



2026 Forage Quality Scissors Cut Results

Make Hay While the Sun Shines!

Estimated days from 5/26 to reach target quality for classes of cattle

	Dairy	Beef			
		Growing Calf	Growing Yearling	Lactating Cow	Mature Dry Cow
Grass	PAST	PAST	NOW	NOW	14 days
Mixed	PAST	PAST	NOW	NOW	14 days
Legume	7 days	NOW	7 days	14 days	14 days

The weather has been a little Jeckel and Hyde this past week, and grass quality advanced more slowly, but many grasses are starting to head, and quality has moved past the dairy quality window.

With some fields heading, Grass height increased on average 4.6 inches but with a wide range of 0-11 inches. Legumes increased 3.2 inches (0"-8").

Fiber content (NDF) increased more slowly this week, with grasses increasing 0.6 points per day and legume holding steady. Fiber Digestibility decreased 0.4 – 0.6 points per day and TDN remained about the same.

Grasses averaged 56.2% NDF, just above the recommended 50% - 55% dairy quality target window.

Mixed stands averaged at 44.9% NDF, right at the target range of 45%.

Pure legume fields averaged 32.5% NDF still about a week away from target of 40% NDF.

Grass and Mixed stands are just past target range for dairy and beef young growing and finishing animals. We recommend continuing rapid harvest of the remaining core grass fields.

Legume fields are still a week out from dairy quality. For Beef mature cow quality forage, farmers can wait at least another week.

A few things to keep in mind:

- **Don't Scalp:** We suggest setting your mower to a 4-inch cutting height. Remember grasses store energy reserves in the base of the leaves, if you take too much, regrowth will be slower. Also, lower cutting risks more soil contamination and higher ash content.
- **Mow Wide, Dry Fast:** Mowing in a wide swath speeds dry down, which saves sugar and energy.
- **Plan to Capture Second Cut Quality:** Harvested fields are re-growing nicely. Remember, second cut yields can be almost equal to first on early cut fields. Plan and prepare now to start second cut 30-35 days after first cut, even if all your first cut is not complete. NDF in second cut increases almost as fast as in first cut, even though the plants aren't heading.
- **Store Smart-** Plan your storage, high-quality feed should be stored in a location that is easily accessible at all times of the year, especially in winter. Also consider shorter baleage tubes that are not blocked in.

Stay safe and enjoy the hay harvest season.

Our next sample day will be Tuesday June 2.



Special thanks to Dairy One for providing the sample analysis



2026 Scissors Cut Results

Delaware County Scissors Cuts Results				May 19				May 26			
Farm	Town	Elev	Species	Ht	aNDF _{om}	NDFD	TDN	Ht	aNDF _{om}	NDFD	TDN
Darling	Andes	1580	Red Clover	19	40.4	73.4	63	22	35.4	64.9	64
Eisele	Andes	1590	Mixed Grasses	10	50.0	70.4	64	15	53.0	70.0	65
Darling	Andes	2200	Red Clover	10	31.5	54.8	66	14	34.3	57.0	68
Gladstone	Andes	2250	Orchardgrass	17	51.9	75.8	62	19	52.9	71.8	65
Gladstone	Andes	2250	Orchardgrass	12	48.6	75.4	65	15	57.4	66.9	65
Brannen	Bovina	1180	Mixed Grasses	18	49.1	73.6	63	24	59.1	63.0	68.7
Mattson	Colchester	1100	Alf(60%)/T	13/20	38.9	63.2	65	21/28	51.1	59.9	60
Grant	Davenport	1290	Alfalfa	16	31.7	52.4	65	21	28.8	51.6	65
Mushkoday	Delhi	1320	Alf(65%)/Grass	18/10	27.4	55.6	68	16	31.8	55.8	66
Frisbee	Delhi	1380	Mixed Grasses	20	59.5	67.4	61	30	64.0	60.7	60
Sullivan	Delhi	1430	Clov(40%)Orch	7/15	53.7	71.9	63	8/22	54.9	67.5	62
Shephard	Delhi	2050	Mixed Grasses	7/19	48.9	71.3	62	12/30	51.9	65.3	63
Coombe	Fallsburg	1180	Tall Fescue	18	50.4	71.7	66	24	59.5	67.1	65
Buel	Franklin	1260	Alf (50%)/Orch	15/17	34.6	68.5	68	18/24	45.2	75.1	68
Taggart	Franklin	1720	Orchardgrass	20	53.5	78.0	59	23	53.4	70.3	63
Buel	Gilboa	1550	Mixed Grasses	20	56.1	71.8	66	24	55.9	72.3	64
DiBenedatto	Halcott	1730	Mixed Grasses	23	51.0	70.8	67	27	58.6	69	64
Scobie	Hamden	1480	Orchardgrass	9/19	45.9	65.3	66	12/24	53.6	68.6	67
Miller	Hamden	1600	Alf(50%)Orch	8/10	46.8	70.6	64	10/12	39.4	62.5	65
Potter	Hamden	2100	Mixed Grasses	19	49.4	76.3	65	19	53.0	77.3	62
Potter	Hamden	2100	Alf(70%)/Grass	10/12	31.5	82.9	67	14/19	34.5	68	65
Hillriegel	Hardenburgh	1700	Orchardgrass	19	55.0	67.6	65	24	57.8	66.2	66
Haynes	Kortright	1870	Orchardgrass	23	56.6	73.8	59	17	54.4	74.4	64
Scott	Masonville	1620	Orchardgrass	8/25	47.6	74.3	66	9/26	48.7	72.6	67
Keator	Meredith	1600	Tall Fescue	17	51.1	71.9	64	25	na	na	na
Gray	Middletown	2020	RCanary/Orch	22	56.9	77.0	62	28	56.6	73.8	60
Elliot	Middletown	2060	RCanary/Orch	23	51.0	71.7	64	27	55.9	70.0	60
Coombe	Neversink	1340	Mixed Grasses	8	44.4	82.0	66	13	47.3	76.4	66
Coombe	Neversink	1420	Orchardgrass	18	54.7	74.9	66	24	63.5	64.6	63
Perry	Roxbury	1720	Orchardgrass	21	58.6	71.1	66	25	58.7	69.4	62
Gockel	Roxbury	1890	Mixed Grasses	16	55.3	68.6	65	22	60.6	64.7	65
Albano	Roxbury	1950	Meadow	18	46.6	76.2	64	24	52.5	68.7	65
Kuhn	Roxbury	1980	Meadow	25	63.4	55.6	60	30	62.2	52.7	63
Johnson	Sidney	1070	Alfalfa	19	35.6	61.8	65	22	27.6	62.4	68
Hanselman	Stamford	1490	Alfalfa	15	32.1	52.8	63	19	36.2	58.9	63
Martin	Stamford	1560	Alf (35%)/Orch	13/22	47.0	75.4	64	17/28	59.3	69.0	63
Ryan	Stamford	1750	Orchardgrass	9	50.9	74.5	66	12	57.5	65.4	63
Ryan	Stamford	1770	Orchardgrass	10	50.3	76.6	64	12	53.2	70.0	64
Melvin	Stamford	2020	Mixed Grasses	18	49.4	74.3	64	24	53.5	71.9	65
McClure	Stamford	2080	Alf(70%)/Orch	14/21	35.9	70.5	66	17/26	48.9	77.2	63
Trovato	Stamford	2200	Mixed Grasses	23	56.4	77.3	62	16/28	55.6	71.5	65
LaTourette	Tompkins	1220	Mixed Grasses	18	58.0	71.7	64	22	64.6	63.8	61
Marsiglio	Walton	1720	Mixed Grasses	na	49.0	80.7	63	11	48.2	74.5	65
Av Grass				17.8	52.2	72.9	63.8	22.4	56.2	68.5	63.8
Av Mixed				-	38.7	70.1	66.0	-	44.9	67.5	64.6
Av Legume				12.6	34.3	59.0	64.4	15.8	32.5	59.0	65.6



Precision Feed Management
Watershed Agricultural Council
Cornell Cooperative Extension Delaware County

NDF Goals for Dairy Cattle Forage	
Grass hay and silage	48 – 55%
MMG hay & silage	40 – 50%
MML hay & silage	38 – 45%
Legume hay & silage	36 – 42%

TDN Goals for Beef Cattle Forage	
Growing Calf (2lb ADG)	70 - 72
Growing Yearling (2lb ADG)	64 - 66
Lactating Beef Cow	60 - 64
Mature Dry Cow	52 - 55



Dairy One

Forage Laboratory

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