



Saskatchewan Hay & Pasture Report

The end of August has us thinking about fall and winter, and preparing for the months ahead. This third edition of the 2021 eNews brings you information about meeting the nutritional needs of cattle, current hay pricing in Saskatchewan and surrounding jurisdictions, nitrates in feed and more.

Visit the SFC Website

Saskatchewan Agriculture Crop Report

For the period August 10-16, 2021

Producers have been making the most of the weather this week and 20 per cent of the crop is now combined and in the bin. Harvest is progressing very quickly and is well ahead of the five-year average (2016-2020) of four per cent. Five per cent of the crop is swathed and 14 per cent is ready to straight combine, ahead of the five-year average (2016-2020) of seven per cent. Some producers have indicated that yields are worse than they expected while those who got timely rains are reporting they are seeing yields closer to average.

Moisture conditions declined throughout most of the province this week, since the small amount of rain received was not enough to reverse the moisture deficient. Cropland topsoil moisture is rated as four per cent adequate, 29 per cent short and 67 per cent very short. Hay and pasture land topsoil moisture is rated as two per cent adequate, 21 per cent short and 77 per cent very short.

Crop damage causes this week remain the same with the majority from wind, heat, drought stress, gophers and insects such as grasshoppers and flea beetles.

Farmers are busy getting equipment and bins ready for harvest, swathing and desiccating crops and combining, which is well underway in almost all areas of the province.

[Read the full Crop Report](#)

Reports on hay and pasture conditions from neighbouring provinces

Excerpt from Manitoba Crop Report
August 17, 2021

- Harvest completion across all regions of the province has reached 21%, ahead of the 2017-2020 4-year
- average of 14% for the third week of August. Crops rated good constitute 44% of the total acreage, down 1% from last week.
- Cooler conditions helped some crops recover slightly at the beginning of the week, but soil moisture from last week's rain was immediately used up during the extreme heat over the



weekend and into Monday.

- Cereal harvest has rapidly progressing; nearing 40% complete for spring wheat, with barley and oats slightly ahead. The Interlake region is the furthest in harvest completion, at 37% done, followed by the Central (33%), and Eastern (27%) regions. The Southwest region sits at 14% harvest completion, while the Northwest is at 8% done.

[Read the full report](#)

Excerpt from Alberta Crop Report Crop Conditions as of August 10, 2021

Over the past two weeks, low to moderate amounts of moisture were received through widespread thunderstorms across the province, with the exception of last week's general rains over southern parts. Rain was welcome in the areas where it was received, particularly for hay and pasture fields. However, it might be late for most annual crops. Temperatures over this period remained in the mid to high 20s across all regions. Overall, precipitation accumulations tended to be highly variable throughout most parts of the province (see the map).

Pasture growing conditions across the province remains poor. Some pastures are so "burnt" and dried out from the earlier hot and dry conditions in the year that recent precipitation was not enough to benefit them. Rainfall before the fall is needed to ensure average growth next year. In response to feed shortage as a result of hot dry conditions, producers are taking cereals and pulses for silage, greenfeed or pasturing them. Pasture conditions (tame hay numbers shown in the brackets) across the province are now reported as 52 (51) per cent poor, 30 (32) per cent fair, 17 (16) per cent good and 1 (1) per cent excellent.

First cut haying is virtually complete across the province, significantly ahead of the 5-year average of 85 per cent. There will not be any second cut in many areas, due to little re-growth. Yield for first cut dryland hay is estimated at one ton per acre (below the 5-year average of 1.5 tons per acre), with quality rated as 17 per cent poor, 34 per cent fair, 36 per cent good and 13 per cent excellent. For irrigated hay, yield is reported at 2.1 tons per acre, below the 5-year average of 2.4 tons per acre. Quality is rated as 4 per cent poor, 35 per cent fair, 55 per cent good and 6 per cent excellent

[Read the full report here](#)



Meeting Cow Calf Nutritional Requirements this Winter

by: Terry Kowalchuk, P.Ag., Provincial Forage Specialist, Regina

Limited hay supply, along with high prices in many areas of the province have some cow calf producers seeking alternatives to perennial hay to carry their herd through the winter. Rainfall since late-June has helped with supply recovery, but hay yields were generally average to poor this year and may need to be supplemented with grain, greenfeed, or straw.

Availability and cost of alternative feeds vary depending on local supply and demand. Buying additional feed may not be practical in areas dominated by range and hay land where distances and trucking costs can be prohibitive. In these areas, harvest alternatives such as slough and ditch hay may be the only viable option. Regardless of location or source, the nutritional value of feed will vary between feed (different hay types, greenfeeds, straws and grains) between fields and from year to year. Knowing the nutritional value of these feeds is essential to meeting the requirements of your animals.

Protein and energy requirements of cows increase through the gestation period (Table 1). A survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture a several years ago, found that much of the feed surveyed did not meet nutritional requirements of cows in their third trimester which often coincides with cold winter conditions. Feed testing and ration adjustment can help match nutritional needs during pregnancy and lactation to maintain animal health and improve overall productivity of the herd.

Table 1. Protein and energy requirements of beef cows

Cows (all values as 100 % Dry Matter)		
	Crude Protein (%)	Total Digestible Nutrients (% min)
Mid pregnancy	7 - 8	55
Late pregnancy	9 - 10	60
Lactation	11 - 12	65

In areas where hay is the main available feed, increasing the amount fed may not be adequate if the neutral digestible fibre (NDF) of the hay is high because as NDF increases intake decreases. In these situations, a grain supplement may be required. In areas where alternative feeds are available, feed tests can be used to blend them into a ration that meets the specific needs of your animals.

Each type of forage should be submitted for a feed test. For instance, if a producer harvests an alfalfa/grass mixed stand, barley greenfeed and a salvage canola crop for greenfeed, samples from each of these fields should be collected separately and submitted for feed analysis. Listings for feed testing labs can be found under the Saskatchewan Forage Council links page under the heading "Forage Testing Labs."

[Read more](#)

Lean on me

by: Joy Hendrix, Editor, Progressive Forage, July 2021

There is no adrenaline rush quite like trying to get a field harvested before a storm hits or the anticipation of waiting for a field to dry out so you can run an implement through.

While these times may be stressful, these are moments your neighbor understands better than anyone.

Community is important in every aspect of life, but agriculture is a tricky sector to form that community in. Your neighbors are also your competitors, and tension can arise from being in close quarters. You may also hesitate to try something new and venture out on your own because it isn't common practice in your area of the country. Community shouldn't be limited to those across the fence, and geography shouldn't dictate your ability to find a supportive peer group.

Thankfully, there are a few more modern practices to help you connect with producers who share similar goals.

Reach out

Jon Paul Driver created the Facebook group Hay Kings in 2017 out of necessity to find his community. The group now has more than 63,000 members around the globe.

"If you feel like you need a community around you, someone else does too," says Driver. "Same with if you need something – most likely someone else needs the same thing."

[Read more](#)

Are you an accomplished grazer?

by: Allen R. Williams, PhD , Stockman Grass Farmer, July 2020

STARKVILLE, Mississippi: What makes a person an accomplished grazer is the ability to be an astute OBSERVER. Most of us have lost our ability to truly observe, to viscerally recognize what is really happening with the soil beneath our feet, the plants growing in our fields, the behavior and performance of our livestock and the signs of ecosystem health around us. We mistake being busy for being observant. They are NOT the same.

Keen, daily observation develops an astute sense of intuition. Highly tuned intuition facilitates great decision making. It is almost impossible to make good decisions without keen observation and intuition. Bad data or a lack of data makes for poor decision-making skills.

Andre Voisin (1903-1964), the French farmer and biochemist, was an incredibly astute observer and spent many hours in his pastures examining and pondering what he saw each day. He wrote two books that are seminal reads for any aspiring grazer titled, Grass Productivity and Soil, Grass, and Cancer. He

was certainly a man way ahead of his time.

Key observations made by Voisin were that overgrazing has little to do with the number of animals on a pasture but far more to do with the amount of time the plants were exposed to the animals. If animals remained in any one place for too long, or returned too soon, they almost always overgrazed certain plants.

He noted that OVERGRAZING and UNDERSTOCKING can result in thousands of plants in a pasture being killed. One example he provided of this is the fact that one cow grazing a 10-acre paddock on a continuous basis can kill thousands of plants, whereas 1000 cows grazing the same 10-acre paddock for a portion of one day will not kill a single plant.

[Read more](#)

Webinar: Nitrates in Feed

Nitrates in livestock feed are a topic of concern in Saskatchewan due to the stress our forage crops have experienced, and the possible use of salvaged annual crops for livestock feed. If you have questions about acceptable levels of nitrates in feed, and what to watch out for, this webinar is an excellent resource!

This webinar from Saskatchewan Agriculture was presented by livestock and feed specialist Barry Yaremco on August 17. It is part of an ongoing Beef Cattle Feeding webinar series - [read more about it and find links here](#)

You can view the recording of the webinar here (you will need to enter your name and email address):

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/2352897026405532940>



Image Credit: Laura Hoimyr



Tool for Evaluating Feed Test Results

Beef Cattle Research Council, Decision-Making Tools

The following calculator was developed by the Alberta Beef, Forage and Grazing Centre. It allows producers to enter results from your feed tests to determine if that feed is of adequate nutritional value to be fed on its own.

[Click here to use the calculator](#)

We encourage you to visit the [Decision-Making Tools web page of the BCRC](#) to download or view other useful tools including the Value of Crops for Livestock Feed Calculator, Backgrounding Calculator, Economics of Water Systems Calculator and many more.

Hay pricing information

Saskatchewan Hay Market Report

Hay and straw are on offer in the province, although supplies are very limited and asking prices tend to be very high. The following is a summary of listings of forage for sale ads in Saskatchewan in mid- to late-August (Kijiji, Facebook Hay for Sale groups, listed as dollars per metric tonne):

Grass hay: 1 offer, \$220/tonne

Mixed hay: 5 offers, \$235/tonne average (range of \$138-359/tonne)

Alfalfa hay: 3 offers, \$245/tonne average (range of \$205-264/tonne)

Greenfeed: 4 offers, \$167/tonne average (range of \$124-220/tonne)

Cereal straw: 4 offers, \$85/tonne average (range of \$55-110/tonne)

Small square hay bales: a range of \$6-13/bale, depending on type of hay

Small square straw bales: \$3-4/bale

There were additional ads with hay for sale with no price listed. There are currently more hay wanted ads than hay for sale ads. Livestock producers in need of feed are willing to haul hay long distances or cut hay or salvage crops in order to obtain feed.

The RCMP have warned of hay scams in which fraudsters place ads for hay on social media and online buy/sell platforms and insist on immediate payment before the buyer can see the hay. They advise that purchasers take steps to ensure the product is legitimate before sending funds. If anyone has any information related to the fraud they can call 310-RCMP, or they can call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

USDA Market News Service Hay Report

August 20, 2021

Wyoming Hay Report: Compared to last week all reported hay products sold steady. Demand was good with active buyer interest.

South Dakota Hay Report: Compared to last week: All classes of hay remain firm. Very good demand remains for all classes and types of hay. Third cutting of alfalfa in full swing, rain fell in western South Dakota late week with central and eastern parts of the state forecasted to see rain on Friday and beyond. Silage harvest has begun in the driest of areas already.

Montana Hay Report: Compared to last week: Hay sold fully steady. Demand for hay remains very good. Rain! That's the story of the week. After months with no measurable rainfall in many locations, rain fell across a wide swath of the state. Many ranchers report from just under an inch to just over 2 inches over last three days. Ranchers say this rain should help soften grass and help promote regrowth, which will be very beneficial to cows still out on pasture and range. Producers continue to report waiting lists of people looking for hay, although hay sales this week were much slower with this rain system. According to the drought monitor 100% of the state is in Moderate drought or worse. 98.7% of the state is in a Severe drought or worse both unchanged since last week. 72.96% of the state is in extreme drought or worse, an increase of 4.61%. 13.81% of the state is in an exceptional drought an increase of 2.29% from last week. Note: The drought data is valid August 17th at 8 am EDT. which is before any rain fell across the state.

View the hay reports, hay prices and hay quality designations at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/hay-reports>

[Click here to view the table of hay prices for August 20, 2021 for Wyoming, South Dakota and Montana.](#)

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