

## **CROP NOTES for May 14, 2009 – PEAQ Report**

Past issues of Crop Notes are posted at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/winneshiek/info/crops.htm>

### **Iowa State University Extension Information for Northeast Iowa**

*By Brian Lang, ISU Extension Agronomist*

*911 S. Mill Street, Decorah, IA 52101*

*563-382-2949*

### **PEAQ for May 14, 2009**

#### **Timing First-Crop Alfalfa**

**Predictive Equations for Alfalfa Quality (PEAQ)** is a method used to estimate forage quality of a standing alfalfa crop. The field estimation is based on the height of the tallest stem and the maturity stage of the field. It has worked very well as a “ball-park” indicator to estimate harvest time for first-crop alfalfa. The following Fact Sheet explains the PEAQ procedure, and can be used to estimate timeliness of first-crop harvest of your own fields. <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/NR/rdonlyres/11CD336E-1D82-427F-9922-49A4C48230AF/12306/FactSheetBL22.pdf>

On average alfalfa quality will drop 3 to 5 points in RFV per day in spring. It is recommended to produce alfalfa forage around 150 RFV for milking dairy herds, and 120 to 130 RFV for heifers, stocker cattle and lactating beef cattle. Under typical hay harvest conditions, 15% of the forage dry matter will be lost. Therefore, it is suggested to cut at PEAQ readings of 165 to 170 RFV (bud stage alfalfa about 27-inches tall) to end up with harvested forage of approximately 150 RFV.

A random sampling of fields across northeast Iowa are being checked for PEAQ twice a week (Monday & Thursday).

#### **PEAQ Results for Thursday May 14:**

County, Height (inches), Stage of maturity, RFV  
Butler, 21, Vegetative, 205  
Chickasaw site A, 18, Vegetative, 224  
Chickasaw site B, 18, Vegetative, 224  
Dubuque, 22, Bud, 190  
Floyd site A, 19, Vegetative, 220  
Floyd site B, 17, Vegetative, 231  
Floyd site C, 19, Vegetative, 220  
Winneshiek, 17, Vegetative, 231

### **WINTER RYE**

#### **Heads-Up, Boot Stage is Near**

While checking alfalfa for PEAQ, I noticed that some winter rye fields should reach boot stage next week. This is important if the winter rye is to be harvested as hay or haylage. The forage quality of winter rye at boot stage is similar to other small grain forages at boot stage (oats, barley, wheat, triticale), however, after boot stage (heading stage and beyond), winter rye forage quality drops faster than these other small grain forages.

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