



ADVANCED AG SYSTEMS'S

Crop Soil News

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May 2012

"It is the crops that feed the cows that make the milk which creates the money."

Advanced Ag Systems
Research, Education, Consulting

The Crazy Season

The season continues on its crazy path of very warm days. In my last letter we discussed the alfalfa and grasses going out of sync for harvest. Unfortunately, that effect has continued. The normal cutting schedule based on alfalfa height is now skewed. Samples over a wide area show the alfalfa at a much more immature stage than the heat units indicate. The grasses continue to race past maturity. The recommendation to stop corn planting and mow grass in areas to the north of Albany, NY latitude continues.

You need to keep an eye out for a new wrinkle. The alfalfa at the Cornell Research farm and in other areas of the Northeast, has disappeared on the warm south facing fields and on the ridges. The accelerated heat units has accelerated the **alfalfa weevil** development and they devoured the alfalfa that was there. You are going to need to mow if you want that alfalfa. Removing the forage exposes the weevil larvae to the predators and severe weather. For any field that had significant damage, you need to do some close scouting after harvest. If there are threshold levels of 3 and 4th instars, you may lose much of your second cutting unless you treat. *The fourth stage larvae, about 3/8 inch long, consume 80% of the total foliage eaten by all the stages. If more than 50% of the AW are in the cocoon stage, the population is maturing to a non-feeding stage and will no longer be a problem for this year. If the larvae are predominantly young, however, damage may be expected.* More information is available at http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/fieldcrops/scouting_info/alf/scout_cal/alfweev.asp

Minimum Till Haylage

This is a relatively new procedure that began with the use of disk mowers. In the desire to maximize yield, farms cut as close as possible. We are now getting complaints that stands are not staying in, the grass is not yielding, and the nutritionist is trying to make milk from dirt (sort of like alchemy- turning lead to gold). Adding to the issue is the shift to wide swath haylage in order to get the high energy forage, means the mergers have more trouble picking up the material. The problem is the mowers are minimum tilling the field instead of just mowing the crop. To many are set to scalp the ground and leave little or no stubble. Raising the cutter bar to leave a stubble will get the crop out of the soil and allow more air to move around it for drying. What you leave is the least digestible part of the alfalfa. You are also leaving the high ash content of many forages. Each pound of ash directly reduces the milk producing ability of your forage. **Raising the bar can also increase yields in grasses.** In an excellent study by Dr. Ray Smith of the University of Kentucky, they significantly increased the regrowth of the grasses by increasing the cutting height. Alfalfa should be cut at 2.5 -3 inches while grasses should never be cut at less than 3.5 inches. This is often the reason intensively managed grass stands disappear. It was cut to short.

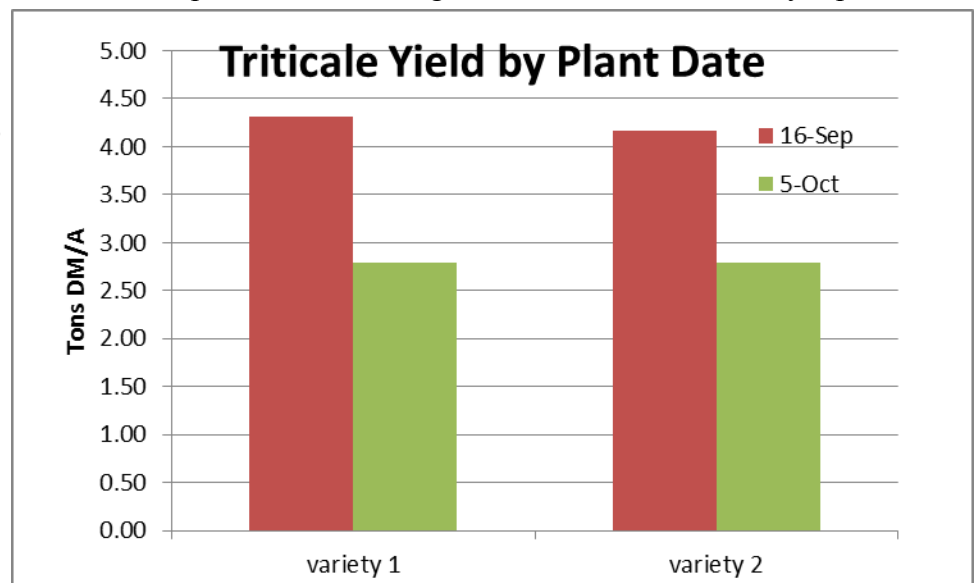
Research Update

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the winter forage triticale was ready for harvest at a record early date. Our lack of rainfall was partially offset by the tremendous amount of tillering from the mild winter and the higher nitrogen last fall. We are planning on doing more nitrogen studies in the fall to determine how much is needed for forage production. We want the tremendous number of tillers that N produces without leaving the crop susceptible to snow mold.

On the nitrogen down side, in spite of using an anti-volatilization agent on the urea, we got less than ¼ inch of rain after applying the nitrogen (enough to dissolve it) and then four weeks of very dry conditions. Much of the urea was lost and so crude protein was only 12% instead of the normal 16 -17%. The use of dribbled/stream bar of 32% solution would have eliminated most of this problem.

Fortunately, the 2.4 inches of rain in the end of April gave the crop a much needed shot in the arm and we ended with an average of 3.3 tons of dry matter for all the varieties. Thus, before we planted our shorter season corn, we already harvested 9.5 tons of very highly digestible forage. The IVTD 24 averaged 79 while the kd/hr was 6.8 on fresh samples. The fresh crop had over 14% sugar which will allow for very rapid and complete fermentation.

Another study of winter forage triticale we conducted this year, was planted on September 16 (a little late) and October 5 (definitely late). Our earlier planting date was well over 4 tons/A of dry matter (12 tons/A of silage). Compared to on time planting we gave up 33-35% of the yield by delaying planting. In spite of the late planting date, we still pulled off 2.79 tons of dry matter (8 tons of silage/A) on the later planting date (graph at right).



For those who grew this crop and are starting to realize these yields, it is critical that they wide swath, **and** then use a tedder after about an hour or so of drying. As yields go up you have more tons of moisture to remove. **A more critical factor is to not leave it overnight.** I highly recommend that you read Miner Institute's May newsletter on Haylage 2012, Capture the Quality. It has to do with the impact of same day haylage and wet forage on butyric formation based on innovative work by Dr.Kung. http://whminer.org/Farm%20Report/2012_05.pdf The bottom line was the same as what we experienced. If you get to the end of the day and the triticale is not quite dry enough, it is better to put it in on the wetter side than to wait until the next day.

Sincerely,

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to Better
Agriculture**

