



## Saskatchewan Hay & Pasture Report

This is the fourth edition of the Hay & Pasture Report, and the last edition until our spring Report in 2023. This edition brings you information on hay pricing, forage analysis and ration balancing, fall and winter grazing and much more! You can keep up with SFC news during the winter with our Forage and Livestock eNews, which is published monthly.

For more forage resources, check out the SFC's Resources page or try the Forage U-Pick Tool on the website.

[Visit the SFC Website](#)

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## Saskatchewan Agriculture Crop Report

**For the period September 27-October 3, 2022**

The weather over the past week was excellent for harvest. The province now has 90 per cent of the crop in the bin, up from 81 per cent last week and well ahead of the five-year average of 82 per cent. Some producers have been struggling with heavy fog and dew in the mornings that has delayed their harvest activities until the afternoon, making for short days and less progress. High humidity in many parts of the southeast, east-central and northeast is making it difficult to combine and has also led to grain coming off at higher amounts of moisture than normal. Producers must dry down the grain in order to store it properly.

Once again, there was very little rain this past week, with only trace amounts being recorded for most regions. Some parts of the southwest received two to three mm but it did very little to improve soil moisture conditions. All areas of the province are reporting that they are either extremely dry or becoming drier each week. This includes the southeast and east-central regions, which started the season with an abundance of moisture.

Cropland topsoil moisture is rated as 28 per cent adequate, 41 per cent short and 31 per cent very short. Hay and pasture land topsoil moisture is rated as 22 per cent adequate, 41 per cent short and 37 per cent very short.

Producers are busy combining, hauling grain and bales and moving cattle. Some producers are also starting other fall field work, such as post-harvest weed control and harrowing. Winter cereals are not able to be planted in many areas due to the lack of soil moisture. Fall fertilizer applications are also not possible in many regions due to these dry conditions.

[Read the full Crop Report here](#)

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## Saskatchewan Advisory Meeting on Forage Crops

Please save Thursday, November 24th on your calendar for the annual Saskatchewan Advisory Meeting on Forage Crops, to be held at the Saskatoon Inn. This year's agenda includes updates on the Strategic Research Initiative, the Saskatchewan Living Labs project, the Prairie Watershed Climate Program and the new Forage Utilization Chair at the U of S, among other timely topics of interest.

## Reports on hay and pasture conditions from neighbouring provinces

### Excerpt from Manitoba Crop Report, October 4, 2022

#### Forages

- Grass hay and alfalfa has become dormant. Pastures have enough fodder to allow animals to graze for a short time longer.
- Corn silage harvest is underway in many areas, tonnage appears to be good.
- Silage corn is drying down rapidly, silage crews are forced to move quickly to keep up with the correct moisture level.
- Retrieval and removal of hay and straw bales is underway.
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#### Livestock

- Dugouts and sloughs are at 50% capacity in the Southwest, and remain sufficient elsewhere in the province.
- Livestock water supplies on pasture are dropping, but remain sufficient to complete the grazing season in all parts of the province.
- Fall cattle roundup from community pastures has begun; mostly yearlings and earlier calves are moving to the auction marts at this time

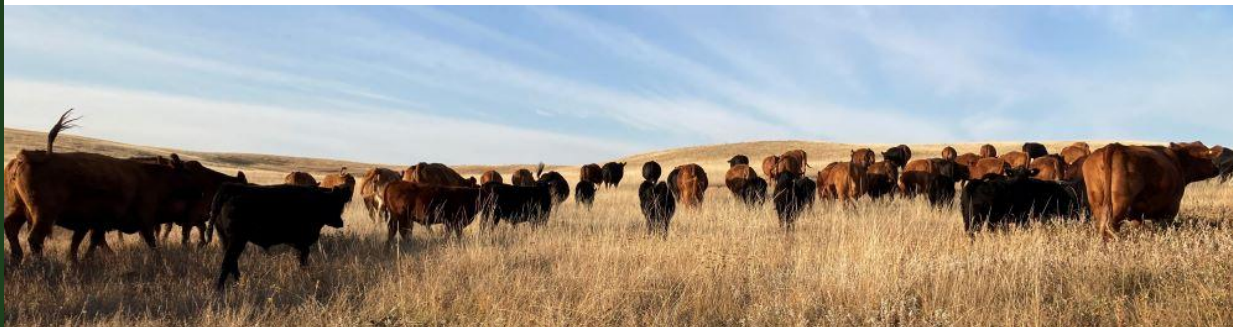
[Read the full crop report here](#)

### Excerpt from Alberta Crop Report Crop Conditions as of September 27, 2022

Over the past week, harvest completion of major crops across the province has increased from 76 to 88 per cent. As can be seen on the below map, with exception of the Peace region, Alberta was well below historical normal for September precipitation allowing harvest to proceed without significant interruption. Spring wheat, barley and dry peas are nearing completion at 95, 95 and 99 per cent harvested respectively. Oats, at 86 per cent harvested, and canola, at 75 per cent harvested, are the major crops with significant acreage left still standing or in the swath. Over the past week, combining of canola has increased from 54 per cent completion to now 75 per cent, with an additional 14 per cent swathed. Only seven per cent of major crops in Alberta are now left standing, much lower than the 24 per cent five-year average. Many producers across the province have or will finish their harvest season earlier than long-term normal.

Pastures are being reported at below historical normal growing conditions and 31 per cent of Alberta pasture land is reported as poor. Currently only 25 per cent of Alberta's pasture land is reported as good or excellent, well below the 10-year average of 44 per cent. Late summer and fall drying trends continue across the province. The Peace region is reporting 60 per cent of pastures as poor and also reports some of the lowest sub-surface soil moisture ratings in the province. The Peace received significant rainfall last week. However, despite this rain and favorable spring moisture even the Peace is now below average long-term soil moisture. Other regions and especially the South are reporting continued decreases to surface soil moisture. Across the province, 31 per cent of farmland is reported as poor surface soil moisture, more than double the 10-year average of 14 per cent. Only one percent is reported as excellent surface soil moisture and there is no reported excessive moisture.

[Read the full report here](#)



## Forage testing, feed quality and ration balancing

Looking for information on testing your feeds and planning winter rations? There are many helpful

resources for Canadian livestock producers looking ahead at winter feeding options. We've gathered a few below that you may find helpful:

The **Beef Cattle Research Council's page on Feed Quality, Testing & Analysis for Beef Cattle** can help you take feed samples, interpret feed test results, and calculate the results for your own herd. Visit the page to learn more: [www.beefresearch.ca/tools/feed-testing-analysis-for-beef-cattle/](http://www.beefresearch.ca/tools/feed-testing-analysis-for-beef-cattle/)

Check out the article **Feed Testing and Ration Design from Saskatchewan Agriculture** for sample rations and feed testing information for different times of year. [Click here to read the article.](#)

For helpful advice about **forage sampling**, watch this YouTube video from the **Iowa Beef Center**, part of the series Controlling Cow Costs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SmolQ0K20s>

For a listing of labs that test water and feed quality for livestock, visit this Saskatchewan Agriculture page: [Water Testing and Feed Contacts, Laboratories and Companies](#)

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## Grazing Alfalfa in Fall or Winter

by: **Brad Schick and Ben Beckman, Drovers, September 23, 2022**

There is often fear associated with grazing alfalfa due to bloat potential or hurting the alfalfa stand. These are very valid concerns, but with additional management and timing alfalfa stands can provide supplemental forage. In a haying system during the spring and summer, fall and winter grazing may be an option to harvest quality feed.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Alfalfa needs 6 weeks of growth, uninterrupted by grazing or haying
- Fall grazing should maintain 8 inches of stubble height; Winter grazing should maintain 4 inches of stubble height
- Bloat risk can be reduced by making sure livestock are full prior to grazing
- Feed additives such as poloxalene and ionophores can limit bloat risk, but require regular consumption to be effective



### Fall Grazing

Alfalfa grazing in the fall provides high-quality forage and eliminates any issues of poor drying if attempting to make hay. In the fall, other pastures may already be fully utilized and crop residue unavailable or temporarily unavailable. All classes of livestock can benefit from grazing alfalfa. Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have shown yearlings can have 1.5 to 2.5 lb/d ADG (average daily gain) and cows can increase body condition score before harsh winter months.

Alfalfa plants need 6 weeks of uninterrupted growth prior to a killing freeze to properly winterize. Winterization allows for accumulation of energy in the roots of alfalfa plants. While alfalfa can be grazed during this time, it is not recommended unless needed. As with a late cutting, any harvest will increase the likelihood of winterkill and impact spring productivity. Also, if the stand is old, has had high pest pressure, or has been under high stress throughout the season, it is not recommended for utilization. Ultimately, the decision to be made is whether to have forage in the fall or have forage later in the spring. If forage is needed and cannot wait until next spring, then utilizing alfalfa now may be a viable option, just with additional management.

Fall grazed or hayed alfalfa can be incredibly high-quality but low quantity, so if it must be utilized, graze lightly leaving at least 8 inches of stubble on average to minimize the stored energy used for regrowth. Graze using a rotation, so animals are less selective and are less likely to overgraze a given area. Because grazing can leave more growth behind, properly managed grazing may allow plants to better winterize than a late hay cutting but is still a risk for the stand.

Plans should be made so that grazing can be done when the field is dry and firm. If the soil is too wet, animal hooves can damage plant crowns. The same principle applies to driving equipment on the fields as well. Having a sacrifice area or an adjacent lot ready to pull animals into if conditions get wet, can avoid excessive damage to the stand. Pairing with crop residue fields will allow for less pressure on the alfalfa and provide good roughage.

[Read more](#)

# Estrogen and the single plant

by: Woody Lane, Progressive Cattle, August 25, 2022

*Livestock producers need to be aware – but not scared – of phytoestrogen-producing forage legumes and how grazing them can affect their herds' reproductive health.*

Fifty years ago in Australia, soon after subterranean clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*) became a popular forage there, farmers and scientists observed a dramatic decline in the fertility of ewes grazing subclover pastures. The longer the sheep grazed these fields, the lower their fertility. Farmers also reported seeing occasional udder development and aberrant lactation in non-pregnant ewes and even in wethers. The Australians called this problem “clover disease” and concluded it was caused by a type of estrogen. But who would put estrogens in the diet of grazing sheep? It turns out it was the plants themselves: They contained hormone-active chemicals called phytoestrogens.

“Phyto” = derived from or associated with plants. “Estrogen” = a steroid hormone with powerful physiological effects, especially on the reproductive organs. Some plants, particularly legumes, can contain phytoestrogens – sometimes at high levels – and these can have profound effects when consumed by livestock.

Before everyone runs out and pulls their cattle and sheep off perfectly good legume pastures, I must add that most legumes are safe most of the time. Only some species of legumes contain enough phytoestrogens to cause problems. Also, some perfectly good legumes that are usually quite safe for livestock produce phytoestrogens only when they suffer from certain kinds of stress. [But read on.](#)

## Hay pricing information

### Saskatchewan Hay Market Report

The SFC reviewed forage asking prices (Kijiji, Facebook groups) for the month of September, and average prices are listed below:

Grass hay: 9 offers, \$185/metric tonne average

Mixed hay: 37 offers, \$157/metric tonne average

Alfalfa hay: 13 offers, \$172/tonne average (1st and 2nd cut)

Greenfeed: 16 offers, \$165/tonne average

Cereal straw: 20 offers, \$95/tonne average

Pulse straw: 2 offers, \$79/tonne average

Small square hay bales: a range of \$5-10/bale, depending on type of hay (mixed and grass hay), and with a range of bale weights from 40lb-85lb/bale.

Asking prices in September are lower than August asking prices on average, with the exception of grass hay, which can be variable due to type of grass and the market being targeted (horse hay, slough hay, etc). Alfalfa-grass hay continues to be the dominant hay on offer, with most of this hay being large round bales.

For comprehensive forage pricing information, stay tuned for the Saskatchewan Forage Council's Fall 2022 Forage Pricing Report, coming out next month!

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### USDA Market News Service Hay Report

October 7, 2022

**Wyoming Hay Report:** Compared to last week baled hay prices sold steady. Demand was good. More tons of hay going to area ranchers this week. Several producers do not sell any hay until they get most cuttings put up as they use hay for their own livestock and do not want to sell themselves out of their own hay. Spotty rain showers in some areas of the state. Per NASS: Corn silage harvested is at 85 percent, edible beans harvested at 56 percent, Sugar beet harvested 31 percent. Winter wheat planted at 84 percent and emerged at 48 percent.

**South Dakota Hay Report:** Compared to last week: Alfalfa hay steady to higher undertones. Very good demand for high testing alfalfa, of which supply is very limited due to a cold, late spring and a continuing/worsening drought. Soybean harvest in full swing, with some corn starting as well. Still few spring born calves showing up in auctions, many more consigned for next week which is keeping demand for grass hay really high.



**Montana Hay Report:** Compared to last week: Hay sold generally steady. Demand for hay is moderate to good for mostly moderate offerings. Hay in far eastern Montana is competing with hay out of North Dakota and has been the lowest priced hay in the state. Hay out of North Dakota has firmed in price in recent weeks as buyers report hay being delivered into Montana for 210.00-260.00, depending on where its delivered. Straw demand remains good, and sales continue at steady money this week. According to the drought monitor 72.87 of the state is in Moderate drought or worse; 41.22% of the state is in an Severe drought or worse; 12.23% of the state is in Extreme drought or worse; 0% of the state is in an Exceptional drought.

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 October 7, 2022 for Wyoming, South Dakota and Montana.](#)

## Saskatchewan Forage Council Sponsors

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The Saskatchewan Forage Council Gratefully Acknowledges funding for our 'Facilitating Forage Initiatives in Saskatchewan' project through the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association Industry Development Fund:



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