



Saskatchewan Hay & Pasture Report

Volume 19, Issue 3

August 9, 2018

Note from the Saskatchewan Forage Council

If you need a break from the heat wave, stay in and catch up on your reading with the August edition of the Hay & Pasture Report! In this third edition of the Report, we bring you up to date on hay pricing and market news as of early August. If you are considering buying hay this year, or are looking for other ways to deal with drought, read on for more information. We also share articles on the importance of soil and pollinators for those in the farming and ranching business.

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. Please visit our website www.saskforage.ca for regular news and information related to the forage industry.

Visit Our Website

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Saskatchewan Agriculture Crop Report

For the period ending July 30, 2018



Harvest operations are underway for some producers in the south, according to Saskatchewan Agriculture's weekly Crop Report. Crops are rapidly drying down across the province and many pulse crops are being desiccated. Most crops remain in fair to excellent condition, although later-seeded crops need rain to help heads and pods fill. Reported yields so far range from average to well-below average, depending on field and moisture conditions.

Most areas of the province did not receive any rain last week, although the Arborfield area reported 22 mm

and the Macklin area 20 mm. Many southern and central areas have not received significant moisture for well over a month, and any future rainfall may be of limited benefit since most southern crops are quickly ripening.

Topsoil moisture conditions have worsened since last week due to the lack of rain and hot temperatures. Provincial topsoil moisture conditions on cropland are currently rated as 39 per cent adequate, 43 per cent short and 18 per cent very short. Hay land and pasture topsoil moisture is rated as 33 per cent adequate, 39 per cent short and 28 per cent very short.

The majority of crop damage this past week is attributed to lack of moisture, strong winds and hot temperatures. There have been some reports of grasshoppers in the south. Haying is wrapping up for some livestock producers and yields remain significantly lower than normal. Pasture conditions are currently rated as two per cent excellent, 25 per cent good, 37 per cent fair, 26 per cent poor and 10 per cent very poor.

[Read the full report here](#)

Are You Purchasing Hay This Year?

by: Terry Kowalchuk, Provincial Forage Specialist
Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

With feed in short supply in some areas hay prices have increased dramatically. It's a seller's market but buyers beware - you may be getting more than you bargained for. Contaminated forage/feed is one of the main ways that new weeds are introduced into grazing operations. This is especially true this year where ditch hay and other sources are being cut and sold. The risk of introducing new weeds increases in proportion to the distance that feed is transported. Weeds to watch for include: absinthe, downy brome, field bindweed, Canada thistle, dandelion, leafy spurge, scentless chamomile and common tansy (Contact the Saskatchewan Forage Council for a copy of their newly released Invasive Plant Species Guide for a complete list and description).

A common difficulty with buying baled hay or other baled feed is the inability to pre-inspect the source prior to shipment and the fact that visual inspection of bales when they arrive on site is often ineffective. As a result, those who buy supplemental feed sight-unseen may find new weeds appearing in subsequent years.

One way to prevent this is to contact the municipal office from the source area and ask their weed inspector to check the source hayfield for noxious weeds. Alternatively, a private agrologist can be hired to perform this task. Ideally hay should be inspected while still standing and be cut within two weeks of inspection to be sure that no noxious weeds have set seed.

Even with forage that is "certified weed-free" (tied with special blue and orange coloured twine and tagged as Certified Weed-Free) it is prudent to take precautions:

- keep imported hay separate from local source hay;
- have the delivery truck cleaned thoroughly at the storage site before it departs to prevent weeds from spreading along laneways leading out of your yard;
- monitor the storage site for two to three years for new weed growth and destroy those that emerge with recommended management practices;
- feed known-source local hay in a confined area for four to five days to allow any potential new weed seeds to be passed in a confined area before re-introducing livestock to pasture;
- store manure produced while feeding imported hay separate from manure produced on local feed;
- monitor the manure pile for new weeds;
- clean equipment used in these hay and manure areas prior to moving on to other tasks; and
- monitor your pasture for new weeds. July is a prime time for this activity, since many plants flower during this period and, therefore, will be more conspicuous.

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Drought management strategies

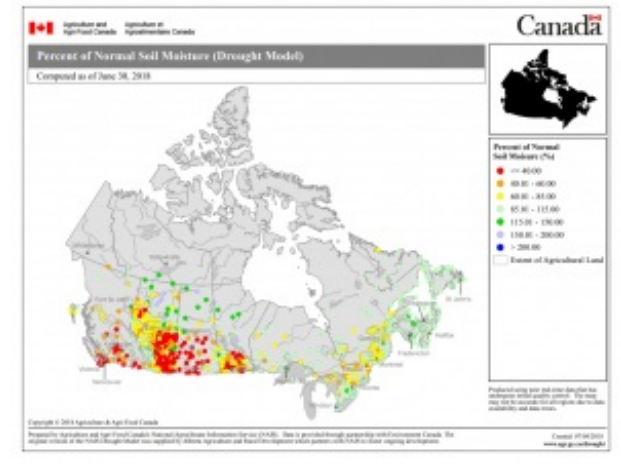
by: Beef Cattle Research Council, July 31, 2018
www.beefresearch.ca

Editor's note: Due to dry conditions in many parts of the country, we've pulled this article from our archives. It was originally posted in July 2015.

For timely information on weather and climate relevant to the agricultural sector in Canada, visit Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's [Drought Watch webpage](#).

Whether in the form of pasture, stored forage, or supplements, feed is the largest variable input cost in cow-calf operations. A big challenge is to feed the cow in a way that meets her current and future nutritional requirements for maintenance, lactation, maintaining a successful pregnancy, giving birth and getting rebred within 80-85 days of calving as cost effectively as possible. This challenge is obviously much greater during drought, when feed is scarce and expensive.

Aside from moisture, one thing that will help keep you and your cows from experiencing a wreck this summer is knowledge. We've pulled together a good list of resources that can help you and your herd get through the drought.



So pour yourself a coffee or an iced tea, and delve into the links below. After a few hours of reading, you'll likely have a few new plans to keep your cows and grass in good shape, and to keep from shelling out more money for feed or vet bills than need be this year and down the road.

Let us know if the information you're seeking isn't here, or if we're missing some valuable information you've found elsewhere so that we can add those links to this list.

[Managing cow herds during drought](#) (University of Nebraska)

[Stretching feed supplies](#) (Canadian Cattlemen Magazine)

[Surrounded by 'Graziers' - Planned Grazing Management Take-Homes](#) (RealAgriculture.com)

Pasture and range management strategies:

[How to Manage for Drought with Grazing](#) - VIDEO (Foothills Forage and Grazing Association)

[Managing grazing lands through drought](#) (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture)

[Range and pasture management when dealing with drought](#) (Alberta Agriculture and Forestry)

[Drought on pastures and rangelands](#) (foragebeef.ca)

Find links related to toxic plants, early weaning, nutritional management, watering systems and much more in the full article at: <http://www.beefresearch.ca/blog/drought-management-strategies-3/>

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The Advantages of Wide, Thin Swathing

University tests confirm that the more leaves are exposed to the sun, the faster crops dry and the more feed value is retained. Quick drying reduces sun bleaching and gives you an advantage when you need to beat the weather and bale or chop before the rain.



That's why New Holland builds their genuine Discbine® 313 and 316 disc mower-conditioners to help you to lay down a wide swath for more sun exposure and better natural drying. New Holland has mounted wedges on the rear swath board to help spread the crop mat. Discbine disc mower-conditioners also allow you to customize your windrow and swath formation using the longer, adjustable windrow shields and a swath gate that features rubber flashing for improved crop flow and a new spring-assist adjustment lever for easy changes.



What's the big deal about soil? Everything.

by: Robert Fears, Beef Magazine, posted April 12, 2018

Your soil is home to most of the biodiversity in the world. Keeping it healthy will keep you and your cows healthy too.

Soil health has become a frequent topic of conversation and for good reason - it's the basic element of the cattle industry. Healthy soil grows abundant forage which keeps cattle producing in good body condition. Unhealthy soils can cause ranchers to file for bankruptcy.

"Soil health is the capacity of a soil to function as a vital, living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans," says Steven Shafer, chief scientific officer with the Soil Health Institute. "Key words in this definition are vital and living. Soil health is vital to our livelihood and soil is alive with physical, chemical and biological components."

Physical component

"Soil has structure, which is the arrangement of primary particles into secondary units called aggregates. Soil aggregates are clumps of soil particles held together by moist clay, organic matter, polysaccharide gums produced by bacteria and fungi and fungal hyphae (strands)," says

Dennis Chessman, Southeastern regional soil health team leader, NRCS Soil Health Division.

"Pores between aggregates contain water and air and allow roots to grow. Structure affects water infiltration, water holding capacity, water and air movement, nutrient availability, and root growth," he explains.

An example of poor soil structure is plating, which is horizontal layers of soil particles created by compaction or lack of root growth. Plating prevents downward movement of water, nutrients and roots, and reduces soil productivity.

"Soil texture is a percent of sand, silt and clay particles and determines water holding capacity," Shafer says. "Water is lost to deep percolation below root zones in sandy soils, whereas clay soils hold water too tightly for it to be available for plants. Available water capacity occurs in medium textured soils between levels of field capacity and wilting point."

Chemical component

Organic matter is an important part of soil chemistry and is derived from the remains of organisms such as plants, animals and their waste products. Benefits of soil organic matter include its major role in aggregate forming and its improvement of water infiltration, water holding capacity and available water field capacity.



[Read the full article here.](#)

You want pollinators to make their home on your range

By: Jill Burkhardt

Alberta Farmer Express, June 27, 2017

There is a buzz on range- and pasture lands. And we really need to pay attention to native pollinators and the benefits that they provide, says a rangeland ecologist.

"Pollinators are critical to rangelands themselves, and the plants that are there," said Cameron Carlyle, an assistant professor at the University of Alberta, who is not only studying the benefits pollinators provide, but tracking how well they are doing.

The range of pollinator species is diverse but they roughly fall into two groups, he said.

"Bumblebees, are the large fuzzy bees that we commonly think of when we think of bees. Solitary bees tend to be smaller and take many forms. Bees aren't the only pollinators - moths, butterflies and flies are other insect pollinators - but generally most pollination done by insects in our grasslands is done by bees."

Pollinators have "co-evolved" with native plant species, said Cary Hamel, conservation science manager of the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Manitoba region.

"These ecosystems have been evolving for thousands of years," he said.

Most ranchers think of rangelands in terms of their ability to produce grass for their cattle, but it goes beyond that. Healthy and productive rangelands have a diverse array of species, including native forbs (such as buffalo bean or pea vine) or introduced ones (such as clover or alfalfa).

"The productivity of that grass could be partially dependent upon forb (flowering plant) species that are present," said Carlyle. "Anything that is flowering is going to be dependent upon pollination and a lot of that is dependent upon insect pollinators."

So if pollinators disappear out of the rangeland ecosystem, then some plants, such as nitrogen-fixing legumes, will, too.

"If we start to lose (legumes) then we would see declines in productivity," said Carlyle. "Not to mention the loss in diversity in forage types on the landscape."

In Alberta, we don't know if native pollinators are on the decline. But Carlyle said other research indicates bumblebee numbers are falling. The exact cause isn't known but there are indications that their ranges are shifting and that a changing climate is a factor.

"Climate change is likely going to impact these native bees," said Carlyle. "They are getting 'squished' as the climate changes because southern areas will become too warm for them but their populations can't move north fast enough."

Helping them out

So what can grazers do to sustain a diverse and abundant pollinator community?

Keeping your range in good health tops the list.

"Our research has found a fairly strong positive relationship between range health and bee diversity and bee abundance," Carlyle said. "In general, a lack of invasive species, a diversity of plants, and the maintenance of structure is more conducive to a healthy pollinator community," added Hamel. "If you have land with flowers or flowering plants, that's a great start. Continue to maintain those habitats."

Diversity is also a good thing as shrubs and forest, grassland, and wetlands provide a variety of habitat for different pollinators. However, in the Aspen Parkland zone, keeping open meadows and prairie areas intact and free from shrub and tree encroachment benefits pollinators.

Having different types of grasses also helps.

"Bunchgrasses can be really important in terms of where they nest," said Hamel, noting butterflies complete their life cycle on the rangeland and the caterpillars will use grass as a source of food.

"Many native species are tied to native grasses."

Having nearby tame pastures can also be a plus as they provide an additional food source for pollinators, which can travel several hundred metres or even, for some species, a few kilometres.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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Saskatchewan Hay Market Report

As of March 31, 2017 the Saskatchewan Agriculture Forage, Feed and Custom Service Listing site has been discontinued.

The most recent crop report indicates that haying is wrapping up in some parts of the province, and that hay yields are reported as significantly lower than average. Some new crop hay listings were discovered, but there still appears to be very little forage on offer in Saskatchewan at this time. Average asking prices this week were:

Alfalfa-Grass Hay: \$151/metric tonne (6 offers), with some old crop or utility hay offered at \$30/bale

First Cut Alfalfa Hay: \$100-120/bale (2 offers)

Grass Hay: \$70-80/bale and \$110/metric tonne (3 offers)

Small Square Bales: \$5.56/bale average, with a range of \$4-\$10/bale, mainly mixed or grass hay

There were a number of listings for old and new crop hay for sale, with no associated price. There were also offers for standing hay for sale, with no pricing.

Hay wanted ads in the past week were mainly requests for horse hay, or small square bales. There were also requests for standing hay to cut or for hay to cut on shares. No prices were associated with these ads.

Note that very few ads include detailed forage quality analysis, or offer to provide these details. Before purchasing hay, be sure to ask for this information.

Wyoming Hay Report

Compared to last week alfalfa and alfalfa grass mix hay sold steady. Demand was light to moderate from the cow/calf ranchers with good demand from horse owners and very good demand on alfalfa cubes. Hay cubes area going to horse owners and cattlemen alike. Most cattlemen are dragging their feet on the asking price of the baled hay hoping it will sell at a lower price later this summer. According to the United States Drought Monitor, a swath of light to moderate precipitation fell in an area roughly covering north and east Wyoming, east Colorado and much of Nebraska and Kansas. Moderate drought was expanded in southwest Wyoming where it remained dry during the period. All prices are dollars per ton FOB the field or hay barn unless otherwise noted. Read the full report [here](#).

South Dakota Hay Report Compared to last week: Light reported sales again this week. Demand is light for low quality grinding cow hay, moderate to good for higher testing hay more suited for dairies. Interest is light to moderate. 3rd cutting alfalfa is underway and has potential to be some of the higher quality hay so far for the year as the weather pattern has been drier and lower humidity allowing hay to cure in a timely manner. Wheat harvest is in full swing which means new crop straw is starting to become available. South Dakota is experiencing limited drought characteristics currently, however much of the Southern Plains states and the South Western states are in Severe to Exceptional Drought (D2-D4). All hay and straw sold by the ton FOB, unless otherwise noted. Read the full report [here](#).

Weekly Montana Hay Report For July 27, 2018. ***Due to very light sales receipts this report will be released bi-monthly until early August when heavier receipts can be confirmed*** Compared to last week: Trade activity and demand moderate. Hay sales are light this week. Producers are getting calls from buyers out of the state where drought has affected hay supply. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor for the week of July 24, 2018, Montana has 24.98 percent of the state in a D0-D4 Drought Category, all located on the northern border. For the same week last year, Montana was rated 81.73 percent D0-D4. The next available report will be August 10, 2018. All prices are dollars per ton and FOB unless otherwise noted. Read the full report [here](#)

USDA Hay Prices for August 2, 2018

	Wyoming	Pipestone, MN	South Dakota	Montana
Alfalfa				
Premium	175-190 200**	-	200 210**	-
Good	150-160 160**	120-135*	170	-
Fair-Good	140-150	-	-	125-130 125-130*
Utility	-	70-80*	-	105-120 120*
Grass				
Premium	-	-	-	-
Good	-	-	140*	185**
Fair	-	80-100*	120*	-
Utility	-	-	100*	120-130 100* 130**
Timothy				
Premium	-	-	-	210**
Alfalfa/Grass				
Premium	185-190 200**		200**	-
Good	145-150 145*	-	150*	-
Fair	130	-	-	-
Utility	-	-	-	115
Barley Straw	60	-	-	-

*large rounds **small squares

All prices per ton and FOB stack, unless otherwise noted

The Saskatchewan Forage Council Gratefully Acknowledges funding for our 'Facilitating Forage Initiatives in Saskatchewan' project through the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association Industry Development Fund:



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Gold



Silver



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Bronze



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