GUEST COLUMN

For Alfalfa Success, Go Back to the Basics

Content supplied by Bayer U.S. – Crop Science, Forage Genetics, and University data

Understanding alfalfa management along with selecting the right products to meet your field and feeding needs are very important when it comes to growing a successful alfalfa crop. Through the years, one thing that is consistent about growing a successful alfalfa crop, is going back to the basics. This article highlights some basic practices that will help you create a successful crop. Meeting your needs is the most important factor for success.

Determine your alfalfa feeding needs

- Select products to meet increased quality, yield, or both.

Select a product that offers you options as well as meets your cattle feeding needs

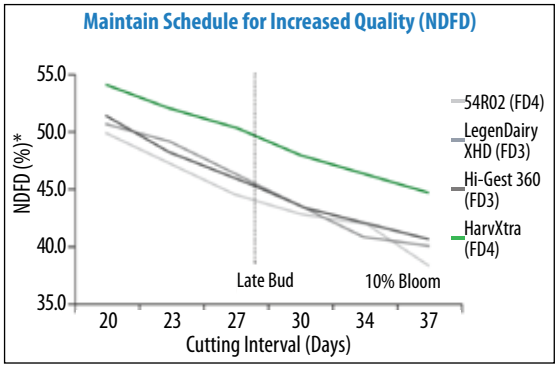
- The Roundup Ready® Alfalfa trait delivers exceptional weed control with excellent crop safety, allowing farmers to improve alfalfa tonnage and quality potential. Roundup Ready® Alfalfa can deliver a high percentage of pure alfalfa in hay and haylage.
- HarvXtra® Alfalfa with Roundup Ready® Technology offers an alfalfa trait which reduces lignin content in alfalfa, giving farmers flexibility to produce higher-quality forage or delay harvest to maximize yield potential.
- Select products with winterhardiness and fall dormancy to meet your geographic area needs.
- Select products with strong disease ratings and agronomic characteristics.
- Avoid planting with a nurse crop.

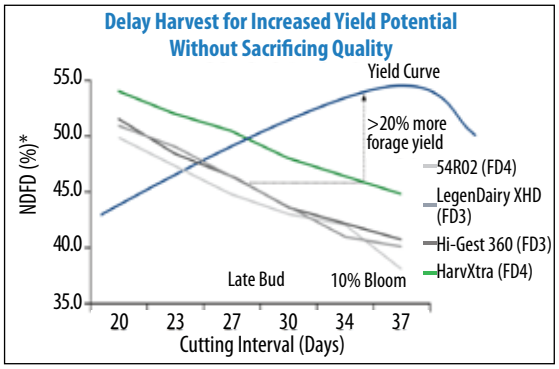
Use Best Practices and Agronomics

- Use a seed treatment with an inoculum to manage early season soil diseases and get plants off to a strong start.
- Plant seed ¼-½" in well-drained, packed soils with 6.2-7.8 pH.
- Plant between 12-20 lbs/ac.
- Manage weeds.
- Test soils and manage nutrients, especially potassium (60 lbs removed per ton of dry matter).
- Scout and manage insects and diseases in your alfalfa crop.
- Manage harvest around frost dates and cutting schedules based on your seed product and forage needs.
- Talk to your Agronomist and Seed Representative for information.

Age of Stand	Plants/Sq Foot
Seeding Year	20-30
1st Year After Seeding	12-20
2nd Year	8-12
3rd Year & Following	6-8

Harvest data when managing and using an alfalfa product like HarvXtra® Alfalfa with Roundup Ready® Technology





*NDFD: Four locations (ID, IA, WA, WI) over two years. 1. Data comes from FGI trials comparing HarvXtra® Alfalfa with Roundup Ready® Technology 2017 FD4 commercial varieties to FD4 commercial checks. Trials were seeded in 2013 and harvested in 2014, 2015, and 2016 in Boone, IA; Mt. Joy, PA; Nampa, ID; Touchet, WA; and West Salem, WI. Yield increase is directly correlated to the ability to delay harvest. 2. Data comes from an FGI trial in West Salem, WI, comparing three cuttings at 35-day intervals to four cuttings at 28-day intervals, with the three-cut system yielding 26% more over the life of the stand. Trials were seeded in 2013 and harvested in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Yield increase is directly correlated to the ability to delay harvest.

Multiple trials conducted at the University of Wisconsin (UW) have shown a 15-20% forage yield advantage for a three- cut versus four- cut management system over a four-year rotation.

3- vs 4-Cutting Effect on Alfalfa Yield (Arlington, WI)						
		1st Cutting	2nd Cutting	3rd Cutting	4th Cutting	Season Total
2nd Year	3-Cut	2.97	2.43	2.15	---	7.55
	4-Cut	1.66	1.48	1.71	1.68	6.53
3rd Year	3-Cut	2.32	1.53	1.24	---	5.09
	4-Cut	1.31	1.18	0.75	0.83	4.07

Source – UW-Extension, Dan Undersander 2009.