

Quality hay may be scarce

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Hively reported that he didn't have "near as much hay this year" as in previous years. "The first cutting wasn't much either," he added, although things seemed to get progressively worse and he is not planning for a third cutting.

As far as bugs are concerned, Hively said they weren't too bad this year, and only infected his crops "a little at first."

Much of the problem in getting good hay this year seems to be the result of wet weather, which hung around in the area during early summer. Farmers report it was often too wet to get the crop in at the right time.

Hively concluded his evaluation by saying: "I believe good hay will sell this winter."

Two farmers interviewed in the Manheim-Lititz area said their fields didn't produce much, and neither is going after a third cutting. They blamed the poor crop on too much rain early in the season and not enough later. Speaking more or less for a number of his neighbors in the area who, like himself, grow grasses rather than alfalfa, one of the farmers remarked that "if there is going to be a third cutting, it's not expected to be much."

Bob Findley, who farms along Route 272 south of Lancaster, says top quality hay may be short this year,

but the "average quality" crop may be readily available. He makes this assessment on the basis of his own experiences and observations he has made in his area.

He reported good yields for both first and second cuttings, possibly more than what was harvested last year. But the quality wasn't there due to excess moisture and infestations of spittle bugs in the clover and weevils in the alfalfa.

Sizing up his farming program as a whole, he pointed out that most all of his crops are two weeks behind schedule this year. He described his tomato crop as "fair" and his wheat as "the worst ever." His wheat yields amounted to about 33 bushels to the acre, or about 60 per cent of what he harvested in 1974.

York County dairyman, David Stewart, is positive he's not getting as much hay from his fields this year as he did a year ago, and he cited several reasons for it. First of all, there have been interferences from the weather. Rain often hindered getting the crop in at its best stage; high moisture in the ground and high humidity didn't allow for fast and proper drying; bugs were a problem; weeds grew rapidly after early summer rains; and grass is getting into the fields now.

Stewart commented that hay fields looked really good two months ago - a remark which most anyone else was making too - but various problems got in the way of high yields. Now in his third cutting of alfalfa, Stewart thought this cutting may actually be yielding a little more than the second. He is doubtful of making a fourth cutting, however, which he says is common for him in other years. That last cutting is used as green chop.

Norman Kolb, who is affiliated with the New Holland Sales Stables, describes his own hay as "the best ever," but adds he has seen very little really good hay come into Sales Stables.

Another unusual development this year is that the hay

market for this time of year is very strong. More hay is coming into the New Holland barns than ever before, Kolb pointed out, and the prices are "really high" considering the season.

"I expect hay to be short," Kolb remarked in a telephone interview, "especially upstate." He added that much of the first cutting was ruined by rain, although yields were there. Second cutting, according to his observations, was "pretty good" over most of Lancaster County.

Good alfalfa hay is currently bringing more than \$80.00 per ton at the Sales Stables. That's higher than he has ever seen it, Kolb stated. Out of 30 loads of hay brought in this past week, only about 10 were described as "really good," showing no damage by rain.



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