



# Saskatchewan Hay & Pasture Report

Volume 20, Issue 4

October 29, 2019

The Saskatchewan Forage Council is pleased to bring you the fourth edition of the Hay & Pasture Report for 2019. Watch for the Forage Market Report, coming later this fall for more detailed information on forage trends and pricing. The Hay & Pasture Report will resume in the spring of 2020, as we begin a new year of forage production. We will continue to provide you with monthly updates through the Forage and Livestock eNews all year.

We'd love to hear from you! If you have ideas for article topics, forage research information to share or updates on forages from your part of the province, send us an email or share your thoughts with us on social media @saskforage.

To be added to our distribution list, contact [office@saskforage.ca](mailto:office@saskforage.ca). Visit our website [www.saskforage.ca](http://www.saskforage.ca) for updates and information from the forage industry.

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## Saskatchewan Agriculture Crop Report

For the period ending October 21, 2019



Many producers were able to continue with harvest operations last week as 83 per cent of the crop is now in the bin. This is up from 69 per cent last week but remains behind the five-year (2014-2018) average of 93 per cent for this time of year. Many areas received very little precipitation which meant more time in the field for producers. Warm, dry and windy days are needed for producers to keep making harvest progress.

Little precipitation was received across the province last week, however the Rhein area reported 12 mm of precipitation and the Barthel area 11 mm. Across the province, topsoil moisture conditions on cropland are rated as 18 per cent surplus, 76 per cent adequate, five per cent short and one per cent very short. Hay land and pasture topsoil moisture is rated as 10 per cent surplus, 81 per cent adequate, seven per cent short and two per cent very short. Some fields remain saturated with excess water, particularly in southern and east-central regions.

[Read the full report here](#)

## **Be nimble when swath or bale grazing**

Michaela King, Hay & Forage Grower publication, September 24, 2019

With winter fast approaching, some cattle will soon be in fields grazing on swaths and bales. Swath, stockpiled, and bale grazing are all ways to extend grazing time and are methods with economic benefits over traditional winter-feeding systems, including reduced labor, equipment, feed, and manure handling costs.

Much of our expertise in swath and bale grazing systems comes from our neighbors to the north. Speaking during one of Canada's Beef Cattle Research Council webinars, Vern Baron and John Duynisveld, research scientists for Agriculture Agri-Food Canada, discussed swath and bale grazing.

### **Match forage to the animal**

"Successful extended grazing programs match the energy requirements of the cow with the true quality of the forage and/or supplement being offered," Baron noted. Understanding the true quality of the forage is critical to having a successful grazing system.

During an extended grazing period, Baron explained that cattle require 20 percent more energy than in a drylot system due to the extra energy used to keep warm and to search for feed. Additionally, the differing conditions of the cattle change the amount of energy needed.

Dry cows in good body condition are best suited for extended grazing during winter, while weaned calves are the worst. Through the gestation period, cows require more nutrients, so provide higher quality forage, supplement nutrients, or change your management system as calving season approaches.

Both researchers recommend testing the feed and body condition scoring of the cows to determine the right option for your needs.

### **Change with the weather**

Being unprepared for the harsh conditions of unpredictable winters results in loss of body condition in cattle, which later causes calving issues including low calf birthing weights and desynchronized calving seasons. Duynisveld recommended controlling lice on cattle to promote a healthier and fuller coat throughout the winter.

During colder weather, cattle need high-energy feed. Duynisveld advised to move fences earlier and to not force cattle to finish swaths like in milder temperatures. Additionally, ensuring access to windbreaks promotes healthier cattle when the temperatures drop or the wind picks up.

Move cattle more often when mud becomes an issue. Use extra feed biomass to help cattle navigate on mud and minimize soil damage. Moving cattle more often during wet conditions reduces the risk of mud issues. Duynisveld also suggested moving cattle to pastures that will be tilled in the spring during muddy conditions. This prevents damage to pastures that you want to preserve for next year's grazing.

[Read more in the Hay & Forage Grower](#)

**Buyer Beware**



Andrea Hanson, Beef Extension Specialist, Alberta Agriculture  
Foothills Forage, posted September 20, 2019  
[www.foothillsforage.com](http://www.foothillsforage.com)

The quality and quantity of forage in Alberta, really Western Canada and below the 49th parallel, is extremely varied. Some producers have all they need, some are looking to buy and others have feed to sell. Those producers looking to buy forage feed need to be aware of the unwanted or unexpected plants they may be introducing to their farm or ranch through their purchases. It is very important to know what you're buying.

Not all plants are alike. Some plants are beneficial to the farm while others could cause big headaches. A producer may be willing to accept some plants while others are ones that are simply not acceptable. Weeds fall into three categories; common, noxious and prohibited noxious. The latter two categories could create long term problems for control.

It is important for the person growing the forage to know what is growing in the field when the forage is cut and baled. It is also important for the buyer to ask what possible weeds could be in the forage before buying it and introducing it to the land.

If the forage is being bought from the neighbor across the fence, chances are, the weed species are close to the same. Wildlife are a very effective way of spreading seeds throughout the countryside.

If the feed is coming from a significant distance, the weed issues in one area could be very different than the weeds in another and by moving the forage in, weed problems are introduced.

[Read the full article here](#)

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## Light Farming: Restoring carbon, organic nitrogen and biodiversity to agricultural soils

Christine Jones, PhD, Founder, Amazing Carbon

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

Imagine there was a process that could remove carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere, replace it with life-giving oxygen, support a robust soil microbiome, regenerate topsoil, enhance the nutrient density of food, restore water balance to the landscape and increase the profitability of agriculture?

Fortunately, there is.

It's called photosynthesis.

### The power of photosynthesis

In the miracle of photosynthesis, a process that takes place in the chloroplasts of green leaves, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the air and water (H<sub>2</sub>O) from the soil, are combined to capture light energy and transform it to biochemical energy in the form of simple sugars.

These simple sugars - commonly referred to as 'photosynthate' - are the building blocks for life in and on the earth. Plants transform sugar to a great diversity of other carbon compounds, including starches, proteins, organic acids, cellulose, lignin, waxes and oils.

Fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and grains are 'packaged sunlight' derived from photosynthesis. The oxygen our cells and the cells of other living things utilise during aerobic respiration is also derived from photosynthesis.

We have a lot to thank green plants for!!

Significantly, many of the carbon compounds derived from the simple sugars formed during photosynthesis are also essential to the creation of well-structured topsoil from the lifeless mineral soil produced by the weathering of rocks.

Without photosynthesis there would be no soil.

Weathered rock minerals, yes ... but fertile topsoil, no.

### **The plant-microbe bridge**

It comes as a surprise to many to learn that over 95% of life on land resides in soil - and that most of the energy for this amazing world beneath our feet is derived from plant carbon.

Exudates from living roots are the most energy-rich of these carbon sources. In exchange for 'liquid carbon', microbes in the vicinity of plant roots - and microbes linked to plants via networks of beneficial fungi - increase the availability of the minerals and trace elements required to maintain the health and vitality of their hosts (1, 2). Microbial activity also drives the process of aggregation, enhancing soil structural stability, aeration, infiltration and water-holding capacity. All living things - above and below ground - benefit when the plant-microbe bridge is functioning effectively.

[Read more](#)

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## **Cows and Chaos: Feed, Forage and Management Strategies**

A webinar series from the Alberta Ag-Info Centre that run from July to October 2019 is now available to view on YouTube. Topics include working with cropping neighbours to salvage crops for feed; using hay land for grazing; fall and winter feeding strategies and much more.

Each video in the series is approximately one hour long.

View the series on the Alberta Agriculture and Forestry YouTube Channel at:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOUwF01x2YXoKNzC0qd0\\_CO3tM5ZcDG](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOUwF01x2YXoKNzC0qd0_CO3tM5ZcDG)

or view all the Alberta Agriculture [video playlists here.](#)

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## **Saskatchewan Hay Market Report**

The Saskatchewan forage market through October continued to see change from August. Trades occurred quickly and at a higher price in August, compared to today. Listings are seen throughout the province for good quality forage of all classes:

Alfalfa/grass:\$150/ mt (26)

Alfalfa 1st cut:\$180/mt (8)

Grass:\$121/ mt (9)

Greenfeed:\$113/mt (8)

Straw:\$59/ mt (31)

Pulse:\$72/ mt (6)

While listings are adequate, there is low palatability from buyers to purchase currently. Low-priced forages are continuing to trade, but at a slower pace than two months ago. Indications are that short-term needs have been taken care of, and many livestock producers will see how winter unfolds before acquiring any additional feed in late winter. The supply and demand situation has changed from a year ago. In October 2018, we saw high prices and short supply in all forage classes. This fall, a decent to excellent greenfeed crop province-wide filled most supply gaps left by lower perennial hay yields.

The prolonged harvest strongly influences the forage market. Historically, bouts of precipitation throughout harvest causes crops to move to the salvage market and 2019 is no exception. Trades between neighbours dominate this market. More salvage greenfeed entering the market has a price-lowering effect on all forage classes. While the quality of salvaged crops may be poorer, feed testing followed by supplementation can make up for nutritional shortfalls.

Producers are continuing to face challenges putting up planned greenfeed, baling straw, and rolling up salvaged crops as of October 25th. An open November will be needed by many to finish these tasks.

## USDA Market News Service Hay Report

October 25, 2019

### Wyoming Hay Report

Compared to last week hay sold mostly steady. Demand was moderate to good. Several hay contacts still trying to put up their final bales of alfalfa and other forages. Most reports of overall tonnage a little less than previous years and most producers struggled to put up a lot of top-quality hay. Note: "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: Alfalfa hay remains steady to firm, especially for large squares. Demand very good for high quality hay of all kinds, best demand is for large square bales bound for out of state buyers. The demand for round bales is much lower as this supply is much more plentiful. Frequent rains and humid conditions this summer made it very difficult to make large square bales that would not spoil, which resulted in a lighter supply. More rain and cool temps keeping producers from cutting and baling cover crops. All hay and straw sold by the ton FOB, unless otherwise noted. Read the report [here](#).

**Montana Hay Report** Compared to last week: Alfalfa hay sold steady to firm. Moderate market activity was seen again this week. Ranchers continue to be more active in purchasing hay this week. Demand for squares to ship east to Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa is very good. A very wet summer in the northern plains has led to a shortage of hay in those states. Producers continue to finish putting up hay for the season. Early season snow storms and a relatively cool summer have many producers behind in finishing up haying season. All prices are dollars per ton and FOB unless otherwise noted. View the report [here](#).

USDA Hay Prices for October 25, 2019

	Wyoming	South Dakota	Montana
Alfalfa			
Supreme	195-200	-	160-170
Premium	180 200-270**	215-250	150-175 225-250**
Good	150-165	175-225	125-140 110-120* 175-180**
Fair-Good	-	-	110-125 75-100* 125-150**
Fair	120-140	175-225 140*	-
Utility-Fair	-	165	70-110 140-160*
Grass			
Premium		-	150 125*
Good	-	120*	130 85-110*
Fair	-	85*	100-125 75-80*
Utility	-	65*	65-75*
Timothy Grass			
Premium	235-250**	-	240-270**
Good		-	160-180**
Alfalfa/Grass			
Premium	230	200-225	180**
Good	200-215	-	130 125-135*
Fair	-	-	100-110 75-90*
Straw	70-80	110	35-45

\*large rounds \*\*small squares  
All prices per ton and FOB stack, unless otherwise noted

To read the full reports and to view the hay quality designations - physical descriptions [click here](#).

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