



Saskatchewan Hay & Pasture Report

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Saskatchewan Forage Council, PO Box 1715, Outlook, SK S0L 2N0
www.saskforage.ca office@saskforage.ca 306.867.8126

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Note from the Saskatchewan Forage Council

Haying season is underway in Saskatchewan. Early reports indicate that most areas are looking at average or above average yields. Exceptions may be in the south east and some east central areas that have had significant alfalfa weevil damage causing problems with both yield and quality of hay. This issue of the *Saskatchewan Hay & Pasture Report* will provide further details on crop conditions and alfalfa weevils in addition to an article on management of irrigated alfalfa, the relationship of cattle prices and pasture rent, and other points of interest from around the forage industry. As always, you will find a summary of forage market information from Saskatchewan and surrounding jurisdictions.

We welcome your feedback and encourage anyone interested in being placed on our email distribution list to contact the SFC at office@saskforage.ca. You may also want to visit our website www.saskforage.ca for regular news and information related to the forage industry.

Saskatchewan Agriculture Crop Report

(for period ending July 9, 2012)

Warm and dry weather has allowed for significant haying progress over the past week. Saskatchewan livestock producers have 44 per cent of the 2012 hay crop cut and 20 per cent baled or put into silage, according to Saskatchewan Agriculture's weekly Crop Report. Ninety-two per cent of the hay crop is rated as good to excellent in quality.

Eighty per cent of the fall cereals, 62 per cent of the spring cereals, 57 per cent of the oilseeds and 70 per cent of the pulses are at their normal stage of development for this time of year. Most crops are in fair to excellent condition.

High temperatures throughout the province have resulted in thunderstorms in some areas producing strong winds, hail and varying amounts of precipitation. Disease, flooding, hail and wind are causing the majority of crop damage. Farmers are busy haying, scouting crops and controlling disease.

For a breakdown of regional conditions, please visit the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's [Crop Report online](#).

Management of Irrigated Alfalfa

*Sarah Sommerfeld - Regional Forage Specialist, Outlook, SK
Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture*

Irrigated alfalfa in Saskatchewan became an integral component of crop rotations during the 1930s with construction of irrigation projects in southwest Saskatchewan. Acres of irrigated alfalfa increased with the addition of irrigated hay projects and development of irrigation from Lake Diefenbaker and along the South and North Saskatchewan Rivers.



Photo credit: Sarah Sommerfeld, SMA

Growing an irrigated alfalfa stand requires additional management and a higher level of inputs compared to producing alfalfa on dry land acres. Under irrigation, producers should select a variety with rapid re-growth, good winter hardiness and strong disease resistance. Producers should also seed the crop at a seeding rate of eight to 10 lb/acre on 15 cm (six inch) row spacing. Seeding rates can be adjusted based on seed quality and cost and seeding conditions.

Nutrient removal by an alfalfa crop can be substantially greater than the nutrient removal for an annual crop (Table 1). As such, the fertility requirements for an alfalfa forage crop must be met to maintain high productivity. Annual applications of phosphorus and potassium are recommended. Sulphur needs may be met through dissolved sulphates available in the irrigation water. In all cases, a soil test is recommended to determine the nutrient levels in the soil. Plant tissue analysis can provide information on the nutrient status of the plant during the growing season. Use of soil and plant tissue analysis can assist in developing an adequate nutrient management plan.

Table 1. Nutrient removal by spring wheat and alfalfa

	Pounds per Acre			
	N	P ₂ O ₅	K ₂ O	S
Spring wheat 40 bu/acre	54 - 66	21 - 26	16 - 19	4 - 5
Alfalfa 5 ton DM/acre	261 - 319	62 - 76	270 - 330	27 - 33

Source: Western Canada Fertilizer Association, 1998

Alfalfa responds well to irrigation. Poor fertility, weed competition, thin stand, disease and insect pressure will reduce the yield response. Moisture stress at any growth stage will reduce the yield potential, but no specific growth stage has been identified as being more susceptible than another.

When a multi-cut harvest is planned, adequate moisture must be available to the plant early in the spring and following each cut to promote rapid growth. Irrigation scheduling of alfalfa is dependent on:

- Soil texture and water holding capacity of the soil
- Daily crop water use
- Time required to apply an irrigation to the field

The purpose of irrigation scheduling is to maintain the available soil moisture for a specific crop between field capacity and the allowable depletion threshold. Available soil moisture is the amount of water in the soil used for crop growth and cooling. Not all available water is able to be used equally by a plant. As the amount of water in the soil declines, the plant has greater difficulty accessing this water.

As an alfalfa crop matures, the amount of water it requires changes, resulting in the need to adjust irrigation applications accordingly. Weekly monitoring of available soil moisture and knowledge of the daily crop water requirements will assist in determining the amount and timing of an irrigation application.

Alfalfa up to 30 cm (12 inches) in height will use about 3 mm (.12 inches) of water per day, given adequate soil moisture. From a height of 30 cm until first bloom, an alfalfa crop will use an average of 6 mm (.24 inches) of water per day. Hot, dry weather will increase daily use amounts, while cool, moist conditions will lower daily water use. Maximum daily water use may exceed 8 mm (.31 inches) per day. Total use for the season calculates to approximately 660 mm (26 inches), with 230 mm (9 inches) for first cut and 280 mm (11 inches) for second cut. An additional 150 mm (5.9 inches) will be used for re-growth following taking the second cut. Fall irrigation of alfalfa is recommended, but caution should be taken to not over-irrigate and saturate the soil. Saturated soil may cause the alfalfa to break dormancy and lead an increased incidence of winter injury or winter kill.

For more information on the management of irrigated alfalfa, contact the Regional Forage Specialist at 306-867-5559 or refer to Saskatchewan Agriculture website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca.

Alfalfa Productivity Affected by Pests and Environment

Michel Tremblay - Provincial Forage Specialist, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Reprinted from Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's Crop Production News



Alfalfa weevil larvae

Photo credit: Saskatchewan Agriculture

The 2012 growing season has been characterized by significant rainfall across the agricultural zone of Saskatchewan, following a dry, warm winter. In Saskatchewan, spring precipitation is the largest single determinant of yield of cool season forage species. With favourable soil moisture present in nearly all areas of the province, a good forage crop should be expected. Some producers have noticed that their alfalfa fields are not yielding, considering the soil moisture present. The following factors may be contributing to decreased alfalfa vigour and yield.

The alfalfa weevil (*Hypera postica*) is a pest of alfalfa crops, and is increasing in occurrence in Saskatchewan. Alfalfa weevils have been observed predominately in the southeastern and east-central parts of the province in alfalfa hay and seed fields.

[Click here](#) to read more of this article from the July 9, 2012 issue of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's *Crop Production News*.

Grass Cattle and Pasture Rent

Reprinted from Agricultural Research & Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA) June 28, 2012 Newsletter

Editor's note: although this article was prepared for an Alberta audience, many of the principles apply in Saskatchewan. Links to Saskatchewan livestock market information have been included as well as those for Alberta.

The price of cattle and the rates charged for pasture rent are intertwined. The current reality is that the relationship between the two is not that positively correlated. I'm often asked by pasture owners why pasture rents have remained flat and have not risen given the increased prices that the cattle industry has experienced for the past 18 months. The straight forward explanation can be found in the old law of supply and demand.



Photo credit: Leanne Thompson

The recent Statistics Canada January 1, 2012 inventory report indicates an increase of 0.9% in the number of cattle on Alberta farms. However, this increase comes mainly from the classes of cattle that we typically do not see on pasture - feeder and slaughter cattle. We do see an increase of 2.3% in beef heifer replacement but we also see a decline of 1.5% in beef cow numbers resulting in a net loss of about 20,000 breeding females in the Alberta beef herd. Bull numbers are also down by 0.9%. It is beef cows, heifers and bulls that predominantly use pasture. With a reduced demand as a result of lower cattle numbers coupled with a static supply of available pasture we typically see a flat pasture rent.

Compounding the situation is the tremendous price slide found in feeder cattle at the present time. The price slide for mid range 6 weights going to mid range 7 weights is about 17 cents for feeders in central Alberta according to AARD's May 25th Weekly Livestock Market Review. The 7 weight to 8 weight price slide is 18 cents. Producers purchase grassers in the spring to take advantage of economic gains on pasture often in the 2 pounds per day range. A 650 pound steer grazing for 100 days will weigh in at about 850 around the first week of September. A 650 pound steer bought at \$1.70 per pound would cost \$1105. By September that 850 pound steer could be worth \$1147 factoring in the 35 cent price slide. If pasture rent cost 50 cents per day, the result would be a loss of \$8 per head on those grass cattle. Add to this hauling costs, possible death losses, interest costs, cost of day riders and marketing costs and one can see that there is not a great deal of motivation for someone to run grass cattle this summer especially if they are faced with increased pasture rent.

Resources:

Weekly Livestock Market Review - [Alberta](#) and [Saskatchewan](#)

January 1, 2012 Livestock Inventory Estimates - [Alberta](#) and [Saskatchewan](#)

Understanding the Cattle Market Sliding Scale
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sis12357](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sis12357)

Article author: Ted Nibourg, B.Sc.Ag, MDEFarm Business Management Specialist, Ag-Info Centre

Roundup Ready® Alfalfa – Forage Industry Impact Report Now Available

Canadian Forage & Grassland Association

The Canadian Forage & Grassland Association (CFGa), through a project partnership with the Saskatchewan Forage Council, is pleased to announce the release of a national, industry-wide market impact study providing an unbiased, fact-based assessment of the potential impact of Roundup Ready® alfalfa (RRA) on Canada's forage industry. This collaborative project, with input and direction from stakeholders across the industry, will assist the forage industry nation-wide in its efforts to respond to the new and emerging issue of genetically modified crops.

The report provides an overview of Canada's forage industry, including export statistics, and a synopsis of the technology and current regulatory status of RRA in Canada. The analysis of the topic is far-reaching as it includes a discussion of the basics of alfalfa reproduction and potential for gene flow and seed cross contamination, an overview of strategies implemented by other commodity groups in their efforts to adapt to the introduction of GE technology, and the current status of RRA in the United States. Key to this study was widespread input from stakeholders across Canada's forage industry, from those concerned about potential impacts on export markets to producers anticipating a new and effective weed control system. Potential economic impacts are quantified.

Canadian Forage & Grassland Association Chair and Irricana, Alberta-area cow/calf and forage producer, Doug Wray, noted "from my perspective, the input gathered and the dialogue created within our industry has been the greatest success of this project. The opportunity to clearly examine the facts and come together for an open and broad-based discussion was essential. By addressing the issue we are positioned to establish the best path forward for all stakeholders," added Wray.

The complete report, 'Assessing the Potential Impact of Roundup Ready Alfalfa on Canada's Forage Industry', is available for download on [the CFGA website](#).

Funding for this project has been provided in part by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP). CAAP funding for this project has been provided through industry councils in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

For more information please contact Wayne Digby, Executive Director of the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association at 204.726.9393 or by email at w_digby@canadianfga.ca.

Key to this study was widespread input from stakeholders across Canada's forage industry

Grazing Stewards Recognized

Leanne Thompson - Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan



2012 Winners of TESA - Terry & Penny, Shelly & Dale Adamson of Diamond J Cattle Co.

Photo credit: Tracey Cornea

The Environmental Stewardship Award (TESA) was recently presented at the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) annual convention. This award has been presented by the SSGA in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada and RBC Royal Bank since 1995 as recognition of excellence in the area of environmental stewardship within the ranching industry. Nominees whose main source of income is cattle production are selected from across Saskatchewan and are considered by the award committee based on the merit of sustainable practices that have been implemented on the operation.

In past years, winners of TESA have shown that incorporating practices such as riparian area management, wildlife habitat protection, and sustainable use of native grassland along with many other environmentally sound practices are being applied successfully on ranching operations. Diamond J Cattle Co., Dale and Shelly and Terry and Penny Adamson of Makwa, SK

were the winners of the 2012 TESA. Diamond J Cattle Co. was founded in 1947 by Dale and Terry's parents and grandparents starting with 5 quarters of land and has grown over time to its existing size of 4800 acres. The brothers (Dale and Terry) have worked together towards a goal of improved grass management and creation of a sustainable environment for future generations.

Diamond J Cattle Co. has successfully implemented source water protection measures, planned grazing, fossil fuel reductions, extensive winter feeding methods and many other practices that have contributed to their long-term environmental sustainability plan. The Adamson's believe that it is the responsibility of land managers to ensure environmental sustainability for future generations by taking measures to improve the land and in turn its productivity. Looking back over the past 10 years of management changes, the Adamson's have seen an improvement in the health of their land as well as economic benefits from implementing these changes.

Information on TESA is available on the SSGA website at www.skstockgrowers.ca along with a list of winners since the award's inception in 1995. Both members of the SSGA and non-members are able to nominate ranches and are encouraged to submit nominations for the 2013 award **before the September 1, 2012 deadline**. As Provincial TESA award winners, the Adamsons will travel to Calgary to compete for the National TESA award which will be presented at the Canadian Cattlemen's Association Semi-Annual Meeting August 13-17, 2012.



One of the many healthy riparian areas on the Diamond J property. Photo credit: Jeremy Brown, SWA

Pasture Agronomist Wanted – in Russia!

Miratorg Agro Holdings is looking for a pasture manager for 160,000 ha ranch near Bryansk which is about 300 km SW of Moscow. They want someone from western Canada as they rightly believe the climate etc. are similar. This is an agronomist position not a ranch manager position according to the job description below.

Pasture manager; agronomist, having knowledge of soil tilling, planting scheduling, grass mixtures options.

Spheres of responsibility:

- making pasture soil analyses, estimation of pastures potential
- cooperation with cattle breeders to determine demands in feeding (volumes/quality)
- development and implementation of the program for increasing pastures production (nutritive value from 1 hectare)

Must be prepared to move to and live in Russia.

For information about Miratorg see links below:

[Miratorg Agribusiness Holdings website](#)
[June 6, 2012 Press Release from Miratorg](#)

Or news stories about their progress:

[Bloomberg news story - June 13, 2012](#)
[Businessweek news story - June 21, 2012](#)

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact Allen Hingston (contact information below) as soon as possible.

Ukraine Mob: +380.95.846.42.47

Email: al.hingston@cibusmanagement.com

Web: www.CIBUSmanagement.com

US Drought Effect on SK Forage Industry?

Saskatchewan Forage Council

Reports from the US indicate that dry conditions are facing much of the south and central states and as a result, hay yields are expected to be poor. A recent article from [eHay Weekly](#) reported that hay growers in several regions are facing extremely dry conditions, according to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) map for July 3. Nearly all of Georgia with the exception of its southeastern corner is experiencing moderate to exceptional drought. In the West, the map shows moderate to extreme drought conditions covering almost all of Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Utah. Most of Wyoming, southeastern Montana and Nebraska's Panhandle were experiencing abnormally dry to moderate drought conditions.

Throughout the corn-belt, dry conditions prevailed during June giving rise to poor hay yields. July has not been better across much of the US with heat and dry conditions continuing. In fact, eHay Weekly reports that severe to extreme to exceptional drought is making an unwanted appearance across 20 states, scorching pastures and affecting hay yields as well as causing heat stress and cattle deaths (see [U.S. Drought Monitor](#)). It's no wonder that reports from USDA in early June indicated that hay prices continued to trend up.

At the other end of the spectrum, an open winter and good growing conditions during 2011 resulted in an oversupply of hay in most of Saskatchewan. Due to the abundance of hay, prices are generally lower than average across much of this province. These conditions have some wondering if hay will begin to move south into the US.

Regional reports from Saskatchewan indicate that this is not happening on a large scale at this time however there are some producers in Southern SK seizing this economic opportunity to move hay south.

Producers interested in accessing US markets are cautioned to do their homework (and there is plenty of it!) before attempting to sell hay into the US. Trucking restrictions, hay testing, permits, trucking costs and the assurance that you will be paid for your product must all be considered before sending a load of hay across the border. For example, while some states continue to waive dimensional and weight restrictions for hay shipments, not all states have these waivers in place. As an example, Texas has a [Hay Waiver Information](#) website which provides details regarding permits and restrictions for hay coming from various areas.

For more details on shipping hay to the US, information sources include:

<http://mbforagecouncil.mb.ca/forage-hay-marketing/hay-transport-information/>

Even in areas of Saskatchewan where hay is moving south, it is unlikely that local prices will be affected to any great extent. Due to adequate carryover from 2011 and the favourable growing conditions across much of the province so far in 2012, hay supply in Saskatchewan is not anticipated to be short. However, it is still early in the season and if larger shipments of hay are organized to head south, there may be some upward pressure on prices in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Hay Market Report

Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/FeedForageListing

As listed July 12, 2012

	Listings	Listings Priced	Tons Listed	Tons Priced	Lowest Price/ton	Highest Price/ton	Weighted Average Price/ton
Alfalfa	1	1	2,000	2,000	\$60	\$60	\$60
Brome/Alfalfa	2	1	1,240	240	\$65	\$65	\$65
Organic Hay	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Listings	Listings Priced	Acres Listed	Acres Priced	Price/lb range	Price/ton range	Price/acre range
Standing Forage	8	7	2125	1725	\$0.01-0.02	\$20	\$20 - 28

Three pasture listings were also priced:

- \$0.52/cow/day, calves \$21/season
- \$1/pair/day
- \$5/acre

USDA Market News Service Hay Report

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](http://www.usda.gov/mnreports/) webpage.

Wyoming, Western Nebraska, and Western South Dakota Weekly Hay Summary (Week ending July 6, 2012)

Dennis Widga, Torrington, WY

www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/to_gr310.txt

Compared to last week: all classes trading steady to firm. Every area is seeing dry to very dry conditions. This is hindering yield and quality of the hay being produced. Many producers are hanging onto what supply they have to cover their own needs before they market any hay. This is putting further pressure on an already tight hay supply. Demand moderate and trade activity is slow to moderate.

Weekly Montana Hay Report (Week ending July 6, 2012)

Justin Lumpkin, Billings, MT

www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/bl_gr310.txt

Compared to last week: new crop hay prices not fully established. With that said, 2012 hay prices are looking to be higher to sharply higher with the export hay at the top of the spectrum. Prices below reflect last year's crop. Trade activity mostly light on current inventories. Demand very good for premium to supreme quality suitable for export; demand moderate to good for all other classes. Producers

concentrating on quality over quantity (i.e. tonnage) for the 1st cutting mostly due to lack of high quality hay available and buyers demand for high quality hay is very good. However, on that note, hay producers have commented that their first cutting was yielding a quarter to half of the tonnage from last year.

Prices are for the week ending July 6, 2012

	Eastern Wyoming	Central & Western Wyoming	Western South Dakota	Montana
Alfalfa				
Supreme	\$240	-	-	\$185 - 210 \$150 - 175*
Premium	\$200	\$175	-	\$150 - 160
Good	\$200	-	-	\$95 - 110 \$125 - 150*
Fair -Good	\$155	-	-	-
Alfalfa/Grass	-	-	\$165 - 200 \$175*	-
Grass				
Good - Premium	-	-	-	\$85 - 145 \$125 - 155*
Good - Fair	-	-	-	\$75 - 95
Timothy	-	-	-	\$180*

All prices in U.S. dollars per ton FOB stack in medium to large square bales and or large rounds unless otherwise noted.

* 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

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Saskatchewan Forage Council
 PO Box 1715
 Outlook, SK S0L 2N0
 Phone: 306.867.8126
 Email: office@saskforage.ca

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