

The Saskatchewan Hay Report

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Saskatchewan Forage Council

August 2003

Saskatchewan Haying Progress

*SAFRR Crop Report No. 18
(for the week of August 3, 2003)*

The warm weather has allowed for continued haying progress. Ninety-five per cent of the first-cut and five per cent of the second-cut hay crop has been baled or put into silage.

South East – The southeastern region was generally hot and dry with some wind and thundershowers during the past week. First-cut haying operations are winding up in the southeast with 95% baled or silaged and 4% lying in the swath. Quality is generally expected to be good. Second-cut haying has begun in some areas with 2% baled or put into silage. Many producers do not expect a second cut in their area.

South West – The past week continued hot and dry with some wind in the southwest. First-cut haying operations are wrapping up in the southwest with 98% of the first-cut hay either baled or put into silage and a further 2% lying in the swath. Three per cent of the second-cut hay crop is cut, but many producers do not expect to see a second cut. Quality is expected to be good.

East Central – The east central region was mainly hot, dry and windy during the past week with a few scattered thunderstorms. First-cut haying operations are winding down, with 94% baled or silaged and a further 4% lying in the swath. Quality is expected to be generally good. There will be little or no second-cut haying operations in the east central area this year.

West Central – The west central region was again generally hot, dry and windy this past week. Cutting and baling the 2003 first-cut hay crop is nearing completion with 98% baled or silaged and a further 1% lying in the swath. One per cent of the second-cut crop has been baled but there will be little or no second-cuts taken in the area. Quality is generally expected to be good.

North Eastern – The northeastern region had a hot week with minimal rainfall. Haying operations are nearing completion with 97% of the 2003 crop baled or silaged and a further 2% lying in the swath. Eight per cent of the second-cut crop has been baled or put into silage. This area has the highest amount of second-cut haying in the province, but poor re-growth will not allow a second-cut for many producers this year. Quality is generally expected to be good.

North Western – The northwestern region was generally hot and dry with some wind during the past week. Haying operations are well underway in the northwest with 91% of the crop baled or silaged and a further 5% lying in the swath. Seventeen per cent of the second-cut hay crop has been baled or put into silage, although there will not be much re-growth to allow a second-cut. Some canola and barley crops are being cut for forage in the Meadow Lake area. Quality is expected to be good.



Table 1 – Provincial Hay Summary (First Cut)

	1st Cut %		Baled/Silaged	Quality **				
	Uncut	Cut		Excel	Good	Fair	Poor	NR
South	-	2-4	95-98	15.1 (14) *	74.2 (69)	8.6 (8)	0.0 (0)	2.2 (2)
Central	-	1-4	94-98	4.7 (4)	74.4 (64)	16.3 (14)	1.2 (1)	3.5 (3)
North	-	2-5	91-97	1.9 (1)	53.8 (28)	34.6 (18)	3.8 (2)	5.8 (3)
Prov.	-	-	95	8.2 (19)	69.7 (161)	17.3 (40)	1.3 (3)	3.5 (8)

* number of producers reporting **quality statistics are for the week ending July 20, 2003

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

	Alfalfa	Br/Alf	Clover	Other Tame	Wild	Greenfeed
South	1.22 (1.12)	1.22 (1.13)	1.33 (1.37)	1.04 (0.94)	0.81 (0.96)	1.52 (1.28)
Central	1.09 (0.78)	1.15 (0.74)	1.08 (0.79)	0.96 (0.66)	0.88 (0.58)	1.89 (1.13)
North	0.77 (0.56)	0.79 (0.53)	0.75 (0.61)	0.68 (0.42)	0.66 (0.45)	1.19 (0.62)
Prov.	1.03 (0.82)	1.05 (0.76)	1.06 (0.90)	0.89 (0.67)	0.79 (0.67)	1.53 (1.12)

* Yield statistics are from the week ending July 20, 2003. Last year's yields in parentheses.

Saskatchewan Hay Markets (August 1, 2003)

Phil Curry, Saskatchewan Forage Council

The hot, dry weather of recent weeks and the closed U.S. border to Canadian beef has left many producers scrambling to secure hay supplies to feed their cattle once they come off summer pastures. With the exception of irrigated land, there will be no appreciable second cut hay anywhere in the province and supplies are becoming short in many areas. As a result, there is very little hay moving to other provinces or the U.S. Trucking companies report that most hay is just moving short distances (i.e. less than 100 miles or 160 km).

Hay prices have strengthened somewhat but are still at average levels, and well below last year's record high levels. In the **northeast**, for example, several large cattle producers were paying 1.5 ¢ /lb. for

grass/alfalfa hay; that price has since increased to 3.0 ¢ /lb. July hay tenders for Ducks Unlimited Canada conservation lands were average in the northeast with standing hay prices ranging from \$5/ac. for poor quality native grass or "go-back" hay yielding 0.5 ton/ac. to \$35/ac. for 1st cut alfalfa yielding 1.5 tons/ac. Other regions report prices as follows: **southeast** – 2.5 – 3.0 ¢ /lb. for grass/alfalfa and straight alfalfa and **southwest** – 2.5 – 3.3 ¢ /lb. for first cut alfalfa hay.

Prices for hay at the July 30, 2003 hay auction at *Vold, Jones & Vold Auction Co. Ltd.* (Ponoka, AB) are as follows:

- Grass/alfalfa or alfalfa hay (good quality)
- rounds (1200 lbs) – no sales reported
- small squares (50 - 60 lbs) - \$1.90 – \$5.10/bale (depending on size and quality)
- med-large squares – no sales reported

Prices for the July 31, 2003 hay auction at *Saskatoon Auction Mart Ltd.* are as follows:

- Grass/alfalfa or alfalfa hay (poor to good quality)
- rounds (1500 lbs) - \$45 (poor) - \$65/bale
- small squares - \$1.70/bale (poor) \$2.50-\$4.50/bale (good quality new hay)

August prices for hay F.O.B. plant from *Elcan Forage Inc.* (Broderick, SK):

- Alfalfa (good quality) - \$60-65/Tonne
- Alfalfa (dairy quality) - \$70/Tonne
- Timothy (premium quality)- \$180/Tonne

August prices for hay F.O.B. plant from *Tisdale Alfalfa Dehydrators* (Tisdale, SK)

- Alfalfa (average quality)- \$65-\$70/Tonne
- Alfalfa (good quality) - \$70-\$80/Tonne

American Hay Prices

Montana (1 August 2003)

Alfalfa – Large Round/Square – Good quality - \$75-80 US

Alfalfa/Grass – Large Round/Square – Good quality - \$45-60 US

Alfalfa/Grass – Small Square – Good quality - \$70 US

Timothy – Small Square – Premium quality - \$150 US

Grass – Small Square – Premium quality - \$120 US

Grass – Large Round/Square – Good quality - \$55 US

Wyoming (31 July 2003)

Alfalfa – Small to Large Square – Supreme quality - \$95 US, Premium quality – \$80-85 US, Good quality - \$60-70 US, Fair quality - \$55 US

Timothy – Small to Large Square - \$125 US

Alfalfa/Grass – Small to Large Square – Premium quality - \$80

Mixed Grass – Small to Large Square - Good quality - \$60

South Dakota (1 August 2003)

Alfalfa – Large Square – Premium quality - \$75-80 US, Good quality - \$50-65 US

Alfalfa – Large Round – Good quality - \$40-60 US, Fair quality – \$35-40 US

Minnesota (31 July 2003)

Alfalfa – Small Square – Fair quality - \$52.50-72.50 US

Alfalfa – Large Round – Good quality - \$60-67.50 US, Fair quality - \$40-60 US

Alfalfa/Grass – Small Square – Fair quality - \$55-70 US

Alfalfa/Grass – Large Round – Fair quality - \$50 US

Manitoba Forage Council Report

Roberta Currah, Manitoba Forage Council

"Our first cut was average with some areas below average due to dry conditions," reports Roberta Currah, executive director, Manitoba Forage Council. "Quality is really dependent on the age of the stand. Because of our winter we did get some winterkill. We are expecting a fairly good demand for hay this year. We are just starting into the second cutting in some areas while producers are wrapping up the first cutting in others.

"Certain areas of Manitoba are dry. Recent thunderstorms have brought some tornado touchdowns throughout the south central and southeastern part of the province."

Currah notes one hot topic among hay producers in her area is the fallout from the discovery of BSE in a Canadian cow. Producers are wondering about the impact this may have on winter feed supplies. "If cattle aren't able to move because of the closed border between the U.S. and Canada,

they are going to require a lot of feed. This could affect the export market to a certain extent," she says.

The Manitoba Forage Council Inc. is a non-profit umbrella organization comprised of producers, organizations, associations, corporations, industries and government agencies working together to represent the view of forage producers and allied trades, Currah says.

Each August a list of producers offering hay for export is compiled. Currah also says the council has a booth at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, WI, where people can learn more about the hay and forage industry in Manitoba. Visit the Manitoba Forage Council web site at www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca or email mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca.

Making The Most Out Of Your Forage Seed Crop

Garth Lyons, SW Newfield Seeds, Nipawin

Every year, Western Canadian beef cattle producers spend the summer stockpiling winter feed for their livestock. Due to our long and harsh winters, the stockpile can be quite large and expensive. However, there are also many innovative ways of procuring and utilizing "cheap" feed that have been developed out of necessity by producers. The following is based on my own experience utilizing forage seed crop residue.

Forage seed crop residue can take the form of aftermath (hay or straw from harvested crop), chaff (light seed, leaf material, flower parts), or stubble and re-growth of the crop

Market Prices - Prices are largely dependent on quality. The dairy prices fluctuate between \$90-135/ton USD with the average holding at \$100-115. Most producers are seeing a decrease in price from last year as well as the American willingness to pay for good hay has also decreased. Beef hay on average will bring \$70-90/ton.

Here are some websites that could be useful as a marketing tool.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/LSMNpubs/HayW.htm> USDA Hay Prices

<http://www.haybarn.com/search/query.asp>
The Hay Barn

<http://www.hayandforage.com> Hay and Forage Grower Website

after seed harvest. Depending on the species grown, one or all of the residues mentioned can be utilized. Before considering feeding crop residue, research the species that you plan on using so there are no surprises (endophytes in turf grass species, coumarin levels in sweet clover, alkaloids in reed canary grass, feed value at various stages, re-growth ability, pre-harvest chemicals, etc.). Some species may be much more suitable or economical depending on your situation.

Never plan on feeding strictly residue. The feed value can vary greatly depending upon species, harvesting technique, and weathering. But generally residues are lower quality, crude protein of 4-8%. On my farm, I have grown meadow brome, intermediate wheatgrass, creeping red

fescue, reed canary grass, timothy, and alsike clover for seed. The crop residue of all mentioned crops have been used to some extent.

Meadow brome was the best crop, from the cow's viewpoint. The aftermath from the seed crop usually amounted to 2 round bales per acre. The feed was highly palatable, even if it was weathered, and the protein levels rivaled that of our hay. About a month after seed harvest, the cows were released onto the field to graze the re-growth. Depending upon fall moisture, this could amount to a very substantial amount of grazing. Creeping red fescue can be managed quite similarly, although the feed value of the aftermath is substantially less. But the re-growth is just as good, and the heavy grazing stimulates seed production the following year. With intermediate wheatgrass, there is a tremendous amount of aftermath. My highest yield was close to 4 bales per acre. The feed can be coarse and somewhat unpalatable, but the cattle will eat the majority if fed straight. Tub grinding and mixing with high quality hay works

very well. As for re-growth, there is little to none.

My only experience with collecting chaff from forages is with alsike clover. By using the chaff collector, I was able to catch all the leaf material, flower parts, and light seed while the coarse stems were chopped and spread over the field. The cattle really went for the small material and would clean it up provided they didn't get too much at a time. Forage seed and livestock production fit together quite well, but only if you have a predetermined market for your forage seed and certain management precautions are taken. Quality test the residue to determine how much you may have to supplement or "mix off" the feed. There is a big difference between intermediate wheatgrass straw and meadow brome. Also, livestock are notorious for spreading weeds. Do not feed intermediate wheatgrass aftermath while the cattle have access to your meadow brome seed field. With a little planning and some common sense, forage seed crop residues can provide a substantial amount of your livestock feed at minimal additional cost.

West Nile Virus Precautions When Haying

*Phil Curry, West Nile Virus Coordinator,
Saskatchewan Health*

Late July and August is the period when the risk to human health from West Nile virus (WNV) increases. This is due to several factors: 1) the virus is cycling to high levels in birds and mosquitoes that primarily bite birds, 2) the numbers of the types of mosquitoes that can transmit WNV from birds to humans or horses, especially *Culex*

tarsalis, are increasing and 3) the weather and particularly the evenings are relatively warm. Higher temperatures hasten mosquito development and increase the likelihood of disease transmission. In 2003, all agricultural areas of the province are considered to be at some level of risk for WNV disease transmission to humans.

Hay producers are at an increased level of risk at this time of year. Typically, they are haying fields and ditches in or near mosquito breeding habitats, and are often working long days. Mosquitoes are most

active an hour before and after sunset and sunrise and seek out alfalfa fields during the day, to escape the hot daytime temperatures and low humidity. In addition, most tractors, swathers or mower conditioners used for haying do not have enclosed or air-conditioned cabs, which further increases the risk to the operator.

There are precautions that producers can take to reduce their exposure to mosquitoes and WNV. Wear light coloured, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when operating haying equipment. If you are haying in areas of high mosquito activity, use insect repellents containing DEET, p-menthane 8-diol, or soybean oil derivatives, especially in

the evening or early morning. Apply repellents to all exposed skin, paying special attention to the back of the neck and hands, or the back-side of your fore-arms if you are wearing a short-sleeved shirt. Spray insect repellents on your shirts, especially the back. Note that repellents containing DEET, will react with polyester clothing, so wear cotton shirts. After coming inside for the day, wash thoroughly to remove any repellents.

For further information on WNV in Saskatchewan or other provinces please go to the Saskatchewan Health and Health Canada websites at: www.health.gov.sk.ca or www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Does Your Hay Contain Noxious Weeds?

Garry Bowes, SAFRR

Noxious Weed Program

The lack of moisture during 2002 throughout many areas of Saskatchewan necessitated the purchasing of hay. During the winter of 2002-2003, there was an extraordinary amount of hay transported over many miles of roads in the province. There is a concern that some bales of hay may have contained noxious weeds such as leafy spurge. During transport, seed can fall from bales onto road rights-of-ways, germinate and start a new weed infestation. This scenario can only happen when mature noxious weed seed is present in transported hay and straw.

Everyone should be on the lookout for small patches of noxious weeds like leafy spurge that suddenly appear along road and highway rights-of-ways. This noxious weed is a perennial plant which has a deep, spreading root system. The flower has

distinctive greenish-yellow bracts which can be easily spotted from a traveling motor vehicle. If all parts of the plant contain white, sticky latex, then the plant is most likely leafy spurge. For identification, consult the book, *Weeds of the Prairies*, which has excellent photographs. For positive identification, consult your local Extension Agrologist.

Other noxious weeds that are found in many isolated areas in the province and could move with hay include; field bindweed, knapweeds, scentless chamomile and yellow toadflax.

Report Noxious Weeds

When a noxious weed is found growing in hay fields, industrial sites, right-of-ways, yards or other sites, immediately report the weed and location where it is growing to the local Weed Inspector. In Saskatchewan, the authority to control noxious weeds is found in *The Noxious Weed Act*. In the province,

211 municipalities have appointed Weed Inspectors. Of these municipalities, 201 are rural municipalities. If a noxious weed is found in a small urban centre that has not appointed a Weed Inspectors then report it to the Weed Inspector in the surround rural municipality.

The smaller the area infested with leafy spurge, the better the chance for eradication. The alternative is long term control. This applied to all noxious weeds. The opportunity for eradication usually only exists when a weed like leafy spurge has grown in an area for a few years in a small area. Therefore, finding noxious weeds growing in small areas is of the utmost importance.

When a small patch of leafy spurge is found a Weed Inspector will either treat it with a herbicide or have it controlled by the owner-occupant of the land. This applies to agricultural and industrial land. Industrial land, which is also called non-cropland includes; road, hydro, pipeline and railway rights-of-ways, and airports, military bases and wastelands. In Saskatchewan, 2,4-D, Vanquish (dicamba) and Tordon 22K are herbicides that are registered for industrial sites such as road rights-of-way. In some areas the weed can be controlled by repeated

mowing. Herbicides are preferred because repeated treatment will kill the weed and may eventually eradicate it. The objective of the herbicide treatment is to never let the weed set viable seed.

In the past, following a herbicide treatment, a weed is killed and no longer visible. It has always been difficult to mark these locations for future monitoring. Now these sites can be marked with a Global Position System (GPS) navigation receiver. In the future, these sites are easy and quick to find. Accuracy is within 2 to 3 m.

Dr. Garry Bowes is the Coordinator of the Noxious Weed Program (p 306.933.7695, f 306.933.7352, gbowes@agr.gov.sk.ca). Financial support for The Noxious Weed Program has been provided by the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund in Saskatchewan (CARDS) and Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) to Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) in collaboration with Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization (SAFRR). Funding for the CARDS Program is provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

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