

# NPFA UPDATE

SPRING '25

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE  
NORTHERN PLAINS FORAGE ASSOCIATION

## WHO ARE WE?

NPFA is a grassroots association open to forage growers, buyers, industry partners, and anyone with an interest in forages. We are creating a networking and education group focused on annual forages/cover crops, alfalfa, silage, grazing systems, and more!

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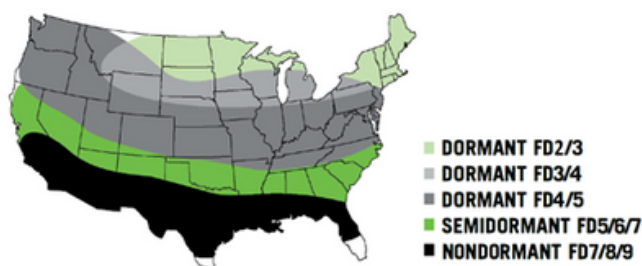
## WHERE TO FIND US



Email: npforage@gmail.com  
Membership Sign-Up:  
<https://sdstate.questionpro.com/NPFA>



## ALFALFA FALL DORMANCY AND WINTERHARDINESS



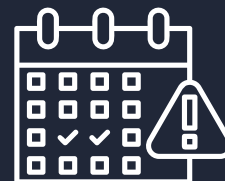
*Excerpt of an article by Leta Larsen, Croplan Alfalfa and Forage Specialist*

- **What is Fall Dormancy (FD)?:** Fall dormancy is the alfalfa plant's response to day length. It is determined by how tall the alfalfa grows in the month following a Sept. 1 cutting.
- More dormant types (lower FD varieties):
  - Green up slower in the spring and go dormant earlier in the fall, regardless of how 'good' the growing conditions are.
  - FD 2, 3, 4, and 5 are dormant varieties that should be selected in Upper Midwest, Midwest and East, as they have a greater chance of survival in the winter. They are adapted for winter survival in northern regions.
- Less-dormant types (Higher FD varieties):
  - Green up faster in the spring, recover/grow quicker between cuttings, typically yield higher in the fall, and go dormant later in the fall.
  - Forage quality of the dormant types is generally quite higher.
  - FD 5 has a wide range of adaptability due to its winterhardiness. FD 6 and 7 varieties are semi-dormant.
  - FD 8 and 9 varieties are non-dormant varieties suited only for southern regions.

## STILL NEED TO RENEW YOUR DUES?

As a friendly reminder, please consider renewing your membership by paying your dues at

- PayPal-  
[https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=R8TMYK397MZFJ](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=R8TMYK397MZFJ) (please consider the 'include fees' option)
- Venmo-  
<https://www.venmo.com/u/npforage> (please consider adding \$1.53 to your dues to help cover fees on regular memberships)
- Check- Make out to "Northern Plains Forage Association" and mail to: Northern Plains Forage Assn. c/o Sara Bauder, 41814 298th St. Tyndall, SD 57066



## “ALFALFA FALL DORMANCY AND WINTER HARDINESS” CONT'D

**What is Winterhardiness (WH)?:** Winterhardiness is an actual measurement of the alfalfa plant's ability to survive the winter without death or significant injury.

- WH tests are conducted over two winters in several locations to determine survival.
- A lower WH number=More cold tolerance and higher stand persistence.
- Scale of 1-6: 1.0 is the most hardy, WH values >3.0 are typical of semi-dormant and non-dormant alfalfa.

### Factors influencing winter survival:

#### *Controllable Influences*

##### Management Practices:

- Alfalfa variety: Choose varieties with low WH scores as they are more likely to persist over multiple winters.
- Stand age: Typically, older stands have greater winter injury risk.
- Soil fertility: Potassium can influence winter survival acting as an “antifreeze”; ensure alfalfa stands are adequately fertilized with Potassium. Manage Phosphorus and Sulfur, as they will help plant health and stand survival.
- Moisture/drainage: Low areas in fields and poorly drained fields hold moisture and do not allow the roots to expel moisture and get ready for winter. These areas are also more prone to ice sheeting and have more disease pressure, leading to more winter injury/winterkill.
- Fall cutting and stubble height entering winter: Do not cut from Sept. 5 to Oct. 15 in Upper Midwest (\*adjust based on region). Cutting during this period can increase chances of winter injury/winterkill. Alfalfa needs about 50 days without harvest to store energy for winter. Last cutting around Sept. 5 allows for 500 GDD before experiencing a killing frost of  $\leq 25^{\circ}\text{F}$ . [This sheet](#) from Dr. Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin-Madison, offers more information on planning for last cutting.

##### Disease:

- Stems, crowns, and roots that have been under high disease pressure will have reduced chance surviving winter.
- If the stand is weak going into winter, it will be even ‘weaker’ coming into spring greenup.
- Plant varieties with high resistance to root and stem diseases and consider using foliar fungicides for improved plant health.

#### *Uncontrollable Influences*

##### Environment; actual winter weather conditions:

- Wet fall conditions do NOT allow roots to reduce moisture content to get ready for winter. Reducing water content increases salt concentration, improving winterhardiness.
- Low soil temperature with inconsistent snow cover, and frequent freeze-thaw periods can all lead to winter injury/winterkill.
- Prolonged soil temperatures below  $<15^{\circ}\text{F}$  without sufficient snow cover, can kill roots or damage crown tissue. Ice sheeting can cause suffocation of respiring cells. Snow provides needed insulation to retain soil heat.
- Freeze-thaw cycles can cause heaving of roots and crowns.



## REGIONAL FORAGE NEWS AND EVENTS!

By Sara Bauder, SDSU Forage Field Specialist

### MFA Forage Webinar

- The Midwest Forage Association and SDSU Extension are hosting a regional forage webinar on April 14th at 12:30pm. Please join this free, informational webinar with keynotes, Andrea Bjornestad (SDSU Extension), Mark Hockel (Eagle Ag Consulting), and Adam Varenhorst (SDSU Extension) as we cover: Forage Adjustments in a Rapidly Changing Environment; Assessing Farm Stress: SD Trends, Indicators, and Preliminary Findings; and Research and Farm Perspectives for Managing Alfalfa Weevil. Sign up [here](#)!

### Forage Field Day slated for July 31!

- This year, ISU will host our regional Forage Field Day at the Western Iowa Research and Demonstration farm at Castana, IA. Learn more about the Western Iowa Research and Demonstration farm by clicking [here](#)! This year's tentative field day agenda will focus on forage sorghum varieties, grazing summer annuals, interseeding into alfalfa stands, and target markets. Watch our social media and summer newsletter for a final agenda and sign-up opportunities!

### Summer Tours and Events

- NPFA would like to get involved more locally this summer! If you host a farm tour or forage-related event in your area that would be interested in having NPFA present with a booth or in another helpful way, please let us know! We hope to see many of you this summer!

### Save the Date for the 2025 NPFA Annual Meeting

- December 5, 2025 at Brandon, SD



## SDSU FORAGE VARIETY TRIAL RESULTS

Check out the 2024 Forage Research Variety Trial Results! Forage trials including rye, triticale, warm and cool season forage trials, alfalfa variety trial, sorghum variety trials, and more are conducted on our research farms.

- Southeast SD Forage Rye and Triticale 2024 data: <https://extension.sdstate.edu/forage-variety-trial-results>
- Southeast SD Alfalfa Variety Trial 2024 data: <https://extension.sdstate.edu/forage-variety-trial-results>
- All SD Ag Experiment Station Reports: [https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/agexperimentsta\\_rsp/](https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/agexperimentsta_rsp/)

## CURRENT NPFA BOARD MEMBERS

- President: David Elliot, Drumgoon Dairy, Lake Norden, SD
- Vice President: Jeff Jackson, Croplan Alfalfa and Forage Specialist/ Forage Producer
- Treasurer: Mark Rogen, Boadwine Farms, Baltic, SD
- Mike Bettel, Dellait Forage Consultant & Dairy Nutritionist
- Justin Fruechte, Renovo Seed, Director of Sales/ Forage Producer
- Paul Hahn, Simplot Sales Representative
- Eric Tieszen, producer, Canistota, SD
- Al Lenhart, KWS Cereals Regional Sales Rep/ Forage Producer
- David Skaggs, Agrovive Biologicals, Dairy Product Manager
- Aaron Swanson, Forage Producer, Lake Norden, SD
- Colin Geppert, Forage Producer/ Sales Account Manager, Hubbard Feeds



## FROM THE BOARD: CENTRAL PLAINS DAIRY EXPO RECAP



*By: Jeff Jackson, Croplan Alfalfa and Forage Specialist*

Central Plains Dairy Expo in Sioux Falls, SD March 25-27, 2025 was certainly a hit once again. People traveled from far and wide to take in the sights, sounds and fill their minds with new information. Catching up with old friends to network and sharing ideas is one of the most prized highlights of the event. Northern Plains Forage Association was represented again this year with a booth for attendees to stop and find out some information about this great organization. This year was special, having some donated toys to do some drawings, it was a great way to get passerby's attention to stop and check out the NPFA booth. Starry eyes and curious fingers from "smaller people" put smiles on our faces as the "big people" assisting, put names in a box that would lead to the drawing of the toy prize winners. That list includes: Enzo Snodgrass, Derek Hofer, and Thomas Hoff, congratulations!

During the event activities, nearly 3,500 unique name badges were scanned as the participants entered the buildings. This represented 20 countries and over 38 of the United States for the attendee distribution. As you can imagine, this is a very diverse and unique gathering of enthusiasts that are there to find the "next best thing". From booths that represented nearly everything you can think of, to the multitude of breakout sessions that covered the rest...if you didn't find something or learn some new practice or advice, you certainly were just there for the ICE CREAM! Which it turns out that there might have been a little "DAIRY" consumed in the building... 880 pounds of cheese, 7,800 cheese slices, 56 pounds of butter, 69 gallons of ice cream, 2,000 ice cream novelties, 2,500 grilled cheese sandwiches 2,750 cartons of milk and 519 servings of pancakes. "We're grateful to our sponsors for providing these delectable and nutrient-dense snacks," said Central Plains Dairy Association (CPDA) Member Services Director Renee Brod.

Please keep the next years event in your plans to join... March 17-19, 2026 to join us once again for a fantastic event that keeps the industry moving forward.



## OFFICER SPOTLIGHT ERIC TIESZEN

Eric and his wife Amy live in Canistota with their three children Ashley, Landon and Katelyn. There they grow corn, soybean, alfalfa and triticale. They also own an ag drainage company - Dakota Tiling. Eric began growing alfalfa and forage crops in 2018 and today it comprises almost a third of their acreage. Much of the alfalfa is chopped to supply local dairies but the later cuttings are small square baled and moved into the horse and small animal market. They moved to more forage crops because of the desire to increase rotation length and help balance season work schedules with the tiling crew. Eric is proud to be a part of the Northern Plains Forage Association and looks forward to continuing to serve its members.



## MEET OUR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Being a new, grassroots organization, we have relied heavily on sponsorships, goodwill, volunteers, and associate members. We would like to specifically recognize our associate members who have gone above and beyond to support the Northern Plains Forage Association in its infancy! If you would like to see your business or operation listed here- contact us!



## UPCOMING REGIONAL FORAGE-RELATED EVENTS

- Forage Webinar; April 14 @ Zoom online
- 20th Annual Soil and Rangeland Days; June 10 @ Belle Fourche, SD
- SD Grasslands Coalition Grazing Schools; June 17-19, July 22-24, Sept. 9-11 @ Wall, Summit, and Chamberlain, SD
- Summer Grazing School; June 25-27 @ Gordon, NE
- West River SD Soil Health School; June 25-26 @ Caputa, SD
- Dakota Lakes Research Farm Summer Field Day; June 28 @ Pierre, SD
- Southeast Research Farm Summer Field Day; July 8; @ Beresford, SD
- Forage Field Day (hosted by SDSU, UNL, NPFA, and I-29 Moo-U) ; July 31 @ Western IA Research and Demonstration farm at Castana, IA
- Haskell Ag Lab Family Field Day; August 13 @ Concord, NE

\*This is the best list available at time of publication- if you would like a forage-related event listed here, please contact Sara Bauder at [sara.bauder@sdstate.edu](mailto:sara.bauder@sdstate.edu).