



A tool to help you decide when to mow your forages!

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Quebec

It is springtime! The days are getting longer, the weather is getting warmer, and the fields have begun to grow! In 2020, the CRAAQ forage committee launched NUTRI-Fourrager (only available in French), an easy-to-use tool that can help you to predict when is the best time to mow your forages. This tool can be used on your computer, or on your smart phone!



NUTRI-Fourrager: How does it work?

With just a quadrant, a ruler, some scissors and a balance, you can predict when to mow your alfalfa/grass mixtures according to a desired nutritive value. All you have to do is go out in one of your fields and take some measurements:

1. The length of the tallest alfalfa stem (cm)
2. The length of the tallest grass stem (cm)
3. The proportion of alfalfa in the mix (grams of alfalfa/grams of mix)
4. The desired NDF or RFV * value

*To predict RFV, you also have to take into account the stage of maturity of the most developed alfalfa stem.

What is the ideal NDF?

It seems like a simple question, but there is no simple answer! In fact, the feeding context and the type of animal to be fed will have significant influence on the ideal NDF value. It is therefore important to include your feed advisor in the discussion; they will be able to guide you through the process.

However, you can set a general objective. This objective will vary according to the type of mixed forage that you have. Given that the NDF in grasses are more digestible than those in legumes, one should aim for a higher NDF value for grasses:

- Alfalfa → 40% NDF
- 50/50 Mixed Forage → 45% NDF
- Grass → 50% NDF

These recommendations, expressed in terms of NDF, will help you to attain a value of 30% ADF.

Visit the CRAAQ site to watch the [tutorials](#) or view the [complete training session](#) (only available in French) on this subject. What if NUTRI-Fourrager could become one of your allies for a higher quality forage harvest? Talk to your advisors!



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Jean-Philippe who grew up on a dairy farm is particularly interested in forage valorization by ruminants. Member of l'Ordre des agronomes, he graduated in agronomy from Laval University in 2018 and also completed a Master's degree in animal sciences, during which he received several distinctions.