

# The Saskatchewan Hay Report

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Saskatchewan Forage Council

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## **Editors' Note**

Welcome once again to the Saskatchewan Forage Council's *Saskatchewan Hay Report*. We are pleased to bring you timely updates and production information for another growing season. As always, we welcome your feedback and encourage anyone interested in being placed on our email distribution list to contact the SFC at [jbruynoghe@saskforage.ca](mailto:jbruynoghe@saskforage.ca).

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## **Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Crop Report #10 (For the week ending June 11, 2007)**

**South Eastern Saskatchewan:** For hay and pasture land, reporters indicate that 89% is in adequate topsoil moisture condition, compared to 95% last week.

**South Western Saskatchewan:** The area of short topsoil moisture increased by a couple of percentage points. For hay and pasture land, topsoil moisture conditions are rated adequate on 90% of the land, also similar to last week. Pastures and hay land are very dry in the Lucky Lake area.

**East Central Saskatchewan:** On hay and pasture land, topsoil moisture conditions were rated adequate by 66% of reporters and as surplus by the rest. Frost damage was reported in localized areas across the region. Dandelions are a problem in pastures and fields in the Kelliher area.

**West Central Saskatchewan:** Reporters rated 93% of crop land and 96% of hay and pasture land as having adequate topsoil moisture. The Grandora and Perdue areas are looking for some rain. Frost damage was reported in the Langham, Biggar, and Battleford areas.

**North Eastern Saskatchewan:** For hay and pasture land, reporters rate 79% as having adequate topsoil moisture conditions, up from 46% last week. Localized areas received flooding damage throughout the region. Some crops are yellowing from the stress of excess moisture.

**North Western Saskatchewan:** Topsoil moisture was rated as adequate on 94% of the crop land and the hay and pasture land, compared to 89% and 92% respectively the previous week. Frost damage was reported in several areas in the northwest.

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### **Forage Update to June 15, 2007**

*Michel Tremblay, PAg*

*Provincial Specialist, Forage Crops*

*Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food*

The 2007 forage crop is progressing towards another above average yield. This will be the fourth forage crop in a row to provide above average yields if nothing happens between now and harvest. There has been some frost damage reported in the province but in most instances it was not severe enough to kill the growing point. There will be a slow down of growth due to leaf damage.

Development of forage crops may be a little behind the long term average. In some instances crested wheatgrass is not fully headed out. Cutting of the 2007 forage crops should be starting by the last week of June.

There have been some reports of light winter kill in alfalfa fields in North East Saskatchewan. Very little disease (spring black stem) pressure on alfalfa because of the early cool dry weather.

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### **CFIA New Feed Ban Rules Affect Producers and Processors**

*Paul Johnson, PAg*

*Policy Branch, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food*

The Canadian Food Inspection Agencies (CFIA) will implement new rules on July 12, 2007 to enhance Canada's feed ban.

These rules will strength Canada's safeguards against Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and speed it's eradication. On July12, the CFIA will require all Specific Risk Material (SRM) tissues to be removed and excluded from use in all animal feed, pet food and fertilizer, and to be disposed of in a manner approved by the CFIA.

If you are a cattle producer, the new regulations will exert control over how you dispose of dead animals. The CFIA considers livestock disposal on premise acceptable and not subject to regulatory control. However, if animal carcasses will be moved from one location to another, transportation permits will be required. Producers are urged to contact CFIA toll free at 1-800-442-2342 to discuss the permitting process.

If you are a beef processor, small or large, the new regulations will control how you handle and dispose of cattle slaughter waste material. Processors that have a contiguous site suitable for disposal of slaughter waste material may be exempt from CFIA regulations. Those that do not have a contiguous site suitable for waste disposal will be required to make alternate arrangements for disposal at a facility that is licensed by the CFIA. All processors will need to develop standard operating procedures for handling and disposal of cattle slaughter waste material.

Processors are encouraged to contact CFIA at 306-975-5809 or 306-691-3466 to learn more about the new requirements for their facilities.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, in conjunction with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, have launched the Canada-Saskatchewan SRM Management Program. This program will provide matching funds to eligible and approved infrastructure projects specifically related to SRM handling and disposal.

***For More Information:***

- Visit [www.agr.gov.sk.ca/ProgramsServices](http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/ProgramsServices); OR
  - Contact SAF in Regina at 306-787-9714 OR 1-877-874-5365
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**Seeding Native Plants**

*Richard McBride, PAg and Paul Thoroughgood, PAg  
Ducks Unlimited Canada*

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has planted over 75,000 acres of native plant materials in Canada, with some of the plantings going back to the late 1980s. Most of these plantings have been in the prairie region of western Canada. While some of these stands have been very successful and low maintenance, others have not. Much has been learned through the trial and error process and these lessons could be summarized this way: if you are going to make the commitment to plant a native stand, it would be in your best interest to take all the critical steps necessary to have a successful planting.

To begin the planting process, you need to determine your goal for the planting. Is it maximum tonnage, protein, late season pasture, or perhaps simply a permanent stand of grass? Most people are interested in extending the grazing season since native plants typically retain their protein content later into the fall.

Secondly, you will need to evaluate your field history. Native plants are generally not very competitive. Make sure perennial weeds are under control prior to planting. In particular, Canada thistle, quackgrass and smooth brome can replace your native plants over time and should be eliminated if you want to have a persistent native stand.

Make sure your seeding equipment can handle the crop residue from the crop prior to planting the grass. Spreading chaff and straw during harvest the year prior to planting is a good start. Baling or harrowing the straw may be required. Also consider herbicide residues. Delay your

planting by a year if herbicides with soil persistent residues have been used the year prior to planting.

Planting objectives and site conditions should determine species selection. Soil types should be determined for the area to be planted and you should use species and seed that will persist on that type of soil. Use good quality, locally adapted seed. In an effort to establish successful native plantings, locally adapted seed was seen by DUC as something lacking. To fill this void, DUC pioneered the Ecovar program. The goal of the Ecovar program was to develop seed supplies that were adapted to the area they were to be planted in. Ecovars have the greatest genetic diversity for the broadest “site appropriateness”. There are many cases where “native” seed was being brought into Saskatchewan from places as far away as Nebraska and Oregon. If you choose to not plant Ecovar seed, try to find the source of your seed prior to purchasing it.

Forage seed prefers to be planted into a firm seedbed. Planting into standing stubble is one option if your seeding equipment can handle the residue. If you prefer to cultivate prior to planting, make sure the land is harrow packed as well. Planting into standing stubble will reduce the amount of moisture lost from the soil surface. Cultivation prior to seeding will also function as your preseeding weed control. One preferred method is to cultivate or preferably spray with glyphosate in mid May and seed the forage shortly after. This usually allows for the most seeds to germinate and survive.

Fall seeding tends to be more difficult as the seed should be planted in fall as late as possible to ensure the maximum number of seeds survive. The best day to fall seed is the day before the ground freezes. If you know what day that will be then fall seeding will be a good option. For that reason, spring seeding is preferred. Seed planted prior to the ground freezing has a risk of taking up moisture, freezing and dying or germinating, not getting enough root growth and then dying. Due to the high cost of native seed you will want to maximize your seed survival rate.

The most critical issue with any forage planting is the depth the seed is planted. No seed should be seeded more than ½ inch deep and ¼ inch is better if you can get good seed to soil contact. To ensure good seed to soil contact, a seed drill is generally recommended. Anything to help the relatively non-vigorous native seedlings is helpful. Disc drills with depth bands or some other type of depth control wheels are ideal. Broadcasting and harrowing the seed may be effective if rains following seeding are timely. Once again, to minimize risk a drill would be the preferred seeding equipment.

Cover crops are generally not recommended for use with native plants, once again due to the poor vigour of the native grass seedlings. All cover crops, regardless of the rates used will compete with the seedlings for light and nutrients. Many native seeds have chaff and awns in the seed sample due to the difficulty of cleaning these out. As a result many native mixes have difficulty flowing through seeding equipment. A 1:1 blend of seed:phosphorous fertilizer will help the seed flow, plus it will give the young seedlings a boost during their initial growth. Nitrogen fertilizer is not recommended in the first year as it generally only contributes to grow of competitive weeds.

Let the native seedlings reach the 2-3 leaf stage prior to chemical application. Post planting weed control will vary depending on weeds and grass species present. Consult Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's "Guide to Crop Protection" for the most recent information on chemical application and always follow the label restrictions. General rules of thumb are that most wild oat herbicides will kill warm season species. Therefore if blue grama, little bluestem or prairie sandreed is in the mix, wild oats must be controlled prior to planting or with the use of mowing. Most broad leaf herbicides are safe on most grasses. If purple prairie clover is the only forb in your mix, it can tolerate most broad leaf herbicides as well.

Ducks Unlimited Canada typically plans for a seeding rate of about 35 pure live seeds (PLS) per square foot. Pure live seed is the seed remaining in a seed lot once the dead seed and inert material has been factored out. This seeding rate may increase or decrease depending on row spacing of the seeding equipment. If broadcasting and harrowing is used to plant the seed, the seeding rate should be increased by 30% to compensate for lower germination rates. The following are some typical seed mixes for use in a late season pasture.

**Brown soil zone (loamy):**

Western wheatgrass	2.0 PLS lb/ac
Northern wheatgrass	1.0 PLS lb/ac
Green needlegrass	2.0 PLS lb/ac
Awned wheatgrass	1.3 PLS lb/ac
June grass	0.1 PLS lb/ac
Slender wheatgrass	0.3 PLS lb/ac
Purple prairie clover	0.1 PLS lb/ac
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.8 PLS lb/ac</b>

**Dark brown soil zone (loamy):**

Western wheatgrass	1.0 PLS lb/ac
Northern wheatgrass	0.8 PLS lb/ac
Green needlegrass	1.5 PLS lb/ac
Awned wheatgrass	0.5 PLS lb/ac
Canada wildrye	0.1 PLS lb/ac
Little bluestem	1.0 PLS lb/ac
Needle-and-thread grass	0.8 PLS lb/ac
June grass	0.1 PLS lb/ac
Blue gram	0.3 PLS lb/ac
Prairie sandreed	0.3 PLS lb/ac
Slender wheatgrass	0.2 PLS lb/ac
Purple prairie clover	0.1 PLS lb/ac
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.7 PLS lb/ac</b>

In the black soil zones, many of DUC's native plantings have been invaded by weeds, particularly Canada thistle. Some of these problems may have been caused by lack of competition due to poor seed sources and a lack of proper weed control prior to seeding. Comments on successful native stands in the black and grey soil zones would be of interest. If you are considering planting native grasses in the black soil zone, consider planting a relatively small area. Use the dark brown soil mix as a basis for your seed mix and add rough fescue if a seed source is available.

Grey soils developed under tree vegetation and therefore there are not a lot of true native forage species available for revegetation. Use species such as native bromes and wildryes on these soils. Remember that a plant not normally found on gray soils and planted on gray soil is no longer "native".

*For more detailed information on seeding native plants, please contact the Saskatoon or Regina Ducks Unlimited Canada office to receive a complementary copy of the CD or printed version of the publication "Rebuilding Your Land with Native Grasses".*

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### **Alfalfa Forage Quality and Cutting Time**

*Murray Feist, PAg*

*Ruminant Nutrition Specialist*

*Agriculture Knowledge Centre, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food*

Hay cutting and harvest issues often involve attempts to maximize yield, which is dictated by the class and type of livestock being fed, i.e. sheep, beef cattle or dairy cattle. Often, the decision to harvest for maximum yield conflicts with the decision to harvest for maximum quality.

Under normal growing conditions, a healthy alfalfa crop will increase in dry matter yield from first growth through to mid bloom, after which it plateaus. Harvesting alfalfa in the early vegetative stage will result in lower yields versus the full bloom stage, even with only 10 to 20 days difference in cutting date! Alfalfa hay quality will decrease from the mid-bloom to full maturity, due to the fact that from mid-bloom on, the leaf to stem ratio of alfalfa decreases, resulting in higher fibre content and lower digestible energy content.

For example, alfalfa that is harvested for maximum yield could be cut at full bloom, yielding 14-16 percent protein, 41 per cent acid detergent fibre, 56 per cent neutral detergent fibre and 54 percent total digestible nutrients (energy). Harvesting for maximum quality at the early vegetative/bud stage may yield 20-22 per cent protein, 25 per cent acid detergent fibre, 35-40 per cent neutral detergent fibre, and 63-65 per cent total digestible nutrients.

Combining a grass/legume forage stand for hay and cutting for tonnage versus quality becomes even more interesting due to the different growth rates and stages of growth between the two or three or four forage species mixture!

Consequently, if the decision to harvest is to increase quality, one benefit will be an increase in estimated dry matter intake, so that daily nutrient requirements are more readily met. Low quality forages (such as straw) can be consumed up to 1.25 per cent of body weight; medium quality can be consumed from 1.5 to 1.75 per cent of body weight; and high quality forages can be consumed from 1.75 per cent to 2.25 per cent of body weight.

The dry matter intake is linked to total fibre content. High fibre content in straw (80 per cent NDF) limits daily intake; low fibre content in early cut alfalfa (46 per cent NDF) allows for higher daily intake levels. Straw cannot be consumed at high levels because the high fibre content takes longer to digest. Coupled with low energy content, straw is best fed with grain to meet energy and protein requirements. Higher quality forages are more digestible in a shorter time, allowing for higher intakes to better meet energy and protein requirements. This is important during the high demand periods of late gestation and lactation.

Increasing forage quality usually ensures better intake with less feed wasted. Given the variables during the harvest of forages, it is strongly advised to conduct a feed test prior to feeding any forage.

***For More Information:***

- Call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377

**Saskatchewan Hay Market Report**

*Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food*

[www.agr.gov.sk.ca/feedforage](http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/feedforage)

**Baled Forage Prices to June 14, 2007**

	Listings	Listings Priced	Tons Listed	Tons Priced	Lowest Price/ton	Highest Price/ton	Weighted Average Price/ton
<b>Alfalfa</b>	23	20	9703	9173	\$20	\$80	\$37
<b>Brome</b>	1	1	120	120	\$75	\$75	\$75
<b>Brome/Alfalfa</b>	8	7	1597	1297	\$20	\$63	\$46
<b>Clover</b>	2	1	219	219	\$40	\$40	\$40
<b>Greenfeed</b>							
<b>Other</b>	1	1	55	55	\$51	\$51	\$51
<b>Slough Hay</b>							
<b>Straw</b>	1	1	150	150	\$20	\$20	\$20
<b>Wild Hay</b>							

**Allan Hay - Sylvan Lake, Alberta**

*Don Allan, Owner*

[www.AllanHay.com](http://www.AllanHay.com)

We marketed about 4500 large round bales of hay and straw over the past marketing season as well as about 4000 small square bales of hay and straw. (Mostly hay in both instances.)

Currently, we only have alfalfa left in inventory. It is going out at \$100 per ton or \$69 per round bale while the small square bales of the same hay are selling for \$5 per bale for stack run (includes bottom bales). If customers want choice, i.e., to leave any bales with any spoilage aside the charge is \$6 per bale. Bale weights are about 55 lb.

For people who are asking what the new crop is going to be priced at we are forecasting about \$60 per round bale. Our round bales typically weigh 1200 to 1300 lb depending on kind and moisture content. We like to bale anything with alfalfa in it at 12 - 16% moisture. Grass hays can be baled lower than that without much loss. Any spots in a field that run over 16% will get a shot of preservative to eliminate the risk of mold and/or dust. Our primary market is to the equine industry so quality is critical.

We are dropping the production of small square bales this year. Our market has grown so much this past year that we can sell more than we can produce in the form of large round bales. The popularity of large rounds has increased to the point that there isn't enough difference in price between them and small squares to justify having a second line of machinery and hiring the corresponding help needed to man it.

Net wrap has revolutionized hay storage for us. We now net wrap all hay and when it is rowed right we can store it in the open for at least three years with hardly any spoilage. Row direction and spacing is critical but when done right we have found that we can have little more spoilage in the open than under a tarp.

### **Vold Jones & Vold Auction Co. Ltd. - Market Report (June 13, 2007)**

*Ponoka, Alberta*

*Phone (403) 783-5561*

*Fax (403) 783-4120*

Hay:

Small Square Bales	\$3.50 - \$5.75
Round Bales	None on offer

Straw:

Square Bales	None on offer
Round Bales	None on offer

Greenfeed:

Square Bales	None on offer
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### **USDA Market News Service Hay Reports**

*For June 14, 2007*

*Dennis Widga and Lance Cline*

[www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/to\\_gr310.txt](http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/to_gr310.txt)

### **Wyoming, Western Nebraska, and Western South Dakota Weekly Hay Summary**

Trade slow this past week, although some trades reported for new crop hay. A lot of hay put into the windrows or bale this past week. Demand good.

### **Weekly Montana Hay Report**

Compared to last week, very limited sales of hay this week. Demand and inquiry light as is normal for this time of year. Rainfall was received over many sectors of the state again this week. Many alfalfa producers currently have hay swathed waiting to be put up with a slight amount already baled. Overall, range conditions are in good shape.



*All prices in U.S. dollars per ton FOB stack in medium to large square bales and rounds unless other wise noted. Horse hay in small squares. Prices are from the most recent reported sales.*

	<b>Eastern Wyoming</b>	<b>Central &amp; Western Wyoming</b>	<b>Western South Dakota</b>	<b>Montana</b>
<b>Alfalfa</b>				
Supreme				
Premium			130.00-145.00	
Good to Premium	110.00-140.00	100.00-130.00		
Good			95.00-120.00	80.00
Fair -Good				
<b>Mixed Grass</b>	155.00	90.00-100.00		
<b>Timothy- Premium</b>	175.00			150.00
<b>Alfalfa/Grass</b>	155.00	100.00		

### **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 mold. RFV: <130

*Source:* USDA NE Dept of Ag Market News, Kearney, NE (308) 237-7579  
Keith L Williams Market Reporter [www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/sc\\_gr310.txt](http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/sc_gr310.txt)

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Canada

