

REPORT



FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

Alfalfa Harvest This Fall? Maybe.

According to the University of Minnesota, where you have 12 inches or more of alfalfa growth in October of a modern, winter hardy, multi-disease resistant alfalfa variety on a good alfalfa soil with adequate potassium; consider harvesting at least your older alfalfa stands to provide more high quality forage for this winter. Alfalfa stands typically begin to lose yield potential after their third year anyway, so where high quality forage is a priority, concerns about damaging stands more than 3 years old should generally not weigh heavily in the decision of whether or not to cut in the fall.

A potentially high risk factor in the fall (maybe not this fall) is soil moisture.

Fields that are very wet going into the winter have a higher risk of winter injury if a fall cutting is taken. If you're conservative and/or in an area where snow tends to blow off fields with short stubble, you may wish to leave strips of uncut alfalfa to help catch snow.

It's still preferable to avoid cutting in the "heart" of the fall critical period (i.e. mid-late September). Better to target mid October, near the time when a killing frost is likely and thus continued growth unlikely.



Apply N This Fall? Maybe.

George Rehm, University of Minnesota says that it is very important that the risk of N loss be kept to a minimum if crop production is to be profitable. The delayed application of anhydrous ammonia is one way to minimize the risk of N loss. Growers on lighter soils in our area are advised to not fall apply nitrogen because the risk of loss is very great.

Considering corn yields, 14 years of research from the Southern Research and Outreach Center at Waseca show that average yields from spring applied anhydrous and fall applied anhydrous with N-Serve were equal. The yield of fall applied N without N-Serve was lower in 6 of the 14 years. Therefore, there is no guarantee that use of N-Serve with anhydrous in the fall will increase yields. The use of N-Serve must be viewed as an insurance policy - not a guarantee.

mean that anhydrous can be applied at soil temperatures higher than 50°F. There is no research that suggests N-Serve use allows application at warmer soil temperatures.

Thinking back to the fall of 2000, it was warm and very dry. Growers were advised to wait until soil temperatures dropped. Many growers did wait and that was a good decision. Soil samples were collected in mid-June of 2001 following excessive rainfall. In those fields where N application was delayed, the amount of N measured to a depth of 2 feet was 80% to 100% of the amount of N applied in the fall.

It's difficult but important to wait until that soil temperature reaches 50°F. In the southern two tiers of counties, wait until after October 25th.

It is also important to understand that the choice to use N-Serve does not

Man, That Hurts!

According to the University of Minnesota, it takes about .02 gallons of LP gas per bushel per percentage point of moisture removed. So, drying corn at 25% moisture down to 14% will take .22 gallons of LP per bushel ($25-14=11$ points $\times .02 = .22$). At \$.85 per gallon of LP, that cost is about \$.187 per bushel ($.22 \times .85$). On a 150 bushel per acre crop, you will need about 33 gallons of LP per acre (150 bushels $\times .22$ gallons/bushel). Your LP cost per acre will be \$28 per acre. Okay, we'll just wait a few more days to let it dry in the field.

How about just bringing it in and blowing some air on it? Good idea. What do those fans cost to run? Electricity is cheap, right? On a per bushel basis, this is true. You can estimate fan electricity cost using either or both of the following methods.

1. Fan horsepower times the hours of operation times the cost of electricity in \$/kWh. For example: a 7 ½ horsepower motor operating for one hour times the cost of electricity at 7 ½ cents per kWh = $7.5 \text{ hp} \times 1 \text{ hour} \times 7.5 \text{ cents per kWh} = \$.5625$ per hour of operation.
2. If you can read the plate on the fan motor: (Voltage x Amps /1000) x the cost of electricity per kWh. For example: A 7 ½ horsepower motor uses 230 volt current and draws 37 amps. $230 \text{ volts} \times 37 \text{ amps} = 8,510 \text{ watts}$ or 8.51 kilowatts in an hour. $8.51 \times 7.5 \text{ cents per kilowatt hour} = \$.638$ per hour of operation.

You see that we get slightly different answers for the same fan, but the answers are fairly close. These examples are estimates based on real bin fans. The actual use of electricity will vary based on the efficiency of the motors and how hard they are working.

Natural air drying is expected to take up to 6 weeks depending on the weather and initial crop moisture.

For lots more information about fans and drying, contact your dealer or go on the web at:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/>



Photo courtesy of Photodisc™

How Much Did You Chop?

The University of Wisconsin did some studies on how much hay, grass or corn silage fits into a chopper box. We can use these numbers as estimates. Their research has shown that these numbers can be off by a third.

Crop	Cutting	Forage Density lbs. DM/ft3	Dry matter %age
Alfalfa Hay	1 st	5.7	45.6
	2 nd	5.0	47.0
	3 rd	5.1	51.7
	4 th	5.0	56.7
All Grasses		4.6	43.5
Corn Silage		5.0	34.0

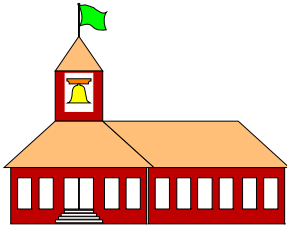
1. To use this table, first figure out the cubic feet in your chopper box. That is the depth of the chopped material times the length times the width. So, if the silage is 6 feet deep, 8 feet wide, and 12 feet long, ($6 \times 8 \times 12$) then the volume in cubic feet is 576.
2. Corn silage dry matter in the wagon would then be $5 \times 576 = 2880$ pounds.
3. Divide the dry matter in step 2 above by the dry matter %age shown in the table. $2880 \text{ lbs.} / .34 = 8470$ pounds of wet corn silage in the wagon.

Your wagon holds just over 4.2 tons of corn silage. This is just a guess. Moisture content makes it vary a lot. This is another measure we can use as a check against silo measurements, bag measurements, feed consumption, etc.

Farm Visit Schedule

I am contacting each of you by phone or e-mail to get back on track with a farm visit schedule. It has been an incredibly busy summer for everyone.

We would like to record crop acres and forage yields to date, as well as work on those fertilizer, chemical and seed costs. We need to take a few minutes for re-enrollment. Financial aid should be almost completed by now. Of course, whatever issues you have will be discussed at this time, too.



Wells Fargo Marketing

Wells Fargo invites producers to a Marketing/Financial Management educational seminar in Dodge Center from 2 – 4 on Thursday, September 11. I won't have the details until after Labor Day. Give me a call if you are interested.

New Students This Fall? Sure.

Do you know friends or neighbors who may be interested in our farm management education program? Let me know and I can send them some literature and give them a call

2003 Iowa Custom Rate Survey

See <http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Publications/FM1698.pdf>

(Clip & Save)

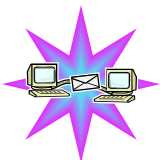
Wayne's Contact Information



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