

ALFALFA HAY

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California

MARKET SUMMARY

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Hay Quality Guidelines for Nationwide Market News Reporting

Livestock and Grain Market News branch has revised the hay quality guidelines for use in the nationwide Market News reporting program. These revised guidelines establish specific objective measurements of value attributes for each quality category of Alfalfa hay. The revised guidelines include all parameters commonly used to measure hay quality and also have all parameters in proper relationship to each other.

Nationwide uniformity of price information is the goal of revising these guidelines for quality designations. It is important for hay buyers in any part of the United States to be able to read any of USDA's hay reports and know the hay prices quoted are consistent from area to area for quality. So that producers and buyers from different areas, can be talking about hay in the report and feel confident they are talking about the same quality.

Market News reporters from several states formed the task force that collected information and input from hay and forage industry representatives, that information was used to form the revised quality designations and parameters numbers associated with each of the quality designations. USDA and State Departments of Agriculture market news reporters will be using the revised guidelines in market reporting across the country.

The following are the revised national hay guidelines on Alfalfa. Guidelines are also included for Grass Hay. Reporters will be using test parameter(s) prominent in their trade area, **visual characteristics**, as well as the **intent of sale (usage)** to determine hay quality.

Table 1: Alfalfa guidelines (for domestic livestock use and not more than 10% grass)

| Quality | ADF | NDF | *RFV | **TDN-100% | **TDN-90% | CP |
|---------|-------|-------|---------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Supreme | <27 | <34 | >185 | >62 | >55.9 | >22 |
| Premium | 27-29 | 34-36 | 170-185 | 60.5-62 | 54.5-55.9 | 20-22 |
| Good | 29-32 | 36-40 | 150-170 | 58-60 | 52.5-54.5 | 18-20 |
| Fair | 32-35 | 40-44 | 130-150 | 56-58 | 50.5-52.5 | 16-18 |
| Utility | >35 | >44 | <130 | <56 | <50.5 | <16 |

*RFV calculated using the Wis/Minn formula. **TDN calculated using the western formula. Quantitative factors are approximate, and many factors can affect feeding value. Values based on 100 % dry matter (TDN showing both 100% & 90%). Guidelines are to be used with visual appearance and intent of sale (usage).

Table 2: Grass Hay guidelines

| Quality | Crude Protein Percent |
|---------|-----------------------|
| Premium | Over 13 |
| Good | 9-13 |
| Fair | 5-9 |
| Utility | Under 5 |

Quantitative factors are approximate, and many factors can affect feeding value. Values based on 100% dry matter.

End usage may influence hay price or value more than testing results.

Hay Quality Designation's physical descriptions:

Supreme: Very early maturity, pre bloom, soft fine stemmed, extra leafy. Factors indicative of very high nutritive content. Hay is excellent color and free of damage.

Premium: Early maturity, i.e., pre-bloom in legumes and pre head in grass hays, extra leafy and fine stemmed-factors indicative of a high nutritive content. Hay is green and free of damage.

Good: Early to average maturity, i.e., early to mid-bloom in legumes and early head in grass hays, leafy, fine to medium stemmed, free of damage other than slight discoloration.

Fair: Late maturity, i.e., mid to late-bloom in legumes, head-in grass hays, moderate or below leaf content, and generally coarse stemmed. Hay may show light damage.

Utility: Hay in very late maturity, such as mature seed pods in legumes or mature head in grass hays, coarse stemmed. This category could include hay discounted due to excessive damage and heavy weed content or mold. Defects will be identified in market reports when using this category.

