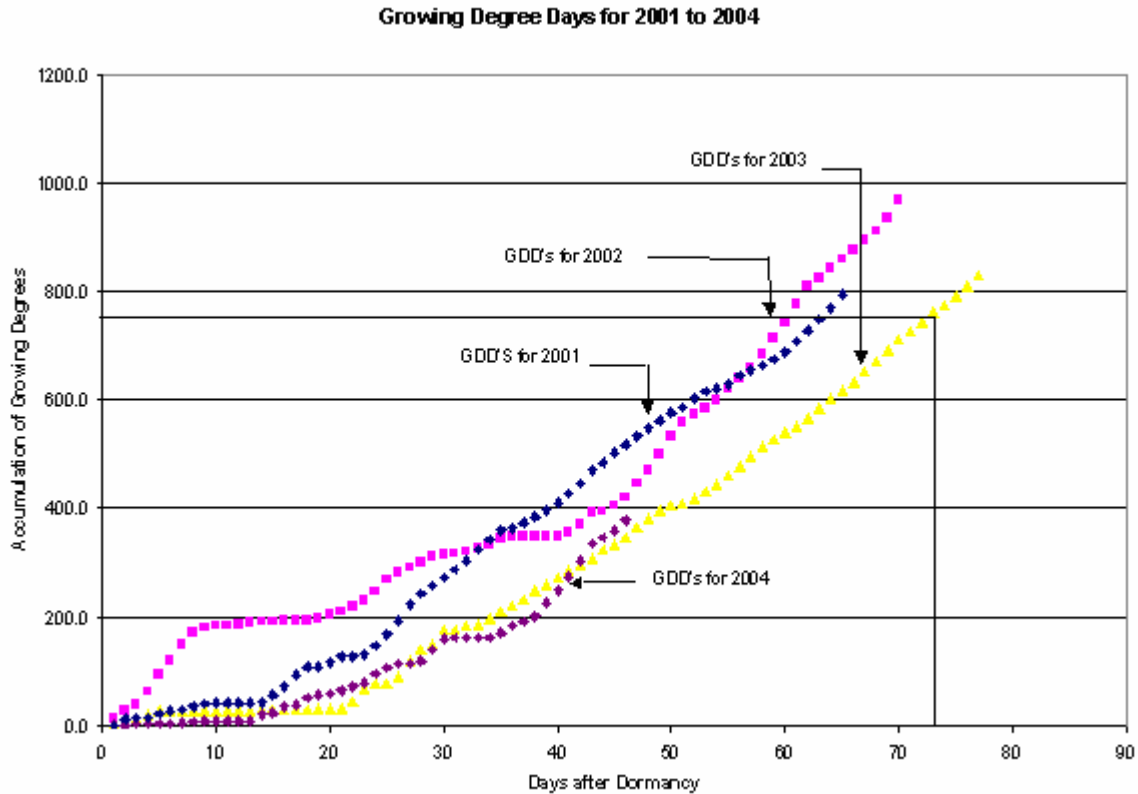


MEASURE AND MANAGE

Growing Degree Days and Forage Harvesting



As spring progresses and fields green up, there is an interest among forage producers as to what they might anticipate with respect to this year's crop. The best that we have to offer is reflecting on previous years and keeping abreast of what is happening this year so far.

From the graph above, the accumulation of growing degrees has been comparable to last year. To date we have been slightly below or slightly above last year's curve. The recent trend is slightly higher than last year, and the difference seems to be due to higher nighttime temperatures. This also promotes more rapid growth in forages.

Moderate to cool temperatures encourages grass growth. Warm temperatures encourage alfalfa growth. Elevated temperatures result in higher lignin values which can have an impact on digestibility.

As of May 20th, we have accumulated two hundred forty-two growing degrees (in degrees C) or four hundred thirty-six growing degrees (in degrees F). Cutting date target is around seven hundred sixty growing degrees (F degrees).

Daytime high of 20 °C and nighttime low of 11°C will result in an additional 20 growing degrees.

Results of scissors cuttings from fields within the Embro area are as follows:

Alfalfa: values as % Dry Matter

| Date | Protein | ADF | NDF | Lignin | Starch |
|--------|---------|------|-----|--------|--------|
| May 06 | 34 | 18 | 26 | 4.5 | 0.8 |
| May 10 | 30 | 18.5 | 27 | 4.5 | 1.7 |
| May 13 | 31 | 25 | 35 | 5.1 | 1.4 |
| May 17 | 27 | 23 | 29 | 4.8 | 1.9 |
| May 20 | 26 | 26 | 31 | 5.0 | 1.6 |

Grass: Values as % Dry Matter

| Date | Protein | ADF | NDF | Lignin | Starch |
|--------|---------|-----|-----|--------|--------|
| May 06 | 21.5 | 25 | 48 | 3.2 | 1.8 |
| May 10 | 21.5 | 27 | 54 | 3.5 | 1.8 |
| May 13 | 21 | 34 | 55 | 2.9 | 1.5 |
| May 17 | 19 | 35 | 58 | 2.6 | 1.7 |
| May 20 | 16.5 | 35 | 58 | 3.2 | 1.9 |

Fields that contain mixtures of both grass and alfalfa are more difficult to predict, but by approximating the composition, you can gauge when harvesting may be close.