



HAY NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON STATE HAY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

WSHGA LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR DISASTER AID

Growers are all too aware of the extent of the damage mother nature has inflicted on their hay crop so far this year. The Washington State Hay Growers Assn. is doing all they can to make sure other important parties are also aware of the seriousness of the situation. The efforts have been pointed in two directions. First, mainly through press releases, customers, dairymen, etc., have been kept abreast of the critical nature of first cutting and part of the second cutting supplies – decimated by the recent rains. It's critical that they know the facts and their inevitable effect on the market.

Second, to the government officials who are responsible for promulgating disaster claims. This includes the county Farm



Ag Director Valoria Loveland looks at damaged hay North of Pasco.

Service Agency officials who are key in starting the process. They are the contact point for you as growers. WSHGA has been working with them to make sure they have the information needed. An initial "Flash Report" of the damage has been sent to the Washington State Ag Department. To help emphasize the situation, WSHGA President Chep Gauntt invited Director of Ag Valoria Loveland to come over and see the damage firsthand. She accepted and spent a half day with Gauntt, Tim Woodward and Rod Christensen seeing for herself what all the paperwork is about. She was impressed by what she saw and promised to help take the story to the right people in Olympia. As growers, you need to help your own cause. Below is a release from the FSA outlining steps you need to take to be in line for possible eventual help. Within the list is the suggestion that you take samples of the damaged hay. This point should be emphasized – it will be one of your main pieces of evidence supporting your claim. Meanwhile, the WSHGA will continue to push the story to our customers and to the government agencies.

TIPS TO GROWERS – REPORTING FARM, RANCH AND CROP DAMAGE AND LOSS

1. File formal loss reports for those crops covered by Federal Crop Insurance – contact private crop insurance and *other non-crop insurance agents as applicable* without delay.
2. File immediate formal loss reports with your county FSA office for any damaged crops covered under the Non Insured Assistance Program administered by Farm Service Agency. Losses must be reported within 15 days of becoming apparent.
3. Be sure that any crop not covered by Federal Insurance or NAP assistance and which will be destroyed due to quality and/or production loss, is appraised or assessed by a third party not related to the farming enterprise.
4. Report crop loss regardless of coverage (Franklin County has enough documentation on damage to first cutting hay for 2004 alfalfa hay loss). FSA documents the extent of crop damage for Secretarial disaster designations.
5. Take pictures of the damaged crop and fully document the growing location. Hay growers may also want to take tests of the damaged crop in the event a quality loss program occurs. Keep complete records of the crop loss, growing conditions, and production results.
6. Crop losses can be filed on form FSA-576 if producers wish to have their losses reviewed by the County FSA Committee and recorded and documented by the FSA office. The form is available at FSA offices and online at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/default1.htm>. File or amend acreage reports at your local FSA office.
7. Remember that FSA is the Federal field level reporting agency for all major farm and ranch affected disasters from adverse weather which includes crops, livestock, farm land and farmstead and dwelling losses.

**2005
Washington
State Hay
Convention and
Trade Show**

January 18-19

**Three Rivers
Convention Center
Kennewick, WA**

New Location which features
22,000 square feet of
COVERED trade show space.

**Information:
(509) 585-5460**

For additional information, contact your local Farm Service Agency office
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa/countyoffices.htm>.

RECORD PRICES ON THE WAY? IT LOOKS LIKE THAT MIGHT BE THE CASE! BY TIM WOODWARD

With confirmed sales of 115.00 to 125.00 for mid size and big bales to dairies it looks like hay prices are on the way back to record levels. Reports of 2 and 3 string bales to dairies at 125.00 to 135.00 and 135.00 to 145.00 to export buyers has us convinced the market trend is on the way back to record levels. With one of the worst 1st cuttings in

history from repeated rain, stocks of good green hay are few and far between. Most farmers are comparing stories of just how many times they had to rake, fluff, turn, ted or flail the hay before they baled it off and usually even then with slugs and wet spots. Most of the buyers we interviewed hadn't even got a chance at buying new hay yet and

dairies are thinking that there is no hay worth buying out there until second cutting. All this means one thing... if you have good green hay, don't give it away! Or be in a hurry to sell.

Export buyers are thinking 2nd cutting is going to come off at a premium as well, or at least the stuff that wasn't damaged from

all the harvest traffic in 1st cutting. Some are thinking it might be 3rd before there is any steady supply of export hay available.

Pacific Rim Buyers don't believe that we have been hit that bad and have been holding back on offering higher prices. With all this plus the record number of acres of hay that came out last fall, we think that once things settle out, prices are going to be at an all time high and will probably hold through next season as well.

www.wa-hay.org

Check it out for the latest news on research, import/export statistics, crop conditions and upcoming events.

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION IN HAY STACKS BY TIM WOODWARD

Each year a few Washington hay producers lose hay and storage facilities to hay fires. What can you do to monitor and prevent hay fires?

Each year in the spring, Washington producers are challenged with small windows of opportunity to bale and store hay at the proper moisture level while avoiding the risk of rain damage. Cut hay must go from approximately 80% moisture to 20% moisture or less in order to be stable in storage as baled hay. The spring season is difficult because of the higher chance of rain and cooler temperatures for drying.

Because the highest yield of the season is on the first cut, it takes longer for the hay to dry just due to the bulk. 33% to 40% of the total yield for the year is from the first cut.

Wet hay is more likely to lead to a spontaneous combustion fire than dry hay. If hay is put into a barn or stack when it has more than about 22 percent moisture, not only does the hay lose forage quality, but also it has an increased risk of spontaneous combustion. High moisture hay stacks can have chemical reactions that build heat. Hay insulates, so the larger the haystack, the less cooling there is to offset the heat.

When the internal temperature of hay rises above 130 degrees Fahrenheit (55 degrees C) a chemical reaction begins to produce flammable gas that can ignite if the temperature goes high enough. Hay fires generally occur within six weeks of baling. All hay baled above 15% moisture will show some elevation in temperature the first couple of weeks in storage. Producers often refer to this elevation in hay temperature following baling as "sweating". Generally, it peaks at 125 to 130 degrees F, within three to seven days, with minimal risk of combustion or forage quality

losses. Temperature within the stack then declines to safe levels in the next 15 to 60 days, depending on bale and stack density, ambient temperature and humidity, and rainfall absorbed by the hay.

To avoid hay fires, small rectangular bales should not exceed 18 to 22 percent moisture, and large round or rectangular bales should not exceed 16 to 18 percent moisture for safe storage. In addition, you should check your hay regularly. If you detect a slight caramel odor or a distinct musty smell, chances are your hay is heating. At this point, checking the moisture is too late, and you'll need to keep monitoring the hay's temperature.

What do you do if you suspect that your hay is heating? Visit www.wa-hay.org for further information.

**WASHINGTON STATE HAY
GROWERS ASSOCIATION
100 N. Fruitland, Suite B
Kennewick, WA 99336**

**PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PASCO WA
399**