



# Saskatchewan Hay & Pasture Report

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## Note from the Saskatchewan Forage Council

Greetings from the Saskatchewan Forage Council! Here's hoping all is well around the province as we head into fall. Just a reminder to get your entries in for the Hay Harvest Challenge! Find out more [here](#). This will be the final edition of the Report for 2016 and we will look forward to getting back in touch with you next spring for the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Report!

As always, we welcome your feedback and encourage anyone interested in being placed on our email distribution list to contact the SFC at [office@saskforage.ca](mailto:office@saskforage.ca). You may also want to visit our website [www.saskforage.ca](http://www.saskforage.ca) for regular news and information related to the forage industry.

## Saskatchewan Agriculture Crop Report

*(For September 20-26, 2016)*

Despite the weekend rain, producers were still able to make progress with harvest. Seventy per cent of the 2016 crop is now combined and 22 per cent is swathed or ready to straight-cut, according to Saskatchewan Agriculture's weekly Crop Report. The five-year (2011-2015) average for this time of year is 79 per cent combined.

Regionally, harvest is furthest advanced in the southwest, where producers have 79 per cent of the crop in the bin. Seventy-seven per cent of the crop is combined in the southeast, 61 per cent in the east-central region, 65 per cent in the west-central region and northeastern regions and 64 per cent in the northwest. Some producers in the southern regions have completed harvest.

Rain was general throughout the province, with areas in the west-central and northwestern regions receiving lesser amounts than other regions. Most areas reported receiving at least 25 mm of rain or more. The greatest amount of rainfall, 63 mm, was reported in the Moosomin area. The Carnduff area received 56 mm, Limerick 38 mm, Webb 30 mm, Foam Lake 51 mm, Bethune 42 mm, Nipawin 33 mm, Biggar 13 mm and Meadow Lake 9 mm.

Provincially, cropland topsoil moisture is rated as 17 per cent surplus, 81 per cent adequate and two per cent short. The recent rain has slowed harvest in some regions, as topsoil was only just starting to dry out enough to support equipment. Areas around Porcupine Plain, Tisdale and Arborfield are reporting that 49 per cent of cropland acres have surplus moisture at this time. Areas around Canora, Preeceville and Foam Lake are reporting that 36 per cent of cropland acres have surplus moisture at this

time. Hay land and pasture topsoil moisture is rated as seven per cent surplus, 87 per cent adequate and six per cent short.

Producers are busy harvesting, hauling bales and controlling weeds.

To view the full Crop Report online, [click here](#).

## From Old, Make New – Rejuvenating a Forage Stand

*By: Sarah Sommerfeld, PAg, Regional Forage Specialist, Outlook SK*

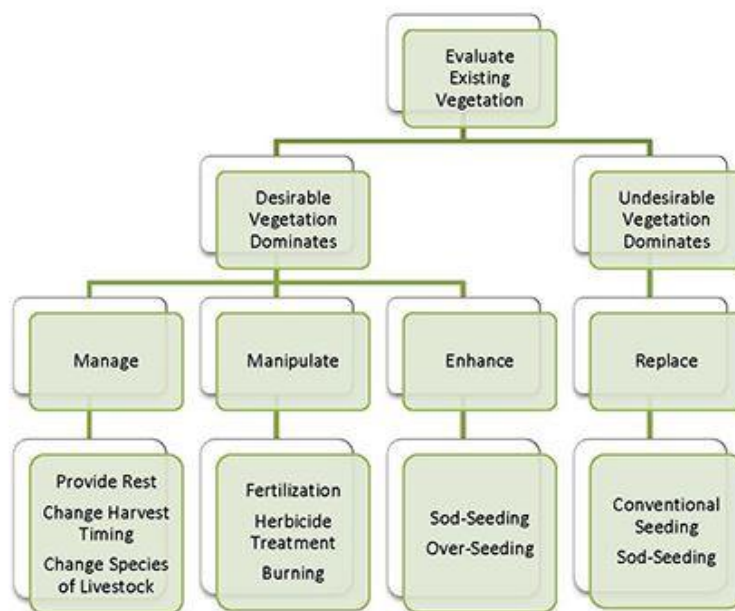
As a forage stand ages, the productivity and quality of that stand begins to decline. Some decline in productivity cannot be prevented, however good management cannot be overlooked. A decline in productivity may be noted as undesirable when plant species and weeds begin to dominate. Reduced forage production may also be attributed to poor stand management, nutrient export, soil limitations and unfavourable weather conditions. To improve the productivity of a stand, forage rejuvenation practices can be implemented.

Forage rejuvenation does not always require the stand to be terminated or aggressive tillage operations be used. Forage rejuvenation can be done through less aggressive field operations that manage, manipulate or enhance the existing vegetation.

A critical first step in the forage rejuvenation process is to identify the reason for the lost productivity. Realizing the difference between the actual problem and a symptom of the problem will help to address the type of rejuvenation that can be implemented. For example, invasion of undesirable plant species could be a symptom of poor grazing management or low soil fertility. When left unaddressed, the original cause of the reduction in productivity will undermine any rejuvenation practices.

An important thought to remember is that the success of any rejuvenation practice is very dependent on weather conditions and overall management practices. Each rejuvenation strategy has benefits as well as drawbacks. Each practice will involve economic considerations. Forage stands in fair condition may benefit from a less aggressive rejuvenation practice, and can return to good condition in one to three years. Forage stands in poor condition usually require a more expensive and aggressive rejuvenation practice, and often take a longer time to return to good condition.

The chart on the following page provides a simplified overview of available rejuvenation options and can be used as a first step in the decision making process.



To read this and related articles on the Saskatchewan Agriculture website, [click here](#).

## Using Fall Rye for Pasture Hay or Silage

*Interested in trying out some annual crops for forage but unsure where to start? Check out this Alberta Agriculture article on fall rye, prepared by Murray McLelland and revised in 2016 by Harry Brook of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry:*

Fall rye is a very versatile crop when it is used for forage. It can be used for pasture, hay or silage, but the majority of fall rye is seeded for summer, fall and spring grazing. It can be seeded throughout the spring or summer and utilized the year of seeding for pasture as well as the following year for pasture, silage or grain production, depending on grazing management.

Forage production of fall rye may not be as high as for some other cereals, but its ability to withstand grazing and the winter hardiness of the crop allow it to be used as a forage for more than one year in most areas of the province.

The current varieties of fall rye listed are all winter hardy and include Hazlet, Bono, Brasetto, Guttino and Prima. Hazlet and Prima are both open pollinated varieties and are best suited for grazing, while the others are hybrid varieties with higher yields best suited for grain production, primarily for milling or distilling.

Fall rye will produce best when grown on fertile, well drained soils of medium texture. However, when grown under less ideal conditions, such as soils with high acidity, low fertility or heavy and light textured soils, fall rye will generally outyield other commonly grown cereals.

When grown for pasture, fall rye should be seeded at 55 to 110 lb/acre (drier areas should use a lower seeding rate). The plant's ability to tiller profusely under good growing conditions makes this crop an effective pasture. It can be grazed once the roots are established and a good ground cover has developed through tillering. At this

time, the plants should be 6 inches high. Fall rye can grow substantially under cool temperatures and is suitable for fall and early spring grazing.

The nutrient level of fall rye for pasture is excellent. Protein levels will vary with the amount of soil nitrogen and growing conditions, but a dry matter protein content of 18 to 23 per cent can be expected. Fibre levels are generally 25 to 30 per cent. At Brooks, (irrigated) spring seeded fall rye had a higher protein content throughout the summer than oats, barley or utility wheat. Fall rye sampled the end of October still had a protein content of 22.4 per cent. The fact that fall rye can maintain quality late in the season makes it a good late season pasture.

To read the full article, [click here](#).

## Be on the lookout for downy brome in your fields

*By: Terry Kowalchuk, PAg, Provincial Forage Specialist, Saskatchewan Agriculture*

Downy brome is an invasive species that germinates at low temperatures (3.5 to 15 C). The plant's ability to begin growth early gives it a competitive advantage over other plants, especially in dry years. Early germination, a short life-cycle and a dense fibrous root system allow downy brome to make more efficient use of early-season water than perennial grasses. Even in dry years plants can thrive, head out and produce prolific amounts of seed. Once a seed bank has developed, seeds germinate continuously under moist conditions or go dormant during a drought, only to flourish again when moisture returns; this makes downy brome very difficult to eradicate. If not controlled, this rapidly spreading grass can quickly advance into native grass stands, choking out native species.

Downy brome is easiest to recognize when it has headed out because of its characteristic drooping tuft-like seed head with awns and its "downy" leaves. The seed heads are 5 to 20 cm long, rather dense, slender and drooping, and pale green with a purple tinge. It has up to eight nodding spikelets that are 2 to 4 cm long and have two to eight seeds each.

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There is no biological control for downy brome, so a combination of cultural and chemical control is required. Cultural control includes hand picking, mowing or grazing prior to seed set. Several chemicals can be used for controlling downy brome, but in most cases they must be used early in the spring when non-target species are dormant. Refer to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Guide to Crop Protection for a list of products and procedures.

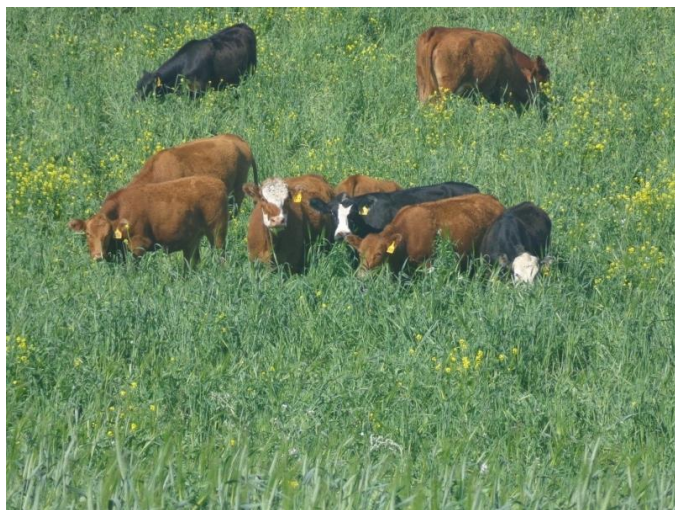
Although most surface seeds germinate soon after they are shed, buried seeds can remain viable for up to five years, so be prepared to monitor the site and deal with new outbreaks after you have initiated controls. With sustained effort, the seed bank can be exhausted and infestations can be eradicated, but early detection and action greatly increases chances of success.

If you suspect you have downy brome and would like an identification, contact your local Regional Forage or Regional Crops Specialist, or send a sample to the Crop Protection Lab for a fee for service identification. For more information about how to eradicate downy brome, contact the Provincial Ag Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 or [aginfo@gov.sk.ca](mailto:aginfo@gov.sk.ca).

## Cover Crops

*Note: The following section is adapted from excerpts from USDA NRCS publication “Conservation Practice Specification: Cover Crop - 340” and in accordance with the NRCS standard, as detailed in Section IV - Conservation Practices subfolder of the “North Dakota Field Office Technical Guide” (FOTG)*

Cover crops are crops that usually are not grown for harvest but serve multiple functions in crop rotation systems. Cover crops typically are grown to prevent soil erosion or for improvement of soil quality; however, other important roles include the enhancement of soil structure, improvement of soil fertility, and management of weeds, insect pests and plant pathogens. Cover crops also have been shown to be important forage for livestock.



*Image: Cattle grazing cover crop  
Image Credit: Derek Axten*

Producers often want to achieve more than one purpose with the cover crop practice. Selecting the best species or species mixture is important to achieve the intended purpose(s) or primary use. Generally, no single cover crop species is ideal for all purposes. Achieving multiple purposes usually requires some compromise in the selection of species or mixture of species to plant.

In most cases, cover crop mixtures provide more or greater functions than single-species plantings. For example, oats and peas planted together tend to yield more and provide additional soil quality benefits than when planted alone. Where soil compaction is a concern, research has indicated a yield increase in crops following a cover crop of forage radish and rye versus following either planted alone. Radish also is known to enhance nutrient cycling by scavenging

nitrogen that is lower in the soil profile, moving it closer to the rooting zone for the following crop.

No-till or direct-seeding of cover crops is recommended wherever possible. A firm, weed-free seedbed is desirable to ensure accurate seed placement and good seed-soil contact at the proper depth to facilitate germination and stand success. Cover crops have been grown successfully when seeded at the same time as the primary crop, interseeded or broadcast at some point after primary crop emergence and seeded after harvest of the primary crop. The most successful techniques in establishing cover crops is seeding post-harvest or seeded as the primary crop.

To read the full publication, [click here](#). Table 1: Cover Crop - Common Species and Properties is a useful guide to selecting cover crop species (on the final page of the publication).

## Greenfeed in a Ration

*Foragebeef.ca*

### Knowledge Nuggets

- Barley and oats are the most common cereals grown for greenfeed. Smooth awned barley makes better quality green feed than oats but yields less per acre. Wheat, triticale, corn stover, or peas can also be used in combination with other cereals for green feed production.
- Rough awned barley greenfeed can cause mouth infections. Watch for lumps on the jaw and consult your veterinarian for treatment.
- When cut in the soft dough stage or earlier, greenfeed tends to have good levels of crude protein and energy and satisfies the requirements of many rations.
- Winter tetany or milk fever problems are often associated with feeding grain, straw or greenfeed rations. Cereal forages are low in magnesium and calcium, and possibly high levels of potassium, impairing magnesium absorption causing tetany. Feeding annuals during the winter requires a very specific mineral package.
- Before feeding greenfeed, determine whether the feed is straw and grain or green forage. Mature crop baled for feed is very different in quality from true “greenfeed” which is cut in the early to soft dough stage.
- When dealing with forage quality, consider the digestible energy content, crude protein, and the potential dry matter intake. Feed testing tells a lot about the quality of the greenfeed and how to use it in a least cost manner.
- Exercise caution when feeding over ripe greenfeed bales (straw plus grain). There have been cases of grain overload (acidosis) and bloat when cows were able to pick out the heads of grain from those bales. Process them using either a bale shedder or tub grinder.

To read all the knowledge nuggets for Greenfeed, visit [foragebeef.ca](http://foragebeef.ca)

This article also includes a number of useful links. Below are excerpts from *Annual Crops: An Excellent Way to Increase Your Flexibility* from Manitoba Agriculture:

### Crops for Grazing

Feed quality is similar between all cereals when they are utilized for grazing, and any minor difference can be managed with harvesting strategies. As indicated, your selection should be based mainly on the crop suitability to your growing conditions, and when you wish to harvest.

Barley and oats are good choices for early spring grazing because of their early growth habit, yield, palatability and grazing re-growth. Recent one-year trials in Roblin (Manitoba) showed barley to yield an average of 2.5 tonnes/ acre dry matter (DM), and oats an average of 3 tonnes/acre DM. However, caution must be taken with spring cereals so that grazing does not occur below the growing points. Otherwise, re-growth will be significantly reduced.

Since winter cereals require an over-wintering period to initiate seed head production (the process that brings the growing point above ground), spring-seeded winter cereals often have better re-growth and thus provide better grazing and hay yields in the year of seeding. However, the trade-off is that spring-seeded winter cereals are usually ready for grazing after the spring cereals. Fall seeding winter wheat, it should be noted, may provide a “green bridge” or food source for the wheat curl mite, the insect responsible for spreading wheat streak mosaic in later-emerging, spring wheat crops. Of the winter cereals, fall rye is usually more winter hardy than winter wheat and winter triticale, with a higher yield; however, yield is dependent on growing conditions.

### **Intercropping for Maximum Potential**

Intercropping is the practice of combining a spring cereal (e.g. oats) with a winter annual (e.g. fall rye) for season-long benefits. Intercropping has been shown to produce overall more dry matter than each crop on its own because of the constant productivity all season long. The spring cereal begins growth early in the season, shutting down towards the later part, while the winter cereal remains active and produces until late in the fall.

Intercropping also gives you the option of harvesting the spring cereal for silage, leaving the winter cereal below for mid to late-season grazing. If more silage or an early grazing season is preferred, seed the spring cereal more heavily, taking care not to seed so much that it restricts growth of the winter cereal underneath. If more later season grazing is needed, then seed the winter cereal at a slightly heavier rate.

To read the full article, [click here](#). To view more links, [click here](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page.

## **Saskatchewan Hay Market Report**

*Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture*

[www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/FeedForageListing](http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/FeedForageListing)

For the week ending September 23, 2016, there were many listings of forage for sale and some listings of hay wanted in the Saskatchewan Agriculture Feed and Forage listing, Kijiji, and the Western Producer classified ads. Mixed hay asking prices averaged \$100/metric tonne (MT), with a high of \$147/MT and a low of \$77/MT (16 ads total). Greenfeed asking prices averaged \$109/MT, while one listing of organic hay asked \$45/large round bale with no bale weight noted. Three ads for grass hay, often advertised as high-quality horse feed asked an average of \$126/MT, with a range of \$88-147/MT. Only two ads for alfalfa hay were discovered that listed prices and these were \$85/MT on average. Small square bale asking prices ranged from \$1-\$8/bale, with prices varying based on bale weights, quality and composition. Organic small square or alfalfa were not generally listed at higher prices than mixed hay as might be expected. There were over 10 entries for hay or forage wanted, although no prices were associated with these ads.

## **USDA Market News Service Hay Report**

**For the week ending September 30, 2016**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) collects a wide variety of information from hay markets across the country. Presented below is information

from those jurisdictions closest to Saskatchewan. For complete USDA hay market listings, please visit the [USDA Market News](#) webpage.

### USDA Hay Prices for the weeks ending September 30, 2016

	Eastern Wyoming	Western Nebraska	Western South Dakota	Montana
<b>Alfalfa</b>				
Supreme	\$160			\$200**
Premium	\$135**	\$110-125*	\$150-175	\$120
Good	\$120-140*		\$120-150*	\$120-135 \$125-140* \$140-180**
Fair	\$100*	\$75-85 \$100-110*		\$100-120 \$100-120*
Utility				\$65-90
<b>Grass</b>				
Premium				\$120-140*
Good				\$110-120 \$110-120*
Fair				\$90-105*
Utility				\$90*
<b>Timothy</b>				
Premium				\$120-125* \$210-240**
Good				\$110-120*
<b>Alfalfa/Grass</b>				
Premium				\$150* \$150-160**
Good				\$120-140*
Fair				\$105-120*
<b>Oat Greenfeed</b>		\$50-55*		
<b>Barley or Wheat Straw</b>		\$50*		\$35-50 \$50**

All prices in U.S. dollars per ton FOB stack in large square bales unless otherwise noted.  
Most horse hay sold in small squares. \* large rounds \*\*small squares

#### Hay Quality Designations - Physical Descriptions:

**Supreme:** Very early maturity, pre bloom, soft fine stemmed, extra leafy - factors indicative of very high nutritive content. Hay is excellent colour and free of damage. Relative Feed Value (RFV): >185

**Premium:** Early maturity, i.e., pre-bloom in legumes and pre head in grass hays; extra leafy and fine stemmed - factors indicative of a high nutritive content. Hay is green and free of damage. RFV: 170-185

**Good:** Early to average maturity, i.e., early to mid-bloom in legumes and early head in grass hays; leafy, fine to medium stemmed, free of damage other than slight discoloration. RFV: 150-170

**Fair:** Late maturity, i.e., mid to late-bloom in legumes and headed in grass hays; moderate or below leaf content, and generally coarse stemmed. Hay may show light damage. RFV: 130-150

**Utility:** Hay in very late maturity, such as mature seed pods in legumes or mature head in grass hays, coarse stemmed. This category could include hay discounted due to excessive damage and heavy weed content or mould. RFV: <130



**Weekly Montana Hay Report**

Compared to last week: Alfalfa hay sold fully steady this week. Demand and offerings were moderate. Rain continues to be the story farmers and cattlemen alike want to talk about as warm temperatures and additional rains have really improved pasture and range conditions. This has many hoping to delay feeding hay as long as snow fall holds off and doesn't blanket the new growth. Producers are still attempting to put up 2nd cutting grass and 3rd cutting Alfalfa across much of the state, however rainfall has made that task rather difficult. Ranchers are beginning to sell their calves and many producers hope this will spur additional buying as many ranches have yet to buy hay for the winter. Hay movement was moderate to good this week. Grass hay sold steady to weak as second cutting has added additional supply to the market. Demand was mostly moderate. All prices are dollars per ton and FOB unless otherwise noted.

**Wyoming, Western Nebraska, and Western South Dakota Hay Report**

Compared to last week: All classes traded moderate with moderate demand. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, In the middle of the USDM period, an inch of rainfall fell in the drought stricken areas of the High Plains. As a result, short term dryness was removed in northwest North Dakota and multiple levels of drought were contracted in western South Dakota. Fourth cutting is underway along with corn silage being cut also. All prices dollars per ton FOB stack in large square bales and rounds, unless otherwise noted. Most horse hay sold in small squares. Prices are from the most recent reported sales.

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