

August 2008

NORTHWEST LINK

Thunder Bay * Rainy River * Kenora Districts

Northwestern Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Associations

Job Opportunity

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To coordinate Soil and Crop activities in the
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Please forward resume with hand written letter of
introduction before August 22, 2008 to Bruce Forrest,
RR6, Thunder Bay, On P7C 5N5
or via fax 807 577 0184

This newsletter is published monthly except for the month of
December. Articles should be submitted by the 15th of the
month prior to the publishing month. Material in this newsletter
is based upon factual information believed to be accurate.
Action taken as a result of this information is solely the
responsibility of the user. We reserve the right to edit articles.

Ontario Forage Council Launches New "Hay Listings Service"

The Ontario Hay Listings Service was created by
the Ontario Forage Council to provide livestock
producers with information on forage availability.
This service is provided free of charge. This Hay
Listings site is a self service tool, that enables
buyers and sellers of hay (and straw), in Canada and
the U.S. to announce and search available or needed
hay lots.

Ontario Forage Council will officially launched the
"Ontario Hay Listings Service"
"www.ontariohaylistings.ca", at the Ontario
Forage Expo, held on the farm of Don & Robin
Rowntree, south of Georgetown, on Tuesday, July
22nd, 2008.

Both hay producers and consumers have often
commented, that there is a real need for a hay (and
straw) listings service here in Ontario. This site has
been designed with dial-up users in mind, and with
the objective of being as simplistic, and yet efficient
as possible. Our mission is to provide an easy and
effective process of bringing hay producers and
buyers together. We trust that the format will be
user-friendly, and enable people to readily obtain
the information and service they are requiring.

Further information can be obtained by contacting
the office of the Ontario Forage Council at 877-892-
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OCA Age Verification

The Ontario Cattlemen's Association has continued the Age Verification(AV) Program for the 2007 and 2008 calf crops. The AV Program was initiated to encourage age verification and increase demand for Ontario cattle. It is open to all beef producers in Ontario(calves sold for dairy purposes are ineligible in this program). As an incentive there is a credit of \$3.00/ calf for each 2007 calf (not previously enrolled in MAP) that is age verified and \$ 5.00/calf for each 2008 calf.

Age verification is already showing an advantage:

- to qualify for "Age Verified Sales
- to qualify for some "Branded Beef" Programs
- to avoid the "Over Thirty Month" discount (dentition has a large margin of error)
- to receive a premium for under 21 month animals marketed to Japan

As market restrictions and consumer demand for quality assurance increases, the Age Verification Program is in place to send a message that this industry is moving forward and doing things that shift the marketplace preference to Ontario Beef.

For further information contact:

Debra Garner

Age Verification Technician for N.Ont

(705) 563-2761

dgarner@ontera.net



Alta Genetics Inc.

Willem Vellinga
Alta Dairy Representative

Phone: 807-475-9515
Email: lwvellinga@air.on.ca

Upcoming Dates

August 10, 2008
Semen Order
Call Kim Jo 482-2863

August 13, 2008
RRCA Directors Meeting
Stratton
7:30 p.m.

August 15 & 16th
Emo Fall Fair

August 21, 22 & 23
Dryden Fall Fair

August 23, 2008
Wedding Social
For Jeff Teeple & Kelly Robinson
Barwick Hall

September 6, 2008
Cattle Sale
Stratton Sales Barn
Call - Clayton Teeple 807-487-1465

September 17, 2008
RRCA Director's Meeting
Stratton 7:30 p.m.

September 27, 2008
Fall - Harvest Dinner
Contact Jeanette Cawston 807-482-3983

October 4, 2008
Cattle Sale
Stratton Sales Barn
Contact Clayton Teeple 807-487-1465

October 25, 2008
Cattle Sales
Stratton Sales Barn
Contact Clayton Teeple 807-487-1466
(Please let Clayton know if you have any breeding stock for this Sale!)

November 1, 2008
Hereford / Hereford Influence Sale - 1st Annual
Stratton Sales Barn - Sale begins 1:00 p.m. - preview prior
Contact Aaron Kuorikoski 807-483-5428

Mark Your Calendars Now!

Hay Preservatives

This is quite a year. Very hard to make dry hay. I have been getting a few calls about Hay Preservatives. I do know much. Personally I have used Silo Guard for a number of years. Silo Guard II contains a patented combination of sulphur salts and amylase resulting in cooler hay and silage. The sulphur salts produce gases which:

- *limit plant cell respiration in the forage mass
- *reduce the amount of yeast and mold
- *reduce temperature after baling.

This results in cooler hay after baling, greater dry matter recovery and fresher, more palatable hay at feedout.

When used in Hay, it produces greener hay - leafier and more nutritious, reduces heating and spoilage - retains more quality nutrients, more high quality nutrients - helps to increase mild production and increases dry matter recovery - improves gain and efficiency. If you would like to try this product or get further information -- contact Jason Teeple @ 807-487-9955 or jkteeple@jam21.net

Kim Jo Bliss



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North West Link Report July '08

Greetings from EARS! It is hard to believe it is the end of July. I was just saying to my students the other day, most days in July when you get to work at 8:00 a.m. – you are already HOT; not this year.

Weather Update –

	2006	2007	2008
CHU (until the end of June)	1163	1216	627

Rain (mm) (until July 22)	179.8	354	321
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So, you can see it is not so wet, but it is for sure cool. I, like everyone, am sure counting on a nice fall.

Here at EARS, the cereals have pretty much all headed out. The Wheat and Oats are looking O.K., but the Barley is pretty sad. All our crops are suffering but there is not much we can do. We have planted everything in the driest areas and still they are not doing so well. Just a reminder we would have nothing if it wasn't for the tiled land, but the tile problem we are having near the back of the station is creating bigger and bigger problems.

Our first cut forages were pretty good. I will highlight a few of the yields;
In the Kura Clover Establishment Trial, top plot was the Reed Canary Grass & Kura Clover @ 3587 kg/ha
In the Reed Canary Grass for Hay / Hay/Pasture Systems – the top plot was Kura Clover, Reed Canary Grass & Tall Fescue @ 4894 kg/ha – keep in mind both of these trials are not 8 years old.
In our Legume Filler Blocks that were planted last year, the Leo Trefoil yielded 3063 kg/ha, the Starbuck Alfalfa 3168 kg/ha, the Cicer Milkvetch 1358 kg/ha, the Crown Vetch 360 kg/ha.
This spring we planted Sainfoin and Cicer Milkvetch. Sainfoin is adapted to deep, well drained soils and produces well under a one cut or rotational grazing productions systems. AC Oxley II Cicer Milkvetch is a bloat-free legume suitable for pastures. Neither of these will yield like our Alfalfa or Trefoil, but you do not need to worry

about bloat. The Sainfoil has established well, and the Cicer Milkvech not so well – so we will have to leave it and see what we have next year.

Our Open House was a busy night. The FedNor Official was in the District so they decided to BBQ at EARS. It is estimated that we had approximately 100 people. We had a great tour, but for the first time we had to really watch our tour route since we had some pretty wet areas we had to avoid. I would like to thank everyone for coming; it was a beautiful evening so I know many were trying to make hay. (I understand.) I would like to thank Jeanette our FedNor Ag. Coordinator for looking after the BBQ – and getting her sisters to come and help her – I didn't have to worry about that at all.

The following day was the Annual Rainy River Soil & Crop Improvement Association. Again, it was a very successful day. It turned out to be a beautiful day as well – so many locals were in the hay field but others managed to spare a few hours and participate. It was great to have our friends from Dryden. Our first stop was at Bernie Zimmerman's (Emo Holsteins) – Bernie shared with us his new purchase, his "Ag Bagger" – and his experience with growing corn. We then moved on to Ted Zimmerman's (Zimmerman Farms) – he showed us his field of barley, under seeded to red clover and sweet clover. He plans to make green feed out of his barley and then plough in his re-growth of clovers. We then stopped by Harry Steiner's (Sunrise Equipment) to re-visit the soil and crop equipment that is for rent. John Vandenbrand (Dutch Pride Farms) then led the way to one of his pasture sites and his new winter watering unit. John partnered with CFWIP and put in a solar water system that he used with great success throughout the winter. John was kind enough to allow us to eat our lunch on his lawn and we then moved down the road with Amos Brielmann (Pine River Ranch). Amos started us off at his Switch Grass and Reed Canary Grass project. The Switch Grass was much slower than his Reed Canary Grass but both grasses were present. He is a part of the project with Abitibi. We then went and looked at some of his Green Manure fields. Amos is organic so this type of work is a must for him and as for the rest of us, the high price of fertilizer is making this more

attractive. Amos had a great stand of Red Clover. The hard part is thinking of putting this back into the ground with such a successful catch – Amos has now found that you should cut your stand early and then just plough in the re-growth later in the fall. We visited his Oat / Pea field, that is under seeded to both red clover and sweet clover – he will make green field out of the Oat / Pea mixture and plough down his clovers. Amos then showed us some of his erosion control – water crossings. A great deal of time and effort had been put into this (not to mention \$) and Amos should be commended on having the vision to be so environmentally correct. It was also nice to have Gary Sliworsky, our Local Ag. Rep, Jack Kyle from Lindsay, the Pasture Specialist for OMAFRA, and Colin Langford, from MNR present at our Open House and Tour. We appreciate and thank them for their time and effort.

I think I have rambled on long enough. So please drop in for a tour if you were unable to make the Open House, you are welcome anytime. This next little while we might be away from the Station as we are trying to collect our tree data – these wet days are not making it so easy or enjoyable.

Thanks for your support.

Kim Jo Bliss
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AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON AGRICORP

STATEMENT FROM MINISTER DOMBROWSKY WITH REGARD TO THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON AGRICORP

I would like to thank the Auditor General of Ontario for the tremendous effort he and his staff put into the value-for-money audit of Agricorp, which I received yesterday. I look forward to considering his recommendations.

As Minister, my most important task is to provide essential support to the farmers of Ontario. They told me of their concerns with regard to the timeliness and accuracy of Agricorp's program delivery. I requested the value-for-money audit. Now I am asking Ontario's farmers to review the auditor's findings.

The report is available at http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/reports_en.htm or by contacting the Auditor General of Ontario's office. I would encourage farmers to read the report carefully, and provide me with the feedback I need to make a considered decision

I look forward to receiving the advice of farmers from across the province on this important issue by mid-September, 2008.

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Email: lindat@tbaytel.net

AGRICULTURE in the CLASSROOM & DAIRY EDUCATION programs, DRYDEN, Ont.

As the school year 2007/2008 has come to an end, I have summarized the activities and initiatives of Dryden's Dairy Education and Agriculture in the Classroom Programs, starting in January to June 2008:

I was invited to facilitate Dairy Farmers of Ontario's POWER 4 BONES Program in two Grade 5 classes at New Prospect Public School, Dryden, which resulted in:

14 Classroom Presentations on the topics of nutrition and processing of dairy products.

Together with a director of the Dryden & District Agricultural Society, we were able to do

4 Classroom Presentations to introduce "Chick hatching" as a classroom project. We provided ongoing support to the teachers until the projects were successfully completed.

I was able to do 1 Classroom Presentation to introduce students to the social studies topic of pioneer/modern farming.

We assisted with 8 Elementary Teachers with resources (teaching kits, books, tools) from our resource library.

I organized and accompanied 1 Farm Tour for three Grade 3 classes from New Prospect Public School, Dryden, Ont.

My gratitude to RHYNER'S Green Acres Dairy Farm, EGLI'S Sheep Farm and GRIFFITH'S Robin Hill Farm. Due to the unstable weather we couldn't complete the tour, as planned, but I am thankful for the cooperation and investment of time by the farmers.

2 Displays - Kenora District Soil and Crop Improvement Association's Spring Conference and - Community Information Meeting - Manitoba's Conservative Party Representatives

I also participated with: - an informational teleconference with Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc.,

- attended the OAAS Annual Convention (presentation)
- attended the Dryden & District Chamber of Commerce "Business of Excellence" awards banquet (nomination for Business Award in Education) - continuously volunteer with the Dryden Community Garden initiatives

I declined to attend this year's Dairy Farmers of Ontario's Education Training Seminar for Dairy Educators to be held July 26 - 29, 2008 in Mississauga, Ont. This seminar focuses on the introduction of new resources and implementation in the classroom. Other sessions include classroom management issues, sharing of successful activities, incorporating new media equipment as a learning tool and other topics.


Dairy Farmers of Ontario and the Rainy River Dairy Producers continuously support initiatives in the Dryden area on behalf of the dairy industry.
THANK YOU!

My task during the summer will be to update resources as they become available and assess existing resources. I have received a variety of agricultural books from a local elementary school which was closed this June. These books will be a great addition to our resource library, once they are sorted and labeled.

I am pleased to be able to report another year of success for our programs and the support and recognition they receive.

THANK YOU to the Dryden & District Agricultural Society for their willingness to assist with our efforts as needed.

Christel Kamm



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Weather at TBARS during June - July 2008

Harjit Dhillon, Technician TBARS

Average maximum temperature in June 2008 was 19.7 °C (~1°C degree below normal) and the average minimum temperature was 7.5°C; almost the same as in 2006 and 2007. Total rainfall (186.3 mm) was 100 mm above the average rainfall. The Corn Heat Units (CHU) were 418 and the Growing Degree Days (GDD) were 286 – lower than that during the past couple of Junes.

In July 2008 (up to the 20th), the average maximum and minimum temperatures recorded were 21.3°C and 10.9°C, respectively, which appeared to be below normal. CHU and GDD, 370 and 241, were also below normal. Total rainfall during this period was 89 mm.

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More than \$900,000 in funding will support 29 volunteer stewardship projects in eastern Ontario this year under the province's Species at Risk Stewardship Fund.

Proposals to increase awareness of at-risk species of turtles and snakes, monitor nesting success of black terns, and develop disease-resistant butternut trees are among the projects supporting public outreach and education initiatives and a variety of stewardship activities to protect and restore species and essential habitat.

The \$18-million, four-year Species at Risk Stewardship Fund is part of the Ministry of Natural Resources' stewardship-first approach to species protection, and is available to landowners, farmers, Aboriginal peoples, academic institutions, industries, municipalities, conservation organizations, stewardship councils and others across the province for eligible protection and recovery activities.

**Great Lakes CSA Conference
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<http://www.csaconference2008.ca/home.html>




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If you are willing to take risk

Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota CCA

Every business has an element of risk. Agriculture is more risky than other businesses. At times it pays to take risk. If you are a risk taker, try seeding winter barely (variety McGregor; seed source Hyland Seeds, Telephone 800-265-5225) this fall. If 2008 fall is as good as 2004 and 2005 falls and spring 2009 is as good as springs of 2005 and 2006, winter barley is likely to give double grain yield than the spring barley. However, if the 2008-'09 winter is as bad as 2006-'07 winter or if 2009 spring is as bad as 2008 spring, winter barley could be a total failure. The only loss in that case would be the cost of seed and seeding. Winter barley fields in the event of winter kill could be (direct) reseeded in spring with spring barley. Optimism tells us that all years can not be bad. Risk takers may therefore try seeding winter barley this fall. Mid September is the optimum time for seeding winter barley (see TBARS Annual Report 2006). Seed rate for winter barley is about 15% higher than that for spring barley. Phosphate (prefer 11-52-0) and potash should be applied based on soil test and OMAFRA recommendations. Apply nitrogen (N) @ 80 kg N/ha (50 kg ammonium sulphate + 150 kg urea/ha) in the spring if the crop survives through the winter and early spring. In case you choose not to apply 11-52-0 at seeding, increase nitrogen application rate from 80 to 90 kg N/ha. Winter barley can smother annual weeds. Perennial weeds could be controlled by a pre seeding application of Round Up when the weeds are actively growing.

If you are not willing to take risk, go for winter wheat. Fields that could not be seeded this spring could be the best fit for seeding winter wheat. Go for a nitrate nitrogen test in fallow fields before seeding. If the test indicates 40 ppm nitrogen, you can grow a bumper winter wheat crop without application of nitrogen. Forage legumes and grasses fields, in the final harvest year, could also be brought under winter wheat cultivation. It may be advisable not to take a second harvest in these fields for an effective burn down of perennial weeds and crops before seeding winter wheat. Our experience at the Thunder Bay Agricultural

Research Station shows that entire nitrogen to winter wheat can be applied at seeding time. We didn't get any significant difference in grain yield of winter wheat by applying entire amount of nitrogen either in fall or in spring or a part in fall and the rest in spring. Therefore you may apply a blend of 100 kg ammonium sulphate + 220 kg urea/ha at seeding that will supply 120 kg N/ha. Environmental concerns about nitrogen application in the fall are not necessarily always genuine. We found that when we applied entire nitrogen to winter wheat in the fall, ~70 % of profile (0-90 cm) nitrate nitrogen, in spring, was in 0-60 cm soil, and the rest in 60-90 cm soil depth. Winter wheat is known to remove nitrogen from up to 120 cm (4 feet) soil depth. Timely (August 25 – September 5) seeded winter wheat can remove up to 40 % of applied N before it goes to winter. For other useful tips on winter wheat cultivation, please refer to my article, "Tips for winter wheat cultivation" in Northwest Link, August 2007, Pages 13-14 ([http://www.tbars.net/Tips_for_winter_wheat_cultivation\[1\].pdf](http://www.tbars.net/Tips_for_winter_wheat_cultivation[1].pdf)). You will find some other useful articles at our website (www.tbars.net).

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**Canadian Organic Regulations –
Update**

*By Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program
Lead OMAFRA*

The Canadian Organic Regulations will be implemented on December 14, 2008. The Organic Products Regulation was published in 2006 with a two year implementation period. We now have 5 months left.

The Regulations will give federal oversight to the organic certification system in Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will be the competent authority for organic certification and enforcement in Canada. The new regulations apply to import, export and inter-provincial trade. The regulations also introduce a new organic logo for Canada that can be used by anyone certified under the regulations.

The regulations reference the Canadian Organic Standards which is two documents: One outlining the Principles and major requirements for certified organic; the second being the Permitted Substances List. Products produced and sold within Ontario are not required to be under the federal regulation but in many cases markets will require certification to the federal regulation.

Since Dec. 2006 there has been a lot of activity to update a number of outstanding issues in the standards. Many of these are editorial. Some are intended to clarify clauses that were commented on in 2006. These changes are currently being finalized and have been balloted by the Canadian General Standards Board process. The finalized standards will now be sent to the Standards Council of Canada for approval as a Canadian Standard. It is also expected that the regulation will be amended due to a couple issues that have arisen since 2006. All standards and regulatory revisions are expected to be finalized by December 14, 2008.

CFIA has established the Canada Organic Office (COO) to manage the new regulations. COO has also been working to establish the accreditation system for Certification Bodies in Canada. They will be recognizing the Accreditation Advisory Bodies and Certification Bodies once they have been accredited. In Ontario, I expect most of the major certification bodies that are currently operating here will be accredited to the new Canada Organic Regulations. Watch for more information from your certification body.

Two links for more info:

Organic Food and Farming Certification

<http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/certification.htm>

CFIA Canadian Organic Office

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/otf/gtspbe.shtml>

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Wood Ash Available

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Spontaneous Combustion and Hay Fires

By Harold House, OMAFRA staff

Lives have been lost and hay crops destroyed because of fires caused by spontaneous combustion. This year has been particularly bad for hay heating due to the hot humid weather. If the hay crop is put into the mow above 20-25% moisture content, spontaneous combustion may occur.

A hay crop that is placed too wet into a mow will heat rapidly. If the mow is so large that heat loss is restricted, the internal temperature will rise. As the temperature rises above 130°F (55°C), a chemical reaction occurs and may sustain itself. This reaction does not require oxygen, but the flammable gases produced are at a temperature above their ignition point. These gases will ignite when they come in contact with the air.

Check your hay regularly. If you detect a slight caramel odour or a distinct musty smell, chances are your hay is heating.

What do you do if you suspect that your hay is heating? First of all, make yourself a simple probe that can be inserted into the hay mass to check the temperature. A probe can be made from a 10 foot piece of electrical tubing. Rivet a hardwood pointed dowel to one end and drill 8 - 3/16 inch diameter holes in the tube just above the dowel. Drive the probe into the hay mass and lower a candy thermometer on a long string into the probe. The thermometer should be left for 10 minutes to ensure an accurate reading.

Watch for the following temperatures:

150°F (65°C) **** Entering the Danger Zone.**

Check temperature daily.

160°F (70°C) **** Danger!** Measure temperature every four hours and inspect mow.

175°F (80°C) **** Call the Fire Department!** Wet hay down and remove from the barn.

185°F (85°C) **** Hot Spots and Pockets May be Expected.** Flames will likely develop when heating hay comes in contact with the air.

212°F (100°C) **Critical!** Temperature rise is rapid above this point. Hay will almost certainly ignite.

Caution: Before entering the mow, place long planks on top of the hay. Do not attempt to walk on the hay mass itself. Pockets may have already burned out under the hay surface. Always tie a rope around your waist and have a second person on the other end in a safe location to pull you out should the surface of the hay collapse into a fire pocket.

Extreme caution should be taken when fighting a hay fire if hay has been treated with chemical preservatives. Hay treated with preservatives containing ethoxyquin and BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene) will produce hydrogen cyanide gas at around 240°F (115°C). This gas is very deadly. Additives containing primarily propionic acid do not produce hydrogen cyanide during a fire.

Many farmers sprinkle salt on hay as it is stored, in an effort to prevent hay fires. However, tests have shown that salt has no effect on controlling spontaneous combustion. Dry ice, liquid nitrogen or carbon dioxide gas pumped into the hay will prevent combustion by eliminating the oxygen from the hay mass.

Spontaneous combustion is not an accident. By following good storage practices, not only will spontaneous combustion be avoided, but a higher quality of hay will be obtained.

Expensive Fertilizer and The Cost of Making Hay

by Joel Bagg, Forage Specialist, OMAFRA,

As the fertilizer bills are coming in, many of us are suffering from sticker shock. Not too long ago it would have been a stretch to imagine \$650 urea, \$1,200 MAP and \$600 muriate of potash. Livestock producers producing their own forage and using manure to manage their fertility will be much less impacted than those cash cropping grain and hay. How will high commercial fertilizer costs and increased commodity and land prices affect forage production?

P and K Removal

Forage crops have high nutrient requirements.

With a mixed alfalfa-grass stand, the value of the phosphorous and potassium removed is currently about **2.1¢ / lb** (or \$46 / tonne) of dry hay harvested. Grasses contain a little less P and K, so about **1.8¢ / lb** (\$40 / tonne) are removed. As an example, assuming a mixed stand with a modest yield of 3.2 tonnes (3.5 tons) per year, hay will remove about 57 lbs of P2O5 and 206 lbs of K2O, with a value of \$147/acre (assuming P2O5 @ \$1.05/lb and K2O @ \$0.46/lb).

Without manure or commercial fertilizer, the soil test will drop quickly. Assuming that it takes about 35 lbs/ac of P2O5 and 20 lbs/ac of K2O to move the soil tests by 1 ppm on some soils, after only 4 years the P2O5 soil test could drop by 7 ppm and the K2O by 41 ppm. This is commonly referred to as “soil mining”, and is not sustainable.

With the increase in fertilizer prices, you may question whether you can afford this expense, but the short and long term costs of poor fertility is much higher than the cost of the fertilizer.

Impacts On Pricing Standing Hay

Historically, standing hay has often been a good buy. With higher corn, soybean and wheat prices, we are seeing higher hay prices in the market. Land rental rates have increased, and there is competition for acreage from these other crops. If you consider an opportunity cost for land rental, P and K removal, and an amortized establishment cost, that historic 1 - 2¢ / lb of standing hay is way under the mark today. For example, as a starting point for negotiations, what would be a possible value for a field of standing hay yielding 3.2 tonne/ac (3.5 ton/ac), that could rent as bare land for \$175/ac? This pencils out to about 2.1¢ for P and K removal, plus 2.5 ¢ / lb land rental, plus about 0.7 ¢ / lb in amortized establishment costs, for a total of about **5.3¢ / lb**. Even an old grassy field yielding only 2.5 tonnes/ac (2.75 tons/ac) grown on land that might rent for \$50/ac, without any amortized establishment costs (because it is so old), might be worth about **2.7¢ / lb** (1.8¢ P and K removal plus 0.9¢/lb land rental value).

Livestock still needs to be fed. Will and more importantly can the market pay these kinds of prices? I don't know, but if it doesn't there may be a lot of hay acres move to other crops.

N Value of Alfalfa Plowdown

When penciling the value of growing the various crops, don't forget to consider the nitrogen value when alfalfa is plowed down. A stand that is one-half or more legume contributes about 110 kg N/ha (100 lb/ac). At current nitrogen values, this is equivalent to about \$63/ac. Stands that are only one-third to one-half legume get a N credit of about 55 kg/ha (49 lb/ac), for a value of \$31. Research also shows that in addition to the nitrogen credit, there is a yield benefit of alfalfa plowdown to corn of about 10 - 15%.

Soil Sample

With higher fertilizer prices, you may want to target your fertilizer applications more strategically than in the past. Take soil samples after first-cut to guide fertilizer applications later in the summer. If the K soil test of the field is below 150 ppm, you can expect a response to adding potassium. In addition, low P and K fertility will reduce the longevity of the stand substantially. Consider topdressing fields with commercial fertilizer or manure following one of the cuts during the summer.

Manure Getting More Respect

As fertilizer prices keep going up, manure is getting more and more respect! Maintaining fertility is much easier and less expensive for forage producers when manure is available. The best option because of the highest economic return from the nitrogen is still to spring apply manure to corn crops in the rotation. However, there are some advantages to applying manure to forage, including potential yield benefits, spreading the workload, reducing manure storage requirements, preventing soil compaction, and reducing environmental risk.

Higher hay, land and input costs means we need to do the best we can in growing, harvesting and storing our forage crops to maximize yield and quality, and minimize losses. Refer to “Pricing Standing Hay” and “Manure Application To Forages - An Economical Alternative” on the www.omafr.ca/english/crops/field/forages.html.

Thunder Bay Fall Crop Tour
September 9th 10 a.m.
Tour starts at Breukelman's Potato Farm

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