

NEWSLETTER



MAY 2021



Matt Severson
CEO

From the Manager's Desk

As we mentioned in last month's newsletter, due to ongoing restrictions with public gatherings, we were forced to postpone this year's open house celebration normally held in early May. Instead of personally handing out checks, we will be mailing out this year's patronage refund and eligible equity redemption checks later in May. We are pleased once again to be returning over \$4 million in cash to our members this year. This past fiscal year (Oct 1, 2019 – Sept 30, 2020) the minimum amount of purchases needed to qualify for a patronage check was about \$750. If you purchased more than this but do not receive a check by early June, please reach out to Emily at our Mt Horeb office to be eligible for future distributions. It is likely that we do not have the required information needed to issue patronage. The IRS requires us to report all patronage refunds we distribute by the recipient's taxpayer identification number. This is usually a social security (for individuals) or federal ID number (for businesses). If you are keeping track, we have returned over \$30 million in cash to our members in the past 10 years. Thank you for the support that has made these patronage and equity redemptions possible.

As I pulled into the office this morning on April 26 just before sunrise, I was met by one of our fertilizer tender trucks leaving

the property and another fueling up at the pumps. The point is not that I get up early (I can hear my kids, "Dad, you got up early. Nobody cares"), it's that some of our staff are already well into their day. If the fertilizer tender trucks are full and leaving before 6:00 am, that means the airflows and spinners applying the fertilizer are already in the fields and needing a refill. Long days and short nights can be the norm this time of year for our agronomy division and our producer members as they work to get this year's crop in the ground. This is a great reminder to please pay special attention over the next couple of months to farm machinery pulling in and out of the fields and wide loads coming around the next corner or over the next hill. Whether you are in your car on your way to work, or in the tractor moving to the next field, never assume the other person sees you. Slow down and be extra careful. If you have teenage drivers at home, please share this reminder with them as well.

We are now putting the finishing touches on the addition to our Mt Horeb Auto and Truck shop that increased the overall shop space by about a third, just in time for the busy spring season. Located behind the new Mt Horeb convenience store, the new addition for the shop will now be a home for large truck repair. In addition to the increased space, equipment has been added to improve employee safety and comfort. I was very impressed the first time I saw Dakota raise a quad axle dump truck about five feet off the ground using the new portable hoist system and touchpad controls. What would have required kneeling or laying on his back to work on the truck can now be done at eye level. With over 600 vehicles in our fleet and the growing large truck customer base, this new addition will help take our auto and truck shop into the future. If you know of someone looking for a career as a skilled auto or large truck diesel technician, please let them know we're hiring!

Soon our propane division will begin compiling contracting options for the next heating season. In June they will begin mailing out contracts to over 12,000 of our propane members that purchased at least 400 gallons or more during the past heating season. While some of our business units may not be easily accessible to all members, propane is the one division that can reach everyone reading this update. If you use propane to heat your home or business, and are not currently purchasing it through Premier, please consider making the change. We would love the opportunity to earn your business and show you why we consistently rank in the top 25 propane companies in the country. As an added benefit, since you are already a member of Premier, a cooperative that you own, all purchases count towards your share of the annual patronage distribution I mentioned above. This year's cash patronage will amount to about three cents back on each gallon of propane purchased.

I'd like to wish all Mothers out there a Happy Mother's Day on May 9. If you are still looking for something for that special Mom or Grandma, stop by either our Mt Horeb Do it Best or Westby ACE stores and pick up a beautiful floral hanging basket.

With Memorial Day later this month, I hope everyone has a chance to honor the brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives to protect all of us and this great country. Have a wonderful May.



CROP PRODUCTION



Ken Jahnke
Agronomy Sales Manager

Fungicide Application Windows

A fungicide targeting foliar diseases is only as effective as its application timing. Generally, there are three key growth stage options to choose from — V5-V7, V8-V10 and VT-R1 — for making a fungicide application, and there are advantages and disadvantages associated with each stage.

We've taken an in-depth look at these options, the pros, cons and expectations associated with a foliar fungicide application at any of these stages.

#1: V5-V7 Fungicide Application

The Pros

- Applying at this stage offers convenience, allowing growers to add a fungicide to the tank with a planned herbicide trip across the field.
- Effective control of early-season disease infections that begin in lower canopy with splashing rains.

The Cons

- Generally, it is too early for the bulk of late-season foliar diseases and likely will require a follow-up application as diseases develop.

What to Expect

- Applications at this stage will perform better when applied to a corn hybrid that has good disease resistance.
- Depending on disease pressure, a corn crop receiving an application at this stage could benefit from a follow-up VT-R1 fungicide

application.

#2: V8-V10 Fungicide Application

The Pros

- With the proper equipment, applications during this time frame can be made with a ground sprayer, mitigating the need for a more expensive aerial application.
- Fungicide applications made at V10 can deliver similar yield results as those of fungicides applied at VT-R1.

The Cons

- Corn is growing rapidly at this time. Any weather disruption or equipment breakdown can result in missing the window for a ground application. Depending on the speed to maturity of the corn, later disease development can occur quickly soon after tassel and requires another application or yields could be sacrificed. Examples of diseases are Southern rust or tar spot that develop aggressively after tasseling.

What to Expect

- If one of the components of the disease triangle is slightly off — e.g., host has some disease resistance, weather is not conducive for disease establishment, pathogen is not present in large quantities — then V8-V10 is the best timing to avoid aerial application costs and still achieve the best disease protection to protect yields.

#3: VT-R1 Fungicide Application

The Pros

- This is ideal timing for applying a fungicide as it's typically a time of high disease pressure, and a corn plant's tissues that need to be protected most are present and functioning at this point.

The Cons

- Your only application option is aerial, which could have a higher price tag than a ground application.
- Complete plant coverage, especially in the mid to lower canopy, is harder to achieve at this point in the corn plant's life.

What to Expect

- Out of all three growth stages to make a foliar fungicide application, this stage allows a grower to achieve the best disease control, protection of yields and ROI, even with additional application costs considered.

Contact your local Premier Agronomist for more information on fungicide and when to apply it on your fields.

COOPERATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

May Open House Events Postponed

Due to the ongoing concerns over Covid-19, we have made the difficult decision to postpone the open house events scheduled for early May for Mt Horeb, Westby, and La Farge. Since we typically have patronage and equity redemption checks available to pick up at the open houses, this year we will be mailing them out. Our goal is to start mailing out patronage refunds and equity redemptions by age by mid-May.

Please check our website and future newsletters for updates on the rescheduling for the open houses at the Mt Horeb Do it Best, Westby ACE, and La Farge AutoCenter.

June Dairy Month

June Dairy Month is quickly approaching. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for June Dairy Month events near you!

ANIMAL NUTRITION

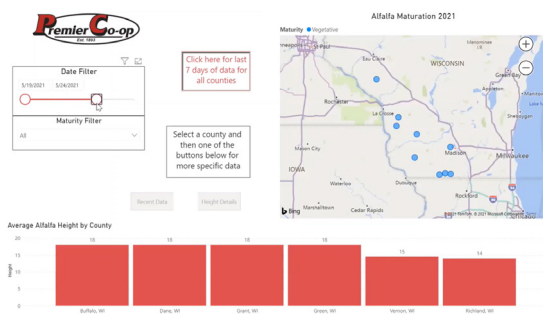


Rich Strutt
Animal Nutritionist

Interactive Alfalfa Maturity Map

Premier Cooperative is once again posting a daily updated interactive alfalfa maturity map on our website. You can go onto the web page yourself or talk to your Premier Cooperative Nutritionist to see what the maturity stage is for the alfalfa in your area. The map will track alfalfa height and RFQ throughout the SW WI, NE IA, and N IL regions based on field measurements taken by farmers and Premier Cooperative nutritionists using the PEAQ system developed at UW-Madison. The link to the map can be found at the very top of the home page at www.premiercooperative.com

Thank you for doing business with Premier Cooperative

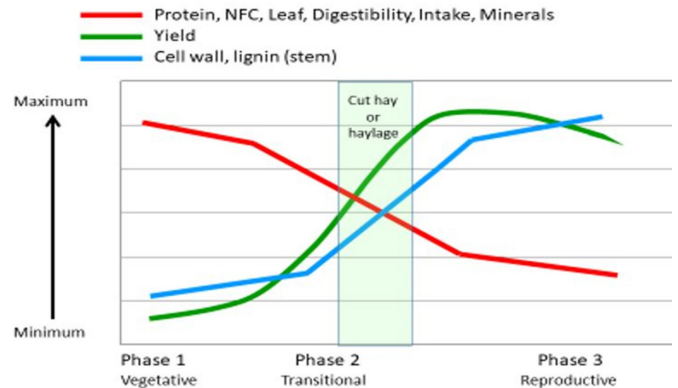


The importance of first cutting alfalfa: Quality versus yield

Phil Kaatz -Michigan State University Extension

The old cliché, you never get over a good or bad start, is very true for the forage crop of alfalfa. Alfalfa is a legume that provides an excellent blend of fiber, protein, and energy. When harvested at the appropriate time, alfalfa can provide excellent quality feed. Harvest too late and the consequences are poorer quality with higher yields. Harvest too early and the consequences are high quality with both reduced yields and reduced stand longevity. While every producer may want to harvest at the “sweet spot” between quality and yield, there is always a tradeoff between quality, yield and persistence based on time of cutting. (Fig. 1)

Forage Quality vs. Quantity



Alfalfa: Vegetative-----bud-----bloom-----see
Figure 1. Forage quality versus quantity. Figure by Kim Cassida, MSU

Alfalfa is versatile enough to be used by most livestock operations in a variety of ways. Therefore, the quality will have a significant impact on how the animal responds, e.g. producing pounds of milk for dairy cows, pounds of gain for growing heifers or steers, or maintaining body condition for a lactating beef cow. It makes sense to harvest with an end goal in mind

for quality and yield, according to the type of livestock fed. Livestock performance and body condition can be excellent markers for whether the forage is meeting animal needs. Figure 2 illustrates how Relative Forage Quality (RFQ) relates to nutrient needs for different species and classes of livestock.

Forage Quality Needs of Animals

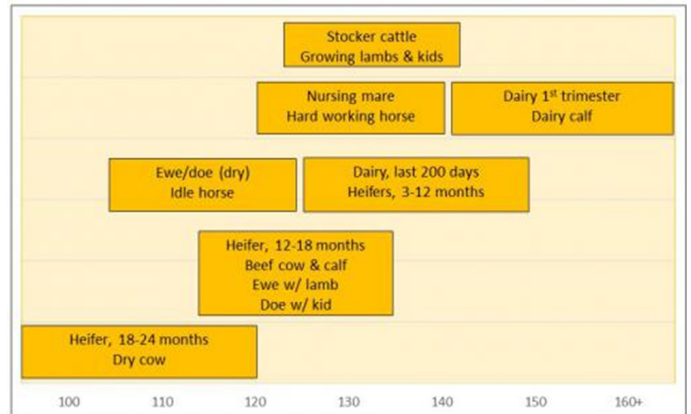


Figure 2. Different species of animal and forage quality needs. Adapted from Undersander, University of Wisconsin

Producers have been using Relative Feed Value (RFV) widely for ranking alfalfa for sale, inventory and allocating forage lots to animal groups according to their quality needs, as well as determining when to harvest. RFQ expands RFV and is an indexing tool that includes digestible fiber. The forage quality needs of a high producing milk cow is better met with alfalfa cut at the mid-bud stage, whereas the forage quality needs of an 18-24 month dairy heifer will be better met with more mature alfalfa harvested at the 1/10 bloom stage. Contact your local Premier nutritionist for more information on alfalfa and RFQ.

FUELS & LUBES



Tim Lease
Energy Division Manger

Energy News

I just got back from a week off of work. It's funny how a few days off can get you more focused and energized. I spent most of my time on my farm. I managed to get a couple of chicken coops completed, some wood cut and a good start on fencing in between bouts with my turkey hunting addiction. As usual, no turkeys were harmed during my hunting adventures. With the warmer weather, it's time to do some chillin' and grillin'. I can't tell you how to chill safely but I can give you some pointers on how to grill safely with propane.

- First you need to find your grill. Check behind the boat.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Position the grill in a safe location. Don't place it closer than 10 feet to the house. I've seen melted vinyl siding from a grill that was too close to the house. Also, look up so that you don't melt or catch something on fire above the grill. For instance, the Christmas lights that you've been meaning to take down.
- Check for leaks. Use a soapy solution that does not contain ammonia. Ammonia will damage brass valves. If you're not sure if your detergent contains ammonia, you can get gas detection soap at your local

hardware store that is safe to use on brass.

- Follow proper lighting procedures which are found in the manufacturer's instructions. If the flame goes out after running for a while, turn off the gas and consult your owner's manual.
- Be present. Don't leave your grill unattended.

If you need grill tanks filled, we can take care of that at the Do It Best in Mt. Horeb, Ace Hardware in Westby and our propane locations in Cobb, Richland Center, Lancaster and Waupaca. Call ahead to the propane locations to find out the best time to drop off your cylinders for filling. Propane cylinders are required to be visually inspected and recertified within 12 years of the manufactured date and every 5 years after that.

Our duty to warn brochures and propane contracts will be mailed in the middle of June again this year. I am going to lock in my propane price at my house and I suggest that you do the same. There is too much volatility in the energy markets to ignore the opportunity. If you have a propane powered vehicle, you can lock your price in for a year as well. There is still plenty of money left in the water heater rebate program. It's \$200 per water heater. Be sure to snap a photo of the data plate on your old water heater before it's taken away. We need the serial number and manufacturer of the old unit. The new water heater must operate on propane.

Enjoy the rest of May. On Memorial Day please reflect on the sacrifice of the men and women who have died in service to this nation. I've had the privilege of serving with some of these heroes and I think about them nearly every day. Salute.



Jory Bossuyt

Grain Lead & Merchandising

We are also beginning the USDA weekly crop progress report season, which both looks at the progression of the crop and rates the condition of the crop. These reports come out at 3pm each Monday and can be helpful to watch to see how our crop is progressing nationwide. On top of these weekly reports, we will see monthly USDA reports on May 12th and June 10th, and the quarterly grain stocks and planted acreage on June 30th. If you have any questions about information on these reports either prior to their release or after, I will gladly answer them or keep you updated as to what the numbers tell us.

Premier has a fleet of grain trucks and quality drivers to haul both your stored old crop grain and new crop grain out of the field. Contact Jory today at 608-308-4889 to discuss how Premier can help you get started on a plan or add value to your existing marketing strategy.

Grain Market Update

We are entering an exciting season in the grain markets. Today's prices are providing some great contracting opportunities for your 2021 crop. We have seen many producers contract a portion of their new crop corn and soybeans on the way up throughout this rally, and I would encourage all to make a plan and set selling goals prior to harvest. Whether that is selling a portion of your production today or having targets in mind, it is typically better to have a plan and be prepared. As the weather and other factors impacting prices change, so can your plan.