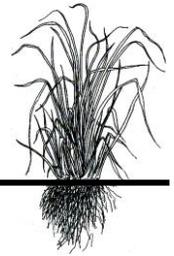




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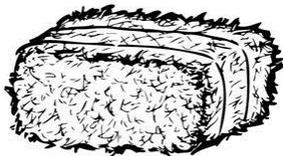
Supporting Members of PFGC

Many businesses support the PFGC through their membership and involvement in many of the PFGC sponsored activities. Our supporting members for 2017 are listed below.

AgChoice Farm Credit
Barenbrug, USA
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Ernst Conservation Seeds
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Rohrer Seeds
Timac, USA. Inc.

Save Your Hay Samples for the Ag Progress Days Hay Show



As you make hay this year, pull a couple of your best bales and store them in a dry spot so that when APD rolls around you will have easy access to them. Hay Show entry forms will be sent with the Summer PFGC News. **PLEASE TAKE NOTE** that there will be

changes in classes and rules for the 2017 APD Hay Show and onward. Rules will be carefully outlined in the Hay Show brochure, as well as in Lancaster farming press releases.

Forage Conference held February 22

The 2017 Forage Conference was held on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at the Grantville Holiday Inn. Industry professionals and farmers had a full day of educational topics from industry-leading speakers!

The conference is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council in cooperation with Penn State Extension. Keep an eye out for possible changes for the 2018 Pennsylvania Forage Conference.

PSU Forage Team National Champions

Roanoke, VA. A team from the Penn State Agronomy Club competed in the National Forage Bowl Competition at the American Forage and Grassland Conference in Roanoke, VA on January 23 & 24. In the semi-finals, Penn State knocked off Virginia Tech but really showed their skill and knowledge in the Championship with Kansas State. The final score was 4800 pts for Kansas and 4900 pts for Penn State.

The Forage Bowl competition requires the students to identify forage and weed species and answer questions about any aspect of forages from seed to animal health. This is all done in a competitive environment where speed in answering is crucial to winning.

Congratulations, Penn State Forage Team!



Penn State's 2017 Forage Team (L-R) Taylor O'Guinn, Casey Baxter, Lew Frame, Amber Gabel, Jon Stephens, Joy Beam, Phil Stutzman and Lauren Martin.

Fickle First Cut

Here we go — the start of another growing season. In some areas of the U.S., the initial cutting of alfalfa is underway; for others, it is near, while some are just starting to watch the first signs of growing plants.

The initial spring cutting of alfalfa can make or break a harvest season. It's a fascinating study of how forage quality can change ever so quickly, or how it may change at a tortoise-like pace.

Why?

No cutting of alfalfa grows under the environmental conditions offered by spring. Early on, temperatures are mostly cool, which is good news from a forage quality standpoint. As the march toward harvest maturity continues, the possible weather scenarios span the TV weatherman's vocabulary.

The range of environmental conditions makes it difficult to gauge forage quality. Calendar dates are useless, as is phenotypic maturity stage. Relative forage quality (RFQ) can be as much as 100 points different from year-to-year on the same date; the same can be said for forage quality at a given stage of maturity.

To be sure, Mother Nature is calling the shots on forage quality when it comes to first cutting. Hot and wet brings much different results than cool and dry. Further, environmental conditions change from day-to-day more in the spring than at any other point in the growing season. This explains the fickle nature of first cutting. It also explains why it's important to pay attention and monitor forage quality in the spring more so than any other cutting.

First-cut fiber digestibility can be the best of the season; those mostly cool days and nights are the hay producer's friend. Once warm to hot weather sets in, or if wet weather delays the harvest, fiber digestibility can quickly move from the best to the worst of the year. This is true for pure alfalfa stands and even truer for alfalfa-grass stands.

The rate of fiber digestibility decline is unmatched by any other alfalfa cutting. This means that the harvest window is usually smaller, unless extended cool weather prevails. Here's where new alfalfa genetics that can lower lignin content and raise neutral detergent fiber digestibility (NDFD) by as much as 15 percent will help widen this window.

No cutting of alfalfa offers the opportunity for high yields more than the first. In fact, it usually comprises

the highest percentage of total-season yield compared to subsequent harvests.

Just as forage quality changes both between years and within a given year, so does alfalfa yield change more dramatically than any other cutting. Estimates are that alfalfa packs on 100 to 150 pounds of dry matter per acre per day during the late-vegetative to late-bud stages. In five days, dry matter yield jumps 1/4 to over 1/3 ton per acre. The yield x quality tradeoff is never so in play as it is with first cutting.

First cutting is the only one of the year when there is no number of days since the previous harvest. The first-cut harvest decision often dictates the schedule for the rest of the season. When the first cut is made may impact how many future cuttings will be possible, the interval between cuttings, and how late in the fall the final cutting will be harvested.

First cutting is complicated, unique, and fickle. The harvest options are many but often dictated by weather conditions during the spring and precipitation patterns as the preferred harvest time approaches. The consequences of when first cutting is taken have huge ramifications on the remaining alfalfa harvests, but more importantly it impacts future livestock performance or the ability to sell the hay at a premium price.

Be ready for first cut.

Mike Rankin, Editor, Hay & Forage Grower

**Don't forget to save some hay for the
Pennsylvania Hay Show at
Ag Progress Days!
August 15-17, 2017**

Aphids in Timothy Fields

Have you seen browning in timothy fields? It may be due to a heavy aphid population.

Many timothy fields in the vicinity of Gettysburg, PA (Adams County) are heavily infested with aphids. Initial infestations were found because fields looked as though they were starting to brown.

If you grow timothy, or work with growers that do, you would be wise to scout that acreage for aphid populations. Most plants appear to have around 20 aphids per plant, but populations tend to be variable across fields. Estimates that I received put the acres infested around 2,000 – 3,000 acres, across perhaps a dozen farms. At this point we are not certain of the aphid species responsible for the

infestation, but individuals are being sent to Penn State for species determination. Of course species identification is valuable for treating with approved materials, but treatment should occur soon in many of these fields to salvage productivity.

Infestations of aphids in grass hay or small grains tend to be more common in cooler parts of the year, possibly because natural enemies are not as active. Some aphids that commonly infest grasses can be particularly damaging because they inject toxins into plants as they feed, causing yellowing. In some cases, the injury looks brown, reddish, or purple. When scouting for low aphid start by looking low on the plant because some species tends to feed toward the base of plants, but move upward as populations increase.

We know that this is a serious issue around Gettysburg, but do not know how widespread the problem is beyond Adams County. We would appreciate being notified of other timothy fields in other parts of Pennsylvania with these symptoms. It would be helpful to have as many details on the history of the management of these fields as possible.

Dr. John Tooker, Entomologist, Penn State

Industry News

Growers to reduce hay acreage in 2017

Lower returns on corn and hay are pushing crop growers to move more acreage to soybeans and cotton, according to USDA's 2017 Prospective Plantings report, released March 31.

Hay acreage lowest in more than a century

U.S. dry hay producers intend to harvest 52.8 million acres of all dry hay in 2017, down about 650,000 acres (1 percent) from 2016. If realized, this will represent the fourth consecutive annual decline since 2013, and the lowest total hay harvested area since 1908.

The estimates do not provide breakouts for alfalfa/alfalfa mixture and other dry hay. USDA details those estimates in an annual Acreage report, to be released June 30.

With U.S. average hay prices mired at six-year lows, harvested area of all hay is expected to hold steady or decline in all Western and Southern states except Arkansas, Idaho and Washington (see **Table 1**).

Compared with a year earlier, Texas hay acreage will be down 530,000 acres, with declines of 100,000 acres anticipated in California and Kentucky. That will be offset somewhat by

increases of 100,000 acres in South Dakota and Pennsylvania. Increases in harvested acreage are expected in several Upper Midwest and Mid-Atlantic states.

TABLE 1 Prospective plantings: All hay acreage

State	2016 1,000 acres	2017* 1,000 acres	Percent change over previous year	State	2016 1,000 acres	2017* 1,000 acres	Percent change over previous year
Alabama	810	800	-1%	Nevada	330	330	0%
Arizona	315	310	-2%	New Hampshire	53	48	-9%
Arkansas	1,204	1,210	0%	New Jersey	114	120	5%
California	1,200	1,100	-8%	New Mexico	275	265	-4%
Colorado	1,380	1,350	-2%	New York	1,360	1,400	3%
Connecticut	45	46	2%	North Carolina	687	620	-10%
Delaware	17	14	-18%	North Dakota	2,500	2,500	0%
Florida	300	300	0%	Ohio	970	950	-2%
Georgia	600	580	-3%	Oklahoma	3,010	3,000	0%
Idaho	1,330	1,360	2%	Oregon	1,130	1,110	-2%
Illinois	480	490	2%	Pennsylvania	1,350	1,450	7%
Indiana	500	420	-16%	Rhode Island	7	8	14%
Iowa	910	1,000	10%	South Carolina	320	310	-3%
Kansas	2,600	2,600	0%	South Dakota	3,100	3,200	3%
Kentucky	2,250	2,150	-4%	Tennessee	1,815	1,800	-1%
Louisiana	380	360	-5%	Texas	4,830	4,300	-11%
Maine	140	130	-7%	Utah	700	675	-4%
Maryland	215	200	-7%	Vermont	190	175	-8%
Massachusetts	92	90	-2%	Virginia	1,215	1,280	5%
Michigan	870	880	1%	Washington	840	860	2%
Minnesota	1,520	1,600	5%	West Virginia	587	590	1%
Mississippi	640	630	-2%	Wisconsin	1,330	1,300	-2%
Missouri	2,830	2,800	-1%	Wyoming	1,020	1,000	-2%
Montana	2,650	2,600	-2%				
Nebraska	2,450	2,500	2%	United States	53,461	52,811	-1%

*Preliminary estimate based on farmer survey
Source: USDA National Ag Statistics Service Prospective Plantings reports

Compared with more recent peak years, U.S. acreage harvested for hay is expected to be down nearly 3.5 million acres from 2012, and about 5 million acres less than in 2013.

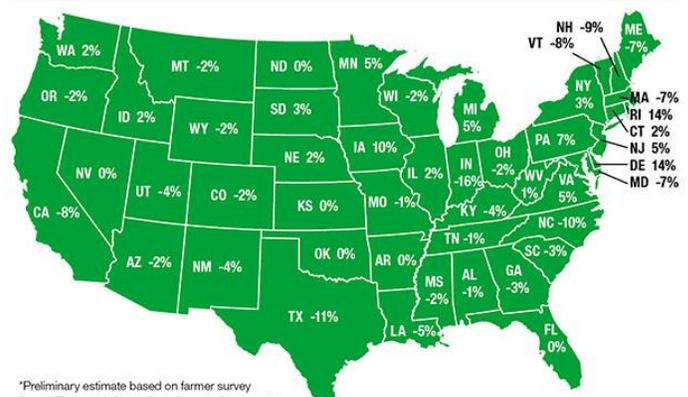
Compared with five years ago, acreage harvested for hay was estimated down 860,000 acres in Missouri, 800,000 acres in Texas and 450,000 acres in California, but up 400,000 acres in Montana and 310,000 acres in North Dakota.

Compared with the previous peak in 2013, Missouri acreage will be down about 1.2 million acres, with Texas down 1.3 million acres.

USDA provided an early indication U.S. hay acreage was headed lower last winter, when it released estimates of acreage devoted to new alfalfa and alfalfa mixture hay seedings in 2016. At 2.268 million acres, the total was down about 11 percent from 2015 and the lowest acreage devoted to new seeding dating back to at least 1997.

Dave Natzke, Editor, Progressive Forage

FIGURE 1 All hay acreage prospective plantings: Percent change over previous year



*Preliminary estimate based on farmer survey
Source: USDA National Ag Statistics Service Prospective Plantings reports



**Pennsylvania
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Upcoming Events in your Area!

- **Penn State's Diagnostic Clinic**
Rock Springs, PA
July 19 & 20, 2017
- **Penn State's Ag Progress Days**
Rock Springs, PA
August 15-17, 2017

Check out our new website!

Visit <http://www.afgc.org/pennsylvania.php> to stay up-to-date with PFGC events and news!

"Like" PFGC on Facebook!

Like Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council to keep up with updates and important links! Don't forget to click the thumbs up button before you leave the page!



**Don't forget to visit us at the Pennsylvania Hay Show at Ag Progress Days!
August 15-17, 2017**

PFGC Officers and Board

The following is a list of the current officers and Board of Directors of the PFGC. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions on how the PFGC could serve you better, please contact one of these people.

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Vice President	Andrew Frankenfield	(610) 489-4315
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