2018 U.S. forage statistics

Total forage production
- More than 15,000 thousand tons
- 10,000 to 15,000 thousand tons
- 5,000 to 10,000 thousand tons
- 2,500 to 5,000 thousand tons
- 1,000 to 2,500 thousand tons
- 200 to 1,000 thousand tons
- 0 to 200 thousand tons

Total other hay production
- More than 5,000 thousand tons
- 2,500 to 5,000 thousand tons
- 1,000 to 2,500 thousand tons
- 500 to 1,000 thousand tons
- 200 to 500 thousand tons
- 0 to 200 thousand tons

Total alfalfa hay production
- More than 5,000 thousand tons
- 2,500 to 5,000 thousand tons
- 1,000 to 2,500 thousand tons
- 500 to 1,000 thousand tons
- 200 to 500 thousand tons
- 0 to 200 thousand tons

Alfalfa hay market trends (dollars per ton)

Total corn silage production
- More than 10,000 thousand tons
- 5,000 to 10,000 thousand tons
- 2,500 to 5,000 thousand tons
- 1,000 to 2,500 thousand tons
- 200 to 1,000 thousand tons
- 0 to 200 thousand tons

Total greenchop production
- More than 5,000 thousand tons
- 2,500 to 5,000 thousand tons
- 1,000 to 2,500 thousand tons
- 500 to 1,000 thousand tons
- 200 to 500 thousand tons
- 0 to 200 thousand tons

Prices
- In 2018, U.S. average hay prices continued the long, slow climb from the lows seen in 2015-16. Alfalfa hay prices started the year stable and moved higher, primarily driven by drought conditions in the Southeast. Supply-demand and quality conditions affected state and regional prices, but average alfalfa prices eventually peaked in May at nearly $190 per ton before settling around $130 per ton for the last half of the year, pressured by a weak dairy economy, new-crop quality issues and trade wars and tariffs that put a crimp in exports. The 2018 average should be near $175 per ton, about $30 per ton more than 2017. Despite the improving markets, 2018 average prices had not reached the highs generated in 2013-14.

The timeline for price recovery in the “other” market has been longer, with changes more subdued. Average prices started January 2018 near seven-month highs, planedruckt into summer, but then resumed a steady increase into fall and winter, reaching highs last seen in July 2014. Based on USDA monthly data, 2018 average prices should be near $127 per ton, up $6 per ton from 2017, but still well off the peak annual averages of about $140 per ton in 2013-14.

*Monthly average prices calculated by USDA are across counties, always using hay-producing states, the range of monthly prices can vary by $100 per ton or more.

Production
- Statistically, almost all forage categories posted production declines in 2018. Even where acreage increased slightly from 2017 (other hay and forage), lower yields were a drag on harvest totals. Compared to a year earlier:
  - **All dry hay:** 2018 production was estimated at 124 million tons, down 3 percent. Harvested area, at 52.8 million acres, up less than one percent; average yield, at 2.34 tons per acre, was 0.09 ton.
  - **Alfalfa and alfalfa mixture dry hay:** Production was estimated at 52.8 million tons, down 6 percent. Harvested area, at 36.6 million acres, was down 2 percent; average yield was estimated at 3.73 tons per acre, down 0.13 ton.

  - **All other dry hay:** Production totalled 71.0 million tons, down 3 percent. Harvested area, at 36.2 million acres, was up 1 percent; average yield was estimated at 1.96 tons per acre, down 0.06 ton.

  - **Total forage:** The USDA’s forage estimation program covers 17 states. Haylage and greenchop production are converted to 13 percent moisture, and combined with dry hay production to derive the total forage estimate. The 17-state total for all forage production was 79.8 million tons (41.9 million tons produced from alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures). All haylage and greenchop production was 29.6 million tons (19.1 million tons from alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures).

- **Core silage:** Production was estimated at 121 million tons for 2018, down 5 percent. The area harvested was estimated at 61.1 million acres, down 4 percent; average yield was down 0.1 ton, to 199 tons per acre.

- **Sorghum silage:** Production was estimated at 3.33 million tons, down 12 percent. Area harvested was estimated at 264.000 acres, down 6 percent; yield averaged 12.6 tons per acre, down 0.8 ton.

- **New sowings of alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures:** As 2.22 million acres, the area newly seeded to alfalfa during 2018 was up less than one percent (13,100 acres) from 2017, which had been the lowest area sown to new seeding since USDA started releasing estimates two decades ago.

- **Hay stocks:** All hay stored on U.S. farms on Dec. 1, 2018, totalled 79.5 million tons, down 6 percent from a year earlier. It marks the lowest December 3 hay stocks since the drought of 2012, and second-lowest inventory for that date since 1977.

Exports
- The outlook for 2018 started bright, but trade wars created market barriers and openings for U.S. competitors, and government policies on both sides of the globe altered the U.S. hay export map. Higher U.S. hay prices and improved inventories among major buyers also had an impact. Although U.S. alfalfa hay exports were steady in early 2018, they weren’t able to list the volume peaks achieved a year earlier. As trade tensions escalated in early July, China—the leading U.S. alfalfa market since 2014—imposed a 25 percent import tariff, adding about $84 per metric to the price.

John Deere netwrap with TamaTec+™ technology

John Deere netwrap with TamaTec+™ technology

Giving you MORE than ever, for LESS.

See your JD dealer for all of your twin needs and JD “XTA”!

Ensuring Feed Quality

ISO 17025 accredited and GMP+ registered laboratory delivering timely results for:
- Nutritional analyses
- Proximates
- Contaminants

Contact Us
605-692-7911
analytical.brookings@ags.com
www.ags.com/us-feed