

## RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY

Mid- to late May is when many alfalfa growers would like to take their first cutting of alfalfa. But not this year! Nearly every day for the last two weeks, harvest has been prevented due to rain, and sometimes overly abundant amounts of rain.

So what can you do about it? I wish I had a good answer. Well, actually I do have a good answer – wait for dry weather. What I really wish I had was a better answer, one that could overcome this daily moisture and bring us some extended sunshine.

We have options when the hay is already cut and we need to beat some rainy weather. Chopping haylage, baling with preservatives, and wrapping bales in plastic are three ways we avoid rain interference – as long as we prepare in advance to be able to use these options.

But when rain prevents us from even cutting the hay, all that can be done is wait. Well, maybe that isn't the only thing to do. While waiting for the rain to stop and sun to shine, checking to see that all haying equipment is ready to go full speed might be wise. Installing preservative applicators or arranging for choppers or bale wrappers might prevent future problems if rains return too soon after cutting. And, like it or not, figuring out how to use or market this grinding hay or stock cow hay may put you one step ahead of the crowd.

Also look ahead to next cutting, and even to the one after that. All this rain is likely to encourage good alfalfa regrowth, along with some annual weeds. Timely herbicide applications may preserve the quality of future cuttings.

It's frustrating when field work is delayed by rain. Don't waste too much time complaining, there's other useful work to do.

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