

June 2009 Service Bulletin

Forage Stand Management:

Many alfalfa fields suffered slight to significant damage over the winter. Fields that were damaged beyond salvaging have been ploughed and planted. Fields that were not severely damaged have been interseeded with rye grass, cereals or sorghum/sudan grass. Others are being left to take at least one cutting. There is some growth emerging from the exposed crowns, although it is doubtful that this growth will be able to catch up by harvest time. Some fields did not suffer any visible damage and look very promising with respect to yield and quality.

This season has been cooler than last year. The average daily growing degree gain over 54 days since dormancy break has been 8°F. In 2008, the average was 10.1°F.

The forage quality values corresponding to this time period (May 29th) were:

	Protein	ADF	NDF	Lignin
Alfalfa	22.6	27.99	34.61	7.1
Grass	15.1	34.06	58.22	4.4

% DM basis

Once the decision has been made to start cutting, based on maturity and pending weather conditions, other management factors that should be taken into consideration include harvest (chopping) moisture (60-65%), cut length (3/4"), and packing density (14-16 lb./cu. Ft.) (for bunks, piles or bags).

By managing harvest and storage of forages, paying attention to these factors, better quality forages can be produced.

PSNT Sampling Tips:

When sampling for Nitrate-Nitrogen to fine-tune sidedress application rates; try these tips:

- Always sample to a 12 inch (30 cm) depth as close to sidedress time as possible
- Extract cores from between the plant rows, to avoid starter fertilizer bands
- Submit samples as soon as possible, keep cool (refrigerate, never freeze)
- indicate crop (corn, tobacco, tomato)
- Sample areas within the field separately such as high vs. low areas

Results returned in 48 hrs. For custom PSNT sampling, call 1-888-868-SOIL (7645)

Plant Tissue Sampling:

Every year weather and management factors can conspire to create less than optimum growth conditions. Plant tissue testing is one diagnostic tool that can help support field observations by providing definitive measurement of plant nutrient content. Deficiencies or excesses of essential nutrients can be determined. Sampling poor and good growth areas separately can show a nutrient comparison that can help in determining the cause of less than optimum crop growth. See the website for crop-specific sampling details, such as when and which plant part to sample.

