Volume 23, Issue 1 | June 2, 2022

Saskatchewan Hay & Pasture Report

Welcome to the first edition of the 2022 Saskatchewan Forage Council's Hay and Pasture Report. Each year the SFC publishes four editions of this Report to keep you up to date on forage growing conditions and forage pricing in the province and neighbouring areas. We also bring you research and production updates to help you make the most of your forage crops each growing season. All the best in the 2022 season from everyone at the SFC!

Visit the SFC Website

Saskatchewan Agriculture Crop Report

For the period May 17-23, 2022

Seeding progress climbed throughout many regions in the past week, despite a storm that brought snow and rain to parts of the province. Fifty-two per cent of the 2022 crop is now seeded, up from 33 per cent last week. This is still behind the five-year average (2017-2021) of 78 per cent for this time of year. The rainfall received over the past week in drier areas will help improve soil moisture conditions and establishment of early seeded crops.

Soil moisture continues to improve across the province, mainly in the eastern regions where most of the spring precipitation was received. Cropland topsoil moisture is rated as 15 per cent surplus, 58 per cent adequate, 18 per cent short and nine per cent very short. Hay and pasture land topsoil moisture is rated as six per cent surplus, 63 per cent adequate, 20 per cent short and eleven per cent very short.

Pasture conditions are rated as 10 per cent excellent, 27 per cent good, 36 per cent fair, 16 per cent poor and 11 per cent very poor. Pastures in the western half of province are struggling to establish this spring due to very limited precipitation causing many livestock producers in the area to continue to feed cattle on farm.

Read the full Crop Report

Reports on hay and pasture conditions from neighbouring provinces

Excerpt from Manitoba Crop Report
May 24, 2024

- Heavy rains the previous week again slowed seeding efforts, leaving fields damp to saturated, and farmers rapidly adjusting plans to find drier fields, switching intended planting order, or harrow/tilling ahead of planting to condition and dry soil where possible
- Provincial seeding progress sits at about 10% completion, behind the 5-year average of 77% for Week 20 (Figure 1). Estimates are that most farms and pastures remain about 3 to 4 weeks behind normal in terms of seeding progress and forage growth.
- Farmers are extremely concerned about seeding delays, leading some farmers to switch a small amount of planned corn or soybean acres into canola and spring wheat, while planned field pea acres have dropped in some parts of the Southwest in favour of more canola.

Read the full report

Excerpt from Alberta Crop Report
Crop Conditions as of May 24, 2022

Precipitation over the past week was highly variable, and as such did not provide as much moisture as needed for many dry areas across the province. Most areas in the southern half of the province received less than 10 mm of moisture, with some (mainly in the South and North East Regions) receiving less than 5 mm. In the Peace Region, most areas stayed dry allowing seeding to progress, following an exceptionally wet start to spring.

Growing season precipitation to date was less than 40 mm in most parts of the South, Central and North East Regions of the province (light orange in the map). The need for moisture remains acute in most parts of the South Region (dark orange and pink), which have received less than 30 mm. More rain and warmer temperatures are needed for these areas, which hopefully will occur in June, which is on average the wettest month of the year.

Seeding progress for major crops in the province is now 73 per cent complete, up 28 per cent from a week ago, but slightly behind the 5-year and 10-year averages of 77 and 82 per cent, respectively. Regionally, producers in the North East Region made the most seeding progress at 37 per cent, followed by the Peace and North West Regions with 34 and 29 per cent, respectively. Seeding advanced 27 per cent in the Central Region and 14 per cent in the South. Compared to the 5-year averages, seeding is most behind in the Peace Region, due to the cold and wet weather experienced at the beginning of the season

Read the full report here

MFGA Carbon-Era Series

by: Manitoba Forage & Grassland Association (MFGA)

These days, led by the proactive push of governments and industry and the willingness to engage by producers on their lands, we all are increasingly immersed in a rapidly-moving Carbon Era as producers, agriculture groups, industry, conservation orgs and governments focus on sequestering carbon via agricultural practices across Canada's Prairie region. In our MFGA Carbon-Era Series, we are hoping to tackle some of the uncertainties, myths and questions around carbon to help producers better understand their options, potential and next moves in the fast-moving dialogues around carbon and farmers.

Feature 1: Nutrient mapping in the Carbon-Era: A Comprehensive approach to better understanding your soil capacity and management

MFGA: Tell us more about the relationship between soil and carbon and is this relationship the same on every farm?
KIM: Soil takes carbon from the air, making it the second-largest carbon store, or "sink", after the oceans. Soil carbon sequestration is an important mitigation measure to combat climate change. Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) stored, or sequestered, has the potential to create another income stream for producers in the form of carbon credits or offsets.
MFGA: What should producers know about soil and nutrient mapping?
KIM: A soil map is a comprehensive decision-making tool that helps producers to optimize their nutrient management across the farm and validate outcomes from their specific management practices.

Read more

Check Alfalfa Stands for Winter Injury

by: Iowa State University, April 11, 2022

As forage stands start to green up this spring, take time to evaluate the stands for any winter injury. It will

be especially important to check stands that had significant armyworm damage last fall.

As you evaluate forage stands, Tables 1 and 2 below can be used to help determine what type of action may be warranted in a field. Note that while older stands typically have fewer plants per square foot, they produce more stems per plant. As a general rule of thumb, plan for 100% of normal season yield if there are 55 stems per square foot, regardless of the stand age.

See **Table 1. Suggested plans of action based on observations and alfalfa field conditions** in original article.

See Table 2. **Recommended plant counts per square foot in either pure alfalfa or alfalfa-grass mix based on the age of the stand** in original article.

Additionally, as you are evaluating stands, dig plants from several representative areas in the field and evaluate the crown and root health, looking at the crown size, symmetry, and how many shoots are present. Slice open the crown and root to check for rot or discoloration (Figure 1 and Figure 2). More information and visuals on assessing an alfalfa stand can be found in the University of Wisconsin publication "Alfalfa stand assessment: Is this stand good enough to keep?"

Possible remedial actions could be doing some patchwork seeding, keeping the field for a first crop cutting and then rotating, or rotating to a new crop immediately.

Perennial forage grasses often overwinter better than winter-hardy legumes. However, orchardgrass and ryegrasses are more susceptible to winter injury than other perennial forage grasses. Visual evaluation of grass regrowth and health of crown tissue is suggested when evaluating winter survival of pastures.

Read the full article here.

Grazing Fall Rye: An Opportunity to Extend Your Forage Supply

by: Dale Weinbender, Livestock and Feed Extension Specialist,Saskatchewan Agriculture

In Saskatchewan, recent grazing seasons have been unpredictable in terms of rainfall and production, leaving it difficult to plan out the capacity of perennial or native pastures. Including annual forage crops to your farm's forage portfolio is an option that can increase the total grazing days per year. If you have some crop acres to spare, or, if you have some old hayland that needs a change, seeding an annual pasture is an option. It can serve as a good intermediate crop in a year with limited grazing acres, with the benefits of manure deposition in-field.

One annual crop option is spring-seeding Fall rye. It produces high-quality forage for cattle without the concern of it heading out and causing digestive problems. It can also produce good summer or fall grazing in the year of seeding, with the potential to utilize it again the following year for pasture, grain or silage once it overwinters. Fall rye is a hardy, drought-tolerant winter cereal that can be successfully grown in almost all parts of the province. It produces a well-tillered stand that is very competitive with weed pressure. It is generally lower-yielding than other winter cereals for pasture, but is more persistent under grazing and dry conditions. Hazlet and Prima are the two varieties best suited for use as grazing, as they tiller more readily and produce a lower grain yield.

Ideal conditions for Fall rye are medium textured, well-drained soils. However, if marginal-quality land or heavy textured soils make up your operation, Fall rye generally outperforms other winter cereals on these types of soils. Inputs generally involve pre-seed spraying, seed, nutrient costs and possibly land rolling. Fall Rye for pasture can be seeded at 55-110 lb per acre, with drier soils requiring a lower rate. A lower seeding rate will allow the plants to tiller and produce a thick, competitive stand. Including all custom seeding costs, planting Fall rye has been reported to be around $60 per acre, seeded at 110 lb per acre.

Read more

Hay pricing information

Saskatchewan Hay Market Report

As we move into the growing season, there is little hay on offer in Saskatchewan, especially after tight forage supplies over winter had many livestock producers searching for feed much earlier in the year. The SFC tracked forage asking prices (Kijiji, Facebook groups) in March and April of 2022, and average prices are listed below:

Grass hay: 5 offers, $290/tonne average (range of $220-380/tonne)
Mixed hay: 20 offers, $324/tonne average (range of $254-380/tonne)
Alfalfa hay: 4 offers, $345/tonne average (range of $220-440/tonne)
Greenfeed: 5 offers, $256/tonne average (range of $128-361/tonne)
Cereal straw: 11 offers, $111/tonne average (range of $66-132/tonne)
Small square hay bales: a range of $6-16/bale, depending on type of hay
Small square straw bales: $2.50-6/bale

The winter of 2021/2022 also saw offers of alternative forage sources for sale such as canola greenfeed/straw and flax straw. Average flax straw prices were $80/tonne, while canola bale asking prices ranged from $110/tonne to as high as $284/tonne.

You can find more in-depth information about forage pricing and production trends in the SFC's recent publication: **2022 WINTER FORAGE MARKET PRICE DISCOVERY** on the SFC website.

Be cautious when purchasing feed online, as the RCMP have warned of fraudulent forage ads. Request forage nutritional quality testing when purchasing feed and have the tests reviewed by a nutritionist or Saskatchewan Agriculture specialist if you're unsure of the quality or creating a forage ration with alternative feed sources. You can contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

USDA Market News Service Hay Report

May 27, 2022

Wyoming Hay Report: Compared to two weeks ago the only test on the market was on alfalfa cubes and sun-cured pellets and both commodities sold steady. Some livestock owners continue to look for hay to buy. Some talk of what new crop alfalfa will be in the 2022 growing season. Old rule of thumb uses the last established market and go up or down from there. Per NASS: Corn planted comes in at 34% a little behind last year of 43%. Dry edible beans at 1% compared to last year at 15%. Condition on alfalfa hay fair to good 90% last year 84% so thing are looking a tick better this year for the alfalfa crop.

South Dakota Hay Report: Compared to last week: Alfalfa and grass hay rather steady. Very good demand remains for high testing, dairy quality hay. Turnout time is here for beef cattle producers as the recent rains and warm weather has the grass green and growing. There has been good moisture east river but west river SD is still showing severe to extreme drought.

Montana Hay Report: Compared to last week: Hay sold fully steady. Demand for hay was moderate to good this week. Hay sales were very light this week as ranchers continue to buy on an as need basis. Rain is forecasted for much of eastern and central Montana over the weekend and early next week, however many report very dry conditions continue especially along the eastern rocky mountain front. Some ranchers who have the ability are turning out cows early in order to stop feeding high priced hay.

However, many who run cows on CRP and Forest service land can't turn out until June 15 or so. Cooler than normal temperatures continue to slow the growth of first cutting.

Traditionally hay is starting to be cut around the last week of May or the First of June, but this year hay is behind schedule as most say first cutting wont start until around the 10th of June at the earliest. Discussions of new crop contracts continue to occur and many have hay priced in the $240-250/ton range in the stack but no confirmed takers have been found thus far. According to the drought monitor 82.77% of the state is in Moderate drought or worse, down 0.27% from last week; 60.26 % of the state is in an Severe drought or worse, 0.80% decrease from last week; 16.80% of the state is in extreme drought or worse, down 2.30% from last week; 0% of the state is in an exceptional drought, unchanged from last week.

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 May 27, 2022 for Wyoming, South Dakota and Montana.

Saskatchewan Forage Council Sponsors

Gold

Nutrien Ag Solutions | ProVen SEED

Silver

Ducks Unlimited Canada

BrettYoung

Bronze

fcc

UNION FORAGE

NORTHSTAR SEED

PICKSEED good things growing...

SFSDC

Manitoba forage & grassland Association

The Saskatchewan Forage Council Gratefully Acknowledges funding for our 'Facilitating Forage Initiatives in Saskatchewan' project through the

Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association Industry Development Fund: