

Message from the President Bob Dippel

Greetings on behalf of the Executive and Directors and Staff of the Ontario Forage Council. At this time I want to extend a sincere thank you to Mary Turkington for her many years of dedicated service as administrative assistant to the OFC at the Markdale office. Mary and her husband Samuel will be returning to Ireland to reside. We wish Mary and her family all the best in the future. I also wish to take this opportunity to welcome Dorothy Friel to the OFC staff. She will be filling Mary's position at the Markdale office. We look forward to working with Dorothy in the future.

Ontario Forage Expo was successfully held at the Elora Research Station in Wellington County on July 13, 2011. This event was attended by more than 300 producers with in excess of 33 field demonstration and over 20 trade show exhibitors participating. We extend our thanks to the Wellington County Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the staff at the Elora Research Station, OMAFRA and the exhibitors who participated in this year's Ontario Forage Expo, which made it a great success. ✂

Forage Focus Conference
"Managing your Forage Crop for Increased Profit"
 hosted by the Ontario Forage Council
 November 29th in Napanee and November 30th in Shakespeare
 Keynote Speaker: **Michael Rankin**
 Joel Bagg, Forage Specialist, OMAFRA
 Ray Robertson, Ontario Forage Council

The Ontario Forage Council will host the annual **Forage Focus 2011 Conference** on Tuesday, November 29th Wednesday, November 30th in Shakespeare

**Mike Rankin – Bio**

Mike Rankin is the Crops and Soils Agent for the University of Wisconsin Extension Service in Fond du Lac County. He has served in that role since 1988 and advises crop producers and agribusiness professionals on the production and utilization of forage, grain, and vegetable crops. Mike received his B.S. degree in Dairy Science and M.S. degree in Crop Production and Physiology from Iowa State University. In addition to his current teaching roles, Mike authors a crop production newsletter, maintains several web sites related to crop production, has written numerous forage management articles for Hoard's Dairyman magazine, and serves as co-chair for the University of Wisconsin Team Forage programmatic team. He also is the coordinator of the Wisconsin Alfalfa Yield and Persistence Program. Mike and his wife live in Malone, WI and have three children and one grandchild. His spare time is filled coaching, watching, and playing baseball.

Google Michael Rankin, Wisconsin or go to www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/miker.html to learn more about Mike and his forage activities. Excellent website. ✂

Ontario Forage Master Places Second in National Forage Spokesperson Competition

June 29, 2011-Guelph, ON. Congratulations to the 2010 Ontario Forage Master, Evert Veldhuizen Jr. who has placed second in the National Forage Spokesperson Competition, hosted by the American Forage and Grassland Council. “I was very pleased to hear of Evert’s success at the AFGC’s National Forage Speaker’s competition. Evert’s complete knowledge of his presentation along with his relaxed delivery was sure to help him connect with his audience. OSCIA was proud to have Evert represent Ontario at this high-profile event,” says Max Kaiser, President of the Ontario Soil and Crop Association (OSCIA).

French Lick, Indiana, was this year’s host for the annual forage competition held in June. Each competitor gave a fifteen minute presentation, providing an overview of their farm while touching on their farm objectives, marketing strategy and the value of forages on their farm.

First place in the 2011 competition went to Weldon Hawkins of the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. Perry Clutts of the Ohio Forage and Grassland Council placed third.

The Ontario Forage Master is chosen each year out of a pool of competitors that emerge from local Forage Master county winners. Each winner can choose to compete in the Ontario Forage Master competition, and a short presentation outlining the value of forages on their farm operation is presented in November to a team of judges. The Ontario Forage Master is then eligible to compete in the (American) National Forage Spokesperson Competition the following June.

In November 2010, Evert was chosen as the winner for the 2010 Ontario Forage Master Competition. He is the general manager of Veldale Farms, and has been recognized as the 2009 Family Farm of the Year Award by the Township of Norwich Chamber of Commerce, as well as hosting the 2010 Annual Forage Expo.

For 2011, twenty-four counties are registered in the Ontario Forage Masters’ Program representing 193 producers competing, 21 of which are 4-H members. The Ontario Forage Master Competition is sponsored by Pickseed Canada, Agri-Food Laboratories, the Rogal Agricultural Winter Fair and the OSCIA.

For further information, contact OSCIA at www.ontariosoilcrop.org, 1-800-265-9751. ✨

Soil Test Your Hay Fields To Manage Phosphate & Potash Levels

by Joel Bagg, Forage Specialist, OMAFRA

Good fertility is essential to forage crop yields, persistence and profitability. Hay prices are trending upwards. With corn and soybean prices and land costs increasing rapidly, it is essential to increase the management our hayfields. While there are many agronomic considerations to look at, phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) fertility management is often overlooked in forage production. P and K is fundamental to remaining competitive with grain crops in today’s market.

Crop Removal Of P and K

Forage crops remove a lot of nutrients and therefore have high nutrient requirements. With an alfalfa-grass mixture, a typical amount of P and K removed per tonne of hay harvested is equivalent to 13.5 lbs (6.1 kg) of P₂O₅ and 54 lbs (24.6 kg) of K₂O. As an example, assuming a mixed stand with a modest yield of 3.2 tonnes per acre per year, hay will remove about 43 lbs (19.6 kg) of P₂O₅ and 173 lbs (78.4 kg) of K₂O every year.

Unlike nitrogen, forage crops cannot generate P or K out of thin air. Without replacing P and K with manure or commercial fertilizer, the soil tests will drop quickly. Assuming that it takes about 35 lbs/ac of P₂O₅ and 20 lbs/ac of K₂O to move the soil tests by 1 ppm on some soils, after only 4 years the P soil test could drop by 5 ppm and the K by 35 ppm. This is easily enough to significantly reduce forage yields if soil test levels drop below optimum levels. We also need to maintain soil nutrient levels for the next crops in the rotation. At lower soil test levels, this “soil mining” is not acceptable. Yet it goes on in many hay fields every year.

There is a wide range of soil fertility levels found in hay fields across the province. Dairy farms that apply a lot of manure typically have high P and K levels. However, K deficiency has become more common in many crop fields. Hay fields that are infrequently (or never) rotated that seldom (or never) receive manure or commercial fertilizer are typically very low in soil fertility and yield.

Soil Testing

Soil testing is essential. Knowing how much P and K is in the soil to start with is critical. Take a representative soil sample, send it to an accredited lab and use the results to determine optimum fertilizer rates. Keep records. Monitor whether fertility is increasing, decreasing or staying in an optimum range over time. Soil samples should be taken at least every 3 years. The time and effort it takes to do the soil sampling seems to be a obstacle, but with the cost of fertilizer there is likely no greater potential return on the cost and extra effort. Compare your fertilizer bill with lab and mailing costs plus an incentive for the kids to do the sampling for you! Refer to OMAFRA Factsheet 06-031 “Soil Sampling & Analysis” www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/facts/06-031.html.



Soil Analysis Report Interpretation

When you get your report, check the sodium bicarbonate phosphorus (P) and ammonium acetate potassium (K) soil test levels (ppm). (Use only these tests, as their tests (Bray or Mehlich) cannot be interpreted using our calibration data.) How do the P and K soil test levels look?

Figures 1 and 2 show the yield response of alfalfa to various P and K soil test levels. The yield curve is quite steep when P gets much below 12 ppm and and K below 120 ppm. A positive yield response from applying fertilizer will be seen when soil tests are below these levels. On the flip side, the yield curve at high soil fertility levels is flat. Don't expect any extra yield from applying fertilizer once the soil test have been built up to higher levels. In these cases, you can choose to apply fertilizer to replace the nutrients removed by the crop to prevent future nutrient deficiencies, but don't expect extra yield from that maintenance application.

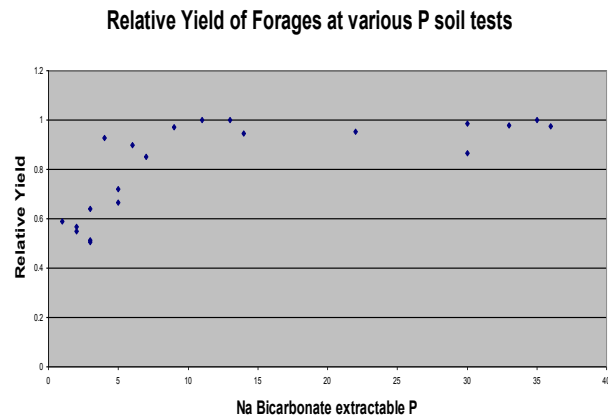


Figure 1

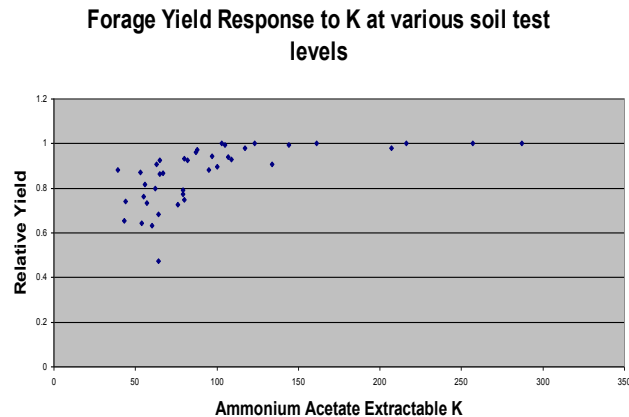


Figure 2

P & K Recommendations For Established Stands

Tables 1 and 2 provide the OMAFRA P and K recommendations on established forage stands. If manure is applied, reduce the fertilizer application according to the amount of P and K in the manure. For P and K recommendations at seeding (banded or not, with or without a nurse crop), or information on nitrogen rates, pH, manure application and micronutrients (boron, sulfur), refer to the Forage Fertility section of OMAFRA Publication 811, *Agronomy Guide*. www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/pub811/3fertility.htm

Table 1 – Phosphate Recommendations For Established Forage Stand (Based on OMAFRA-Accredited Soil Tests)

Sodium Bicarbonate Phosphorus Soil Test (ppm)	Established Forage Stand	
	Rating ¹	Phosphate (P ₂ O ₅) Required kg/ha
0 – 3	HR	180
4 – 5		120
6 – 7		90
8 – 9		60
10 – 12	MR	30
13 – 15		20
16 – 20	LR	0
21 – 25		0
26 – 60	RR	0
61 +	NR	0

¹ HR, MR, LR, RR & NR denote respectively – high, medium, low, rare and no probabilities of profitable crop response to applied nutrient. Profitable response to applied nutrients occurs when the increase in crop value from increased yield is greater than the cost of the applied nutrient.

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Table 2 – Potash Recommendations For Established Forage Stand (Based on OMAFRA-Accredited Soil Tests)

Ammonium Acetate Potassium Soil Test (ppm)	Established Forage Stand	
	Rating ¹	Potash (K ₂ O) Required kg/ha
0 – 15	HR	480
16 – 30		400
31 – 45		320
46 – 60		270
61 – 80		200
81 – 100		130
101 – 120	MR	70
121 – 150		20
151 – 180	LR	0
181 – 250	RR	0
251 +	NR	0

¹ HR, MR, LR, RR & NR denote respectively – high, medium, low, rare and no probabilities of profitable crop response to applied nutrient. Profitable response to applied nutrients occurs when the increase in crop value from increased yield is greater than the cost of the applied nutrient. ✂

Effective Dairy Pasture

by Jack Kyle, Grazier Specialist, OMAFRA

Pasture can be an effective forage feed source for milk cows, dry cows and heifers. A well managed pasture will be very competitive with any other crop use that you might consider for that land base.

The key to maximizing both forage and livestock production is to manage the forage for optimum growth and optimum bite size for the animals grazing. If the grazing animal cannot get a big bite of quality forage, then production is going to suffer. When we feed stored feed, great effort is made to have optimum forage quality with appropriate length and excellent palatability. Pasture managed with the same diligence that is given to managing a feed bunk will give excellent returns. In the pasture situation you are not only managing animal intake, but also managing the forage growth to optimize yield and quality.

Optimizing Plant Growth

To get optimum growth from the forage plants they need to be in a rapid growth state for as much of the growing season as possible. Maintaining a grazing forage height between 10 cm (4 inches) and 30 cm (12 inches) will allow the plants to maintain good growth and capture all the available sunlight to drive the photosynthesis. This plant height will also maintain a substantial root system that will be able to gather water and nutrients throughout the summer and minimize a summer dormancy period should we get into hot dry weather. To maintain this level of forage growth, the pasture manager needs to move livestock to fresh grass every couple of days. If too much pasture is offered at a time then selective grazing will take place and the less desirable plants will not be grazed and become mature. After a plant is grazed it needs time to rest and re-grow. This is the key point of pasture management - rest and recovery.

Optimizing Animal Intake

From an animal management standpoint, maximizing bite size is the key to good productivity. Cattle bite at a rather constant rate and for about 8 hours each day. The variable that you can control is the size of the bite. By providing pasture that is the optimum size for the animal to bite (10 - 30 cm), you will have taken the first big step to maximize intake. The second step is to have fresh forage on offer at all times. Livestock are not going to eat forage that has been laid on or fouled with manure or urine. The longer the animals are in a given paddock, the greater the percentage of forage in that paddock that is going to be unpalatable because of what has been done to it. Thus the importance of frequent moves to fresh pasture.

Fence, Water & Laneways

Fencing is the tool that will allow you to manage your livestock to provide re-growth time for the grass and manage the quality and quantity of forage available for your livestock. Temporary or semi-permanent single or double wire electric fence will allow you to control your livestock to achieve improved pasture performance from both the forage and the livestock.



Moving livestock to fresh pasture every 1 - 2 days will optimize plant growth by allowing the plants adequate rest and recovery time. (It takes 15 - 20 days to recover from grazing in the early part of the season and 30 - 45 days in late summer.) These same 1 - 2 day moves will provide readily available fresh forage that will encourage optimum bite size by the livestock.

Grazing livestock need ready and easy access to fresh clean water. The water supply should be in the paddock they are grazing. If livestock have to walk a distance for water they will drink less, which means they will eat less. If they are walking away from the pasture to drink they will deposit manure and urine in the lane ways and around the water source which does not benefit the pastures. The easiest and most effective water system is to use a pipeline system utilizing black plastic pipe laid on the surface along a fence.

For milk cows that are going to travel to and from the barn twice a day, good lanes are essential for ease and comfort of cow movement. A well drained firm surface will facilitate cow movement even during wet weather. This combination of readily available forage and fresh water will give maximum forage production and maximum animal performance. By applying these principals to your pasture system you will make pasture a profitable part of your farm operation.✂

Forages Feed Soil

Bonnie Ball-Soil Fertility Specialists-OMAFRA

The benefits that growing forages have on soil were clearly demonstrated during this year's challenging growing season. Pounding rains, flooding, and traffic too soon, caused crusting and compaction of some soils in the spring of 2011. With root growth limited and shallow, crops were water and nutrient deficient where dry weather followed. Forages help soil resist damage from adverse conditions. With forages, soil has better tilth and more resilience against structure breakdown. The tendency for crusting and compaction is less; drainage, capacity to hold water, and root growth are improved with forages.

How it works

Soil Stability Soil after forage is more stable. Forages increase biological activity. There are more roots, more microbes, and more soil animals, such as worms. Fibrous roots of grasses promote granular structure. Root exudates, hyphae of fungi, and slimes from bacteria and worms, glue soil particles together. They form water stable aggregates. Water stable aggregates are granules that resist destruction and erosion. In the years after the forage, the water stable aggregates help soil resist breakdown and erosion. In the years when the forage is grown, continuous ground cover and intact roots prevent erosion. Over the rotation, a 60 to 70% reduction in erosion is typical. Less erosion means more topsoil and better soil quality.

Porosity Large deep pores created by forage roots and soil animals improve infiltration and drainage. These deep pores allow excess water to drain away quickly because water above field capacity is held at low tension in large pores. While large pores facilitate drainage of water at very low tension, tiny pores created inside the aggregates by organic matter and microorganisms hold plant available water at higher tension during drier times. Increased water retention or holding capacity means that soil is less droughty.

Root room Crops after forages have more 'root room'. Tap roots of legumes such as alfalfa, help break up plow-pans and create channels. The root channels remain in the subsoil for several years. Roots of subsequent crops use these channels to explore deeper layers. Earthworm pores are also re-used by crop roots.

Root health Crops following forages have healthier roots because of fewer pathogens. When the host crop is not present the number of pathogens decreases. Rotating into forages also enables beneficial organisms to consume pathogens. Fewer pathogens help subsequent crops to cope with adverse weather conditions. Forages rank highly in biodiversity. A study that assessed 21 major crops over 25 different criteria defining ecologically friendliness, ranked alfalfa the most biodiversity-friendly out of all the crops.

Nutrient availability After a forage crop soil has better nutrient availability. This is a result of more abundant and healthier crop roots, and the addition of high quality residues. The narrow carbon to nitrogen ratio typical of forage residues increases active organic matter and easily mineralizable nitrogen. Reduction in nitrogen fertilizer requirement is up to 112 kg/ha (100 lb/ac). Organic matter also increases availability of phosphorous, sulphur and some micronutrients.

Bottom line

Under average conditions, yield increases range from 5 to more than 20% in the case of corn after alfalfa, with effects lasting into the 2nd year of corn. Adverse conditions, such as beating from rains or other forces, are better tolerated by soil with forage in the rotation. The soil environment is more conducive to healthy crop root growth due to physical and biological changes. Soil holds more water, but drains quicker. Extremely wet or dry weather has less impact on crops.✂

Biomass: Future Commodity for Ontario?

Nick Betts OSCIA

Context

At the beginning of 2010, media interest focussed on how Ontario will be the 'greenest' part of North America, looking to wind, solar, and biomass as renewable energy sources. Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association is interested in understanding if purpose-grown biomass crops can benefit the farm community and contribute to economic growth in rural communities.

One of the biggest hurdles with growing agricultural biomass for thermal energy generation is transportation and densification. Many countries around the world grow and utilize agricultural biomass for energy production, but this is usually done on a regional or city-level. By down-scaling generation plants, process efficiencies can be increased, such as limiting distances from field to plant, lower densification needed, decreasing costs and handling fees. Ontario Power Generation is considering the feasibility of burning biomass in their large-scale plants.

While energy sources are the primary focus for most biomass research, alternative end-uses are numerous. These end-uses range from structural additives in plastics and manufactured fire logs to low-dust, organic horse bedding and small animal litter.

The Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has funded a project through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP), in Ontario, this is delivered through the Agricultural Adaptation Council. This project is taking an intensive, in-depth look at developing an innovative agricultural biomass value chain sector in Ontario. Such research will illuminate efficiencies in crop production and commercially viable end-uses.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is leading the project, looking at the industry as a whole, from planting to end-use. Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association is coordinating the field research of this project. This involves growing 900 acres of energy crops across Ontario in field-scale size comparison plots.

Ontario Energy Crops

All grasses grown for this project are perennial species. While several annual grasses are under production in the United States, they offer limited environmental benefits while increasing handling and maintenance costs. By using perennial grasses, the crop is likely carbon-neutral or even carbon-negative, sequestering carbon in the root mass that remains in the field year after year. For economic viability, it is essential that any new crop in a farmer's rotation be low maintenance with little handling. These grasses are extremely low maintenance; little, if any fertilizer is used, no pesticides are needed, and the harvesting for most will occur in the early spring when custom harvesters are sitting idle. Other environmental benefits for long-term rotation (sometimes 20 + years) grasses come out of planting them in high-erosion potential soils, vegetated filter strips of milk-houses and greenhouses, and along riparian buffer zones. Yet another avenue for research is the impact these long-term rotation crops will have with respect to biodiversity. Research on the not-to-distant horizon will look at the ecological benefits associated with growing various purpose-grown energy crops long term.

Our Project Process

The Ontario Field-scale Agricultural Biomass project started with innovative farm co-operators submitting applications and receiving funds to help with growing, maintaining and harvesting energy crops on field-scale research plots. A field technician is monitoring the growing activities throughout the 4-year program. This unique design provides the farm community with hands-on agronomic data from actual farmers dealing with the crop management. Results will provide data on basic agronomy of these crops in various climates and soils (collected by the University of Guelph), as well as the experiences of the farmers themselves, providing incredibly valuable information for expected future scaling up of the industry. This project has some of the most creative, innovative farmers in Ontario working on solutions that work best in their particular part of the province.

All 26 farmers taking part in the project will have multiple field days onsite, organized by the OSCIA Regional Communications Coordinators.

Nick Betts is the Outreach Coordinator for Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. For more information, contact him at nbetts@ontariosoilcrop.org. Follow him on twitter at www.twitter.com/nickAToscia. Read some of his thoughts at CroppedThoughts.wordpress.com ✂

Ontario Forage Expo Update

Karen Jacobs, Heartland Soil and Crop Improvement Association

In 2006 the Ontario Forage Council recognized a need to promote the latest haying equipment by doing side-by-side, in-field demonstrations. The Ontario Forage Expo allows producers to compare the results of numerous machines, all working in the same conditions.

The Ontario Forage Expo has rotated through numerous counties in South Western Ontario. It is always partnered with a county or regional Soil and Crop Improvement Association. The OSCIA groups have a good network of producers in each county, and an excellent connection with the Forage Agri-Business community in their respective areas.

The Ontario Forage Expo has grown in popularity, and has proven to be an excellent opportunity for both industry and producers. The year's event was held at the Elora Research Farm, and was attended by over 300 people. Over a hundred pictures can be seen at <http://hscia.wordpress.com/>. There is at least one picture of every machine that was demonstrated that day!

This is a free event that is open to everyone, keep an eye out for it next summer!

Special thanks to Ray Roberston for his help with this article.

Interesting Data to Think About.

Paul Wight, Pickseed Sales Manager

When I am speaking to a group such as 4-H I find everyone learns more by two-way interaction rather than a one-way conversation; so challenging the group as to which crop; grain corn, soybeans or forages provides the most dollars per acre on farm for the farmer is always a good starting point. Grain corn, no question is having a tremendous year with great yields and the best pricing in a long time. Naturally this was their choice. I must admit some members saw through my question and picked forages.

The obvious answer is forages. Our testing program calls for the evaluation of 30-40 new alfalfa varieties each year in head-to-head trials conducted across Canada (locations: 3 in Ontario, 3 in Quebec, 2 in Alberta, 1 in Manitoba), with each location being cut 3-4 times per year. Forage quality samples are taken at each cut from each rep at 2 Ontario locations and these are tested for Relative Forage Quality. Each sample is analyzed and the results are put into the Milk 2006 Program to determine potential milk production (milk per acre, etc).

Leader produced 15,109 kg/milk per hectare in this trial (of 2 locations over 2 years; 4 station-years, comprising a total of 14 cuts all 4 reps per location were sampled for a total of 56 samples). Using 15,109 kg/ha, I divided by 2.5 to convert to 6,043 kg per acre; Divided the 6,043 kg by 103 (Density of milk is 1.033 kg per liter) to get 58.70 hectoliters per acre and using \$70.00 blended milk price came up with \$4,107.00 for forages in milk dollars per acre for Leader.

Finally, comparing the yield of forages in milk dollars I compared this to grain corn and soybeans. Corn to equal this value of forages at 200 bushels per acre, the farmer would need a price of \$21.14 a bushel. Soybeans at 60 bushels per acre the price would need to be \$70.47 per bushel to be the equivalent of forages.

The crop to provide the most dollars on farm for the farmer is forage! I then turn to the other benefits of forages like providing soil nitrogen, helping build organic matter and soil structure.✂

Hay – What's Happening?

Ray Robertson, P.Ag. Manager- Ontario Forage Council Vice Chair Canadian Forage & Grassland Association

Through the years, farmers have always strived to make great hay and would try to minimize the chances of it getting rained on, yet it has often been referred to as the forgotten crop. As a former dairy farmer, getting that hay crop in the barn without a rain on it after cutting was always my goal. But we have all experienced the unpredicted rainfall, and sometimes much more than we would want. Many of us have heard the comment - the beef cow guy down the road will be glad to get it. Of course - at a much lower price or perhaps just for taking it away.

Some of those comments are still true today, but hay is starting to command a much higher profile, and rightly so. I think the majority of us have witnessed a considerable increase in hay prices, and that is quite possibly going to continue on a spiraling upturn.

Just look at what has happened to the various cereal crops. Corn, wheat, soybeans, canola and various other crops have all seen a considerable increase, and hay is now on the rise. Good quality hay in large square bales is now reported to be selling at \$.10 a pound, and based on many reports about shortage of quality hay, we may see that price rise. If asked the question why - it is fairly obvious. In the past year or so, we have all seen acres taken out of hay and pasture that had never been broken in our life time. The traditional cash crops are grossing prices we have not seen, and south of the border, corn for ethanol has certainly taken its toll on the forage crops. Last March, while on a Fact Finding Mission to Florida, hay retailers were commenting that the dairy farmers in the western US would be paying at least \$100 per ton more for hay - if they could even find it. That has now gone beyond the prediction stage. We have been told that hay is extremely scarce in many of the US states, and that will definitely have a huge impact on our hay prices, despite the high Canadian dollar.

Certainly, in the short term, the livestock producer, who has to purchase hay, will feel this in the pocket-book, and that is certainly reason for some concern. In the longer term, the higher hay prices may be in most people's best interest. The vast majority of good farmers still see forages as an extremely important part of a good crop rotation. If we can reduce the exit of forage acres, as hay producers experience a greater return, we may all benefit. Granted, the majority of livestock farmers in much of Ontario produce most of the forage they require. As has been said on occasion, farmers can aim to produce some excellent hay to sell into the horse industry or possibly into a dairy operation which certainly assists the overall cash flow of his operation. But as many have experienced, some of that rained-on hay will be purchased by a cow/calf producer who is looking for a cheaper class of hay for the dry cows, to tide him over in the short term.

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There has always been a significant amount of hay marketed into the US for both horses and probably a lesser number of dairy operations. That market is now expanding, and there appears to be no borders. Having participated in some Forage Fact-Finding Missions in the past couple of years, it has become most evident that Canadian hay is, and will be in an increasing demand. Canada is highly respected in most parts of the world, and although it may sound strange, distance is not a real or permanent barrier. For example, the Middle East tendered for 1.2 million tons for 2011, and Canada was awarded a 400,000 ton contract. This is just one example and other overseas destinations are on the radar. The grains and oilseeds have experienced these markets for many years, and hay is certainly gaining in recognition. The Canadian Forage & Grassland Association (CFGGA) is a relatively new national organization and is quickly becoming an effective voice for the Canadian forage industry. Forage yield increases have lagged behind most other crops, possibly due in part to the fact that forage research has not kept pace with the majority of agricultural crops. That in itself can, and will be one of the key roles of the CFGGA.

To date, the most evident accomplishment of CFGGA has been on the forage export side. An active and highly visible group has been building awareness of the Canadian hay industry and its working. Yes, the job is not yet completed, but progress is being achieved. In early October, the CFGGA will be participating in the World Dairy Expo in Madison Wisconsin, which is considered one of the major international hay export market opportunities. A number of initiatives are in progress and constant focus on the forage industry will pay dividends. As we continue to increase the profile and awareness of the forage industry, producers are encouraged to check the following websites.

Ontario Forage Council - www.ontarioforagecouncil.com

Canadian Forage & Grassland Association- www.canadianfga.ca

Producers interested in Forage Marketing are invited to join the Ontario Hay Marketing Forum and become eligible to join the CFGGA Export Group. For more information or an application form, you are encouraged to contact the Ontario Forage Council office in Markdale: 519-986-1484, or email ray@ontarioforagecouncil.com



Ontario
The Ontario Forage Council thanks the
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food &
Rural Affairs for its support

Forage Council Welcomes New Staff Member

Ontario Forage Council is pleased to announce that Dorothy Friel has joined the OFC Staff as Executive Assistant. Dorothy is enthusiastic about her new position at the Agriculture Centre here in Markdale, and is looking forward to working with everyone connected to the forage industry.

We welcome Dorothy in her new position and trust you will assist her in fulfilling her role.✘

Gold Level Members

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