

Haying Season - Finally

Who would have thought a couple months ago that our first good stretch of haying weather would come during the last week of June. But that's what happened for many of us. Lots of first cutting hay got baled last week. That hay may have been laying in the windrow for several weeks waiting to get dry, but it still was first cutting!

Today, though, let's look forward instead of behind. How should we handle the rest of this haying season?

If you were lucky and got first cutting made early and avoided all the weather delays, my only advice is to move forward just like you planned to do normally. And if you finally cut for the first time last week, my advice is much the same. However, consider taking your next harvest a bit sooner than usual to get some better quality hay and to time cuts so they occur at favorable dates in the season.

For the rest of you who had hay down earlier and just baled it recently, you probably have strips of nice looking regrowth separated by strips of nearly bare ground where windrows were smothering your alfalfa. If that alfalfa doesn't come back, you need to consider planting replacement fields later this summer or next spring.

If it does regrow, be real careful about when you take next cutting. Those plants are really weak. If you harvest when the good looking plants are ready, many of the weakened plants might be killed. If you want to save that field, wait until weakened plants start to bloom, even though the rest may be way too mature.

Start planning now for the rest of your hay cuttings this year. It could have a big impact for several years.

Dr. Bruce Anderson, Extension Forage Specialist
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
314 Keim Hall—East Campus
Lincoln NE 68583-0915
402-4742-2577
banderson1@unl.edu

