

Weekly Ag Report

Willis Dow

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Hello this is Willis Dow from the Lassen County Farm Bureau with your local Ag Report.

With the passing of Memorial Weekend, this marks the beginning of haying season here in Lassen County. As swathers and haying equipment head to the fields for first cutting, you will see an increased use of our rural roads by these slow moving tractors which are often over width, so when you see the flashing lights and slow moving triangle please slow down and pass with care.

Here in the intermountain region we generally have a three cutting season for alfalfa hay. The majority of the alfalfa produced here is marketed as high quality dairy hay which will be trucked to the Sacramento Valley and fed to dairy cows. In recent years there has been a trend to switch to a big bale haying system due to the ease of handling and reduced labor requirements. Rather than a three-string 105-pound bale, big bales use six strings and weigh nearly 1700 pounds. However many three-string bales continue to be produced and tend to be marketed more for retail feed store hay where you are dealing in smaller quantities.

All hay must be cut and dried before baling no matter which baling system you use. In general, hay is baled in the early morning with the morning dew at moisture content between 8 and 16 percent. If the moisture is too high, your hay will mold or, even worse, if placed in a stack or barn too wet, it could spontaneously combust and burn up your barn. It is a good idea to keep a moisture meter with you while baling and check your bales often as conditions may change within the same field.

With nearly 27,000 alfalfa hay acres produced in Lassen County, our hay is among the best hay in the state. Our farmers have a lot of work in front of them as they begin this season that extends well into September.

As a reminder, 4-H and FFA fair entries are due June 8th.

Also, catch Rock the Wake 2 as Lassen County Farm Bureau hosts an action-packed wakeboarding event on Emerson Lake at the Diamond Mountain Golf Course June 16th.

Got a question? Give us a call at the UC Cooperative Extension office 251-8133. We'll catch you same time next week with the Ag Report.