

The Saskatchewan Hay Report

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Sask. Forage Council

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Saskatchewan Haying Progress

(For the week ending July 8, 2002)

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Crop Reports No. 13 and No. 14.

Haying operations are now in full swing with 4 - 8 percent of the 2002 hay crop baled or silaged depending on region. Quality is expected to be fair to good in most areas. Yields are expected to be average or above average in the south and significantly below average in central and northern areas. In general, timing of first cut haying operations are slightly behind normal due to the generally cold, dry weather earlier in the spring.

In southern crop districts (CD 1-4), 4 % of the first cut hay crop is baled or silaged, with a further 17% cut. Quality is expected to be fair to good. Some of the cut hay has been rained on affecting quality in southeastern areas while wind and

rainstorms have affected some crops in southwestern areas.

In central crop districts (CD 5-7), moisture conditions have not improved enough to ensure an adequate hay crop for 2002. Some hayfields will not be cut this year. Only east central areas report mainly fair to good topsoil moisture conditions. Across the central areas, 4 % of the hay has been baled or silaged, and a further 16% has been cut. Only a few areas expect to harvest a second cut.

In northern districts (CD 8-9), the first-cut hay crop is 8 % baled or silaged, with an expected quality of fair to good. Quality is deteriorating, however, due to drought and heat stress. Some producers were finding it difficult to retain leaves during haying operations because of the dryness and heat. Haying operations are furthest advanced in CD 8a; yields will be extremely low in most areas.

Table 1 – Provincial Hay Summary (First Cut)

	1st		Cut %		Quality **				
	Uncut	Cut	Baled/Silaged	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor	NR	
South	79	17	4	11.8 (11) *	50.5 (47)	7.5 (7)	4.3 (5)	25.8 (24)	
Central	80	16	4	2.2 (2)	21.7 (20)	25.0 (23)	9.8 (9)	41.3 (38)	
North	80	12	8	6.8 (3)	20.5 (9)	25.0 (11)	18.2 (8)	29.5 (13)	
Prov.	80	15	5	7.0 (16)	33.2 (76)	17.9 (41)	9.2 (21)	32.8 (75)	

* number of producers reporting **quality statistics are for the week ending June 30, 2002

Table 2 – Provincial Hay Yield – Dryland Production (t/ac) *

	Alfalfa	Br/Alf	Clover	Other Tame	Wild	Greenfeed
South	1.12 (0.93)	1.13 (0.93)	1.37 (1.19)	0.94 (0.66)	0.96 (0.70)	1.28 (1.22)
Central	0.78 (0.80)	0.74 (0.70)	0.79 (0.99)	0.66 (0.64)	0.58 (0.76)	1.13 (1.16)
North	0.56 (0.59)	0.53 (0.57)	0.61 (0.76)	0.42 (0.58)	0.45 (0.86)	0.62 (0.86)
Prov.	0.82 (0.77)	0.80 (0.76)	0.90 (0.97)	0.67 (0.63)	0.67 (0.70)	1.12 (1.08)

* Yield statistics are from the week ending June 23, 2002. Last year's yields in parentheses.

Limited Moisture Impacts Forage Production

*Janice Bruynooghe
Saskatchewan Forage Council, Saskatoon*

Across a large part of Saskatchewan, the 2002 growing season has meant little to no moisture in combination with little snowfall last winter. These results mean significantly reduced forage production, particularly in northern parkland areas. The northeast, in particular, has traditionally produced surplus hay and other forage crops for export to other areas or countries. This area will have a shortage of hay in 2002.

In those areas that have received rainfall, the moisture, in many cases, came too late for most pastures and hay fields to recover from previous years' extremely dry conditions. The effect has been and will continue to be disastrous. Rain fell in some areas during the second to third weeks of June but for many forage species this moisture fell too late to improve production significantly.

As a result, hay production across Saskatchewan will likely again be lower than average with many producers not cutting some fields at all. Pastures are attempting to recover from several years of dry conditions and with limited moisture for another year, producers are planning for shorter grazing seasons and another fall and winter of purchasing a large proportion of their winter feed supply. In some areas, such as the northwest and west-central, cow/calf producers continue to sell pairs to reduce the demand upon their extremely limited resources. Fortunately, some southern regions of the province have received adequate rainfall and forage supplies in these areas will be much improved from

previous years. The hay trucks will again be moving feed this winter, however the direction may be a bit different from that seen in years past.

2002 Hay Prices

*Phil Curry, Saskatchewan Forage Council,
Melfort*

A combination of reduced yields in the first hay cuts throughout central and northern areas of Saskatchewan and strong demand from local, Alberta and Montana livestock producers have put upward pressure on hay prices. In addition, parched pastures throughout the western half of the U.S., southern areas of the Southeast and up the Eastern Seaboard are forcing cattle producers and horse owners to access feed from further afield or sell or move animals. Furthermore, there are no hay reserves from previous years left in Saskatchewan. This has resulted in tight hay supplies for most producers who have to meet contract requirements or supply their own feed needs.

It is difficult to determine the price for most hay at this time, particularly for local markets. The asking price for brome/alfalfa hay in the northeast is currently as high as \$70 - \$80/round bale (approximately \$100/ton), with slough hay at \$30/bale. Even small squares bales are being listed at \$5/bale. Many cattle producers are hesitant to pay the current asking price for hay, choosing to wait to assess the availability of greenfeed and straw. The problem is that in many northern and central areas, cereal crops will be too short to be harvested as greenfeed and straw will be non-existent. Grain producers in areas where there has been a little more moisture and the plants have some height and have tillered out should consider marketing their crop as greenfeed instead of grain. In many

instances, grain yields will be substantially reduced due to heat and drought.

Dairy quality feed will be the highest this year and dairies will be the most active in the market. At a recent hay auction in Ponoka, Alberta, first cut alfalfa sold for \$170/round bale, presumably to a dairy operation.

Prices for hay at the July 10, 2002 hay auction at *Vold, Jones & Vold Auction Co. Ltd.* (Ponoka, AB) are as follows:

- Grass/alfalfa or alfalfa hay
 - rounds (1100-1300 lbs) \$93 - \$106/bale
 - squares (50 - 60 lbs) \$4.60 - \$7.00/bale

Annual Forages a Viable Option Under Drought Conditions

Michel Tremblay, Provincial Forage Specialist, SAFRR, Regina

The recent dry conditions has caused a serious reduction of available pasture and stored feed available to Saskatchewan livestock producers. During times of

Prices for hay F.O.B. plant from *Elcan Forage Inc.* (Broderick, SK) are as follows:

- Alfalfa (good quality)
 - \$120/Tonne
- Timothy (good quality)
 - \$195 - \$200/Tonne *
- Timothy (lower quality)
 - \$150 - \$160/Tonne

* *Timothy production has not started yet.*

SAF Feed and Forage Listing Service:
www.agr.gov.sk.ca/feedforage/

AAFRD Ropin the Web on the General Store Site:

www.agric.gov.ab.ca/store/haylist.html

protracted drought, annual species can become a major contributor to total forage requirements. Annuals are popular for silage, greenfeed, grazing and swath grazing in Saskatchewan.

Many annual crops can be grown as a forage crop, but oats, barley and triticale are the most popular.

Dry matter yield of annual crops as greenfeed, Black Soil Zone

Crop	Yield (kg/ha)
barley	5000-7500
fababeans	2500-4500
Italian ryegrass	4600-4900
oats	5600-9800
peas	5600
Proso millet	3100-5600
canola	1300-4200
Sorgum-sudangrass	3200-5300
spring rye	5900-6100
sunflowers	1200-2900
triticale	5600
wheat	2600-6800

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Data, Melfort

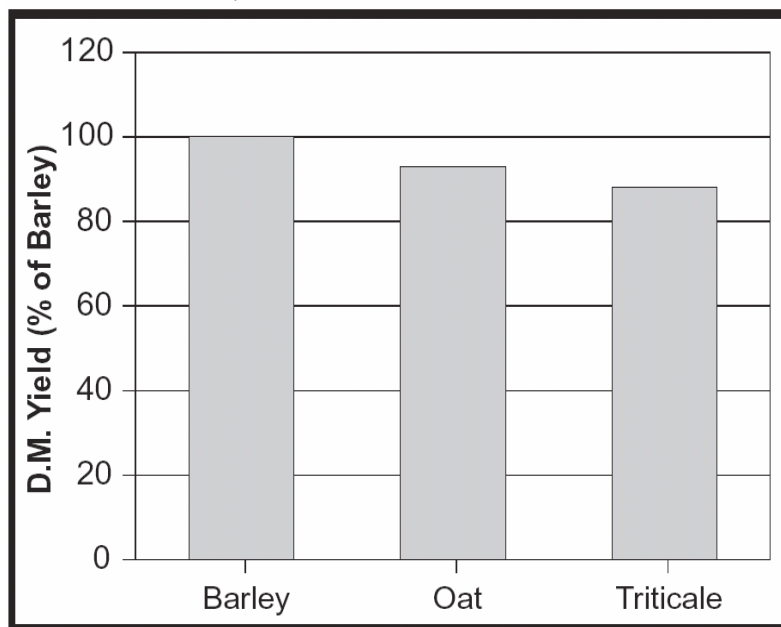
Annual crops can accumulate nitrates when growth is interrupted by environment stress, such as drought. Nitrates are toxic to livestock if they are present at 0.5% or greater. In 2001 many greenfeed crops had high nitrates, and even some cereal straw tested high in nitrates. Excessive nitrogen applications, seeding on summerfallow or seeding on pulse crop stubble will provide ample nitrogen to a growing greenfeed crop, but will increase the risk of nitrate accumulation if the crop becomes stressed.

Yield potential on greenfeed crops vary, and as with any other crop, yield is difficult to predict with certainty. This is particularly true with the variable moisture and heat conditions throughout Saskatchewan in

2002. Generally annual cereals grown for greenfeed have a grain to straw ratio of 1:1 to 1:3. Therefore, a 20 bushel wheat crop would produce from 1-3 tons of dry matter per acre.

There are many varieties of annual crops in the market. Generally speaking, the taller cultivars have higher greenfeed yields. When using barley as a greenfeed, a smooth-awned variety should be used. If an annual species is seeded late to address a looming feed shortage, select a disease resistant cultivar (particularly oats) to maintain forage quality. Greenfeed should be cut at the soft dough stage to maximize the yield of nutrients and dry matter.

Dry matter yields of annual cereals grown for forage expressed as a percent of barley yield - average of 15 site years of data from North West Saskatchewan, 1992-96



Protein, total digestible nutrients (TDN), and fiber (acid detergent fiber, neutral detergent fiber) content of cereal greenfeed

Crop	Protein (%)	TDN	ADF	NDF
barley	11.2	58.4	37.3	58.1
oats	10.8	57.0	37.6	60.9
rye	8.7	53.8	42.3	66.3
wheat	10.6	55.7	37.6	63.1

The Saskatchewan Hay Report is published monthly from July-October by the Saskatchewan Forage Council. Comments and suggestions are appreciated. If you wish to be placed on an electronic mailing list or have articles and suggestions for upcoming issues, please send them to the editor:

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