190 | 213 | | 25.4 | 30.2 | | 24.4 | | |
| 5/21 | 24 | bud | 181 | 213 | | 25.4 | 30.2 | Lodged | 24.4 | | Lodged |

Frericks - Stearns Co 4 miles - north of Melrose

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| 5/3 | 17 | veg | 233 | 273 | | 20.8 | 24.8 | | 26.8 | | |
| 5/7 | 20.5 | veg | 215 | 264 | | 20.5 | 25.6 | | 25.0 | | |
| 5/10 | 22 | veg | 200 | 224 | | 23.4 | 29.4 | | 23.5 | | |
| 5/14 | 26 | bud | 172 | 262 | | 20.9 | 25.8 | | 26.2 | | |
| 5/17 | 28 | bud | 164 | 199 | | 26.1 | 32.1 | | 21.9 | | |

Winkelman - Benton Co - east of Duelm

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|--------|---------------|
| 5/3 | 10-13 | veg | >250 | 238 | 235 | 22.6 | 27.8 | 38 | 27.3 | | |
| 5/7 | 14 | veg | >240 | 251 | 256 | 21.4 | 26.8 | 37.4 | 28.4 | | Ave 2 Samples |
| 5/10 | 15 | veg | 245 | 240 | 253 | 22.6 | 27.8 | 41.2 | 25.2 | | Ave 2 Samples |
| 5/14 | 19 | bud | 207 | 227 | 239 | 23.1 | 29.1 | 42.6 | 25.9 | | Ave 2 Samples |
| 5/17 | 22 | bud | 190 | 203 | 209 | 25.2 | 32.4 | 40.1 | 22.9 | | Ave 2 Samples |
| 5/21 | 23.5 | bud | 183 | 193 | 200 | 26.1 | 33.1 | 39.6 | 24.2 | Lodged | Ave 2 Samples |

D Scapanski - Benton Co - 8 miles NE of Sauk Rapids - Older Stand

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|--------|---------------|
| 5/3 | 10-13 | veg | 245 | 195 | 193 | 26.6 | 32.5 | 39.8 | 24.1 | | |
| 5/7 | 12-14 | veg | >240 | 214 | 220 | 24.2 | 30.3 | 38.9 | 26.5 | | Ave 2 Samples |
| 5/10 | 15 | veg | 245 | 226 | 242 | 23.5 | 29.2 | 43.8 | 25.8 | | Ave 2 Samples |
| 5/14 | 19 | bud | 207 | 205 | 219 | 25.6 | 31.4 | 43.9 | 23.7 | | Ave 2 Samples |
| 5/17 | 22 | bud | 190 | 210 | 222 | 24.9 | 31.5 | 41.9 | 23.1 | | Ave 2 Samples |
| 5/21 | 24.5 | bud | 179 | 173 | 176 | 28.7 | 35.8 | 38.2 | 21.7 | Lodged | Ave 2 Samples |

D Scapanski - Benton Co - East of Rice -2011 Spring Seeded

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|--------|-------|
| 5/3 | 12 | veg | >250 | 252 | 254 | 21.5 | 26.4 | 40.3 | 29.5 | | |
| 5/7 | 14 | veg | >240 | 256 | 268 | 21.2 | 26.3 | 41.4 | 30.6 | | |
| 5/10 | 17 | veg | 230 | 240 | 254 | 22.5 | 27.7 | 42.1 | 26.8 | | |
| 5/14 | 21 | bud | 196 | 230 | 239 | 23.4 | 28.7 | 42.6 | 27.4 | | |
| 5/17 | 22 | bud | 190 | 250 | 264 | 21.8 | 26.8 | 42.3 | 27.5 | | |
| 5/21 | 24.5 | bud | 179 | 193 | 195 | 26.7 | 32.9 | 38.4 | 22.5 | Lodged | |

O & S Dairy - Benton Co - East of Rice old crop residue removed

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------------|
| 5/3 | 15 | veg | 245 | 235 | 248 | 22.3 | 28.3 | 41.8 | 26.6 | | |
| 5/7 | 17 | veg | 230 | 218 | 224 | 23.8 | 30.0 | 38.1 | 25.0 | | |
| 5/10 | 19 | veg | 217 | 217 | 227 | 23.9 | 30.1 | 40.1 | 24.8 | | |
| 5/14 | 22 | bud | 190 | 188 | 191 | 26.8 | 33.6 | 38.8 | 23.3 | | |
| 5/17 | 23 | bud | 185 | 193 | 201 | 26.2 | 32.9 | 40 | 21.6 | | Cut May 17 |

O & S Dairy - SAME FIELD WITH OLD CROP RESIDUE

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------------|
| 5/3 | 15 | veg | 245 | 154 | 155 | 30.8 | 39.4 | 38.6 | 22.6 | | |
| 5/7 | 17 | veg | 230 | 129 | 121 | 35.4 | 44.2 | 33.0 | 19.3 | | |
| 5/10 | 19 | veg | 217 | 141 | 135 | 33.4 | 41.6 | 34.7 | 29.8 | | |
| 5/14 | 22 | bud | 190 | 161 | 162 | 29.6 | 38.0 | 38.6 | 21.2 | | |
| 5/17 | 23 | bud | 185 | 153 | 151 | 31 | 39.5 | 36.9 | 19.6 | | Cut May 17 |

Old crop residue should be less significant as new crop grows. This can vary a lot with what is sampled.

Roerick - Morrison Co - southwest of Upsala

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| 5/10 | 15 | veg | 237 | 222 | | 25.1 | 29.1 | | 26.9 | | |
| 5/14 | 20 | veg | 211 | 243 | | 22.7 | 27.3 | | 25.8 | | |
| 5/17 | 23 | bud | 185 | 223 | | 24.3 | 29.2 | | 25 | | |
| 5/21 | | | | | | | | | | | |

Morrison Co - between Little Rock and Buckman

| Date | Height | Mat | PEAQ RFV | RFV | RFQ | ADF | NDF | NDFd | CP | GDD | Notes |
|------|--------|-----|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| 5/14 | 20.5 | veg | 208 | 225 | 237 | 24.0 | 29.0 | 42.9 | 25.1 | | |
| 5/17 | 23.5 | veg | 193 | 187 | | 27.4 | 33.5 | | 22.9 | | |
| 5/21 | 23.75 | bud | 182 | 183 | 187 | 27.8 | 34.2 | 38 | 24.6 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

Cooperating Agri-Businesses

Vita Plus, Barry Viser and Jack Hales

Waconia Farm Supply, Bob Nelson and Rich Schug

Famo Feeds and Hutchinson Coop with Rod Riewer

Cooperating Labs Stearns DHIA Lab at Sauk Centre

Dairyland Lab at Sauk Rapids

Extension Educators

Laura Kieser, Carver / Scott Counties 952-466-5300 lkieser@co.carver.mn.us

Nathan Winter, McLeod / Meeker Counties 320-484-4334 Wint0146@umn.edu

Dan Martens, Stearns / Benton / Morrison Counties 968-6450 or 1-800-964-4929 marte011@umn.edu

NOTES

4/24 Charles Krause at Buffalo reported some alfalfa being 14 inches tall

4/26 Field at Winkelman's near Duelm mostly 6-8-10 inches tall. Some plants in older stands look a little pale. Cut in the fall with little regrowth going into winter. Some brown frosted leaf edges from 5/20-22.

4/27 Scapanski's SE of Mayhew Lake mostly 6-8-10 inches tall in older stands with little fall regrowth. New seeding from spring 2011 is a little shorter but more uniform.

4/27 O & S Dairy East of Rice Field with a lot of old crop residue 10-14 inches tall. Other fields with old crop residue 8-12 inches. Other fields 6-8 inches.

5/1 Stormy Rainy weather in the evening, some areas got as much as 2 inches.

5/7 Mostly rainy and cloudy since May 3 sampling. In Foley about 4 inches of rain since last Tuesday.

MORE VARIATION IN 2012 from field to field, farm to farm, make it IMPORTANT TO CHECK what your fields are like. Buds are showing up in some fields. Some fields around 24 inches, lab tests are looking like **some producers will be taking a closer look** at the weather and field conditions related to harvest before too long. Fields on the same farm might vary by 10 days or more for harvest.

Dan Moscho, Dairyland Lab shared yesterday, that in SW MN where harvest in being considered, they are seeing second crop shoots starting at the crown. We'd like to avoid clipping second crop shoots with first crop harvest - something to check.

In the Pierz area and 3-4 miles north non Tuesday May 8, the better looking alfalfa seemed to be 12-13 inches tall. Here too VARIATION is key to keep in mind.

5/10 Harlan Poppler by Waverly cut fields on May 9.

Alfalfa Weevil - For the next 4-6 weeks maybe, keep an eye out for signs of feeding by the Alfalfa Weevil Larva (AWL). I have not seen or heard of great indications of AWL in our area yet this spring. There are reasons to think they could show up and be an issue. There should be plenty of moisture

now for second crop alfalfa to start strong after first crop harvest. I readily see new shoots starting where I have clipped scissors-cut samples.

Plans are being made for more cutting next week where the crop is ready for the farmer's need.

5/14 It's NOT all the same.

~Craig Roerick shared a sample from the family dairy, measuring 22-24 inches, not quite bud stage, that tested 206 RFV and 221 RFQ about like expected. The lower part of the landscape measured 16-18". Craig figures it was hurt by frost.

~Got another call telling about alfalfa by Villard that was shorter than that, figured to be hurt earlier by frost.

~Where there are significant plant height difference in the field, it might be useful to dig a few roots of shorter and taller plants and split them to see if there is consistently more root damage in short plants

~Found 3 Clover Leaf Weevil Larva while picking old crop residue out of a sample. They were about 3/16 inch long. Similar to Alfalfa Weevil but CLW have tan/brown head not black like AWL.

5/17 ~More buds - more harvest decisions. Note the Little Rock/Buckman sample does not have buds yet; so consider YOUR field conditions. For some feed targets, harvest might start before buds show.

~Could this crop test better? Dan Undersander reminded readers in a recent Midwest Forage "Clippings Newsletter" that when the flower bud forms at the top of the stem, there will be no more growth in terms of new leaves being add to the stem. Growth from here on is from stem elongation between leaf attachments points on the stem. Some flower buds may form at leaf nodes below the top buds. Where the crop growth has been limited by cooler weather earlier, or by frost, or by dry soil... it be that we have a higher leaf to stem ratio. In fields where the lab test is consistently higher than the PEAQ chart would indicate based on height and maturity stage, this could be a reason to think it really might be better. It sure seems like some fields have been growing slowly this year.

5/21 ~The Weather.....

I'm guessing that for a lot of people now, at least in most of Benton and Stearns County and south, harvest decisions for milk cow hay are pretty much driven by finding a weather opportunity that works for their harvest plans. There are some places where buds are just starting to form. Farther north in Morrison County some hay may be farther behind. It's not all the same.

~Insects

I was at a farm 3-4 miles north of Albany today. In one field, I found 8 Alfalfa Weevil Larva in about 12 sweeps with a net. This is first crop hay that will be cut sometime within the next week. We'd like to think all the Alfalfa Weevil Larva (AWL) will be destroyed in first crop harvest, but not a good bet. It will be important watch second crop regrowth for AWL problems. Found a couple Potato Leafhoppers PLH and several plant bugs in the same set of sweets.

This is NOT a reason to routinely spray a lot of fields. It IS a reason to keep an eye on second crop from first shoots through harvest ... and follow recommended thresholds for treatment decisions.

Website users and try a search for "Minnesota Extension Alfalfa Weevil Threshold". A direct link to one resource is:

http://www.extension.umn.edu/forages/pdfs/alfalfa_insects_forage_days_09.pdf

For Nathan, Laura and I, in our counties, you're welcome to call for printed info.

I know many agronomy ag business folk, crop consultants and others or working with folks on this.

Please work toward a SAFE hay harvest and with other work and activities.