

# Soybean Fields With Low Yield Have Tremendous Value As A Forage, Hay Or Silage

**LAMAR, MO.**

Fields in southwest Barton County were scouted on Wednesday, Sept. 12 by Wyatt Miller, an agronomy assistant with University of Missouri Extension in Barton County.

Miller found soybeans between stages R5, beginning seed stage, and R6, the full seed stage. Green cloverworms were seen this week, but were at levels well below threshold levels.

Economic threshold for cloverworms is met when defoliation reaches 20 percent or more during pod fill and 10 to 15 or more larvae are present per foot of row.

"Before long beans will be turning. Now is the time to determine the potential of soybean fields. With a strong demand for hay, those who are concerned about the lack of yield potential of their beans, may consider using them as a forage," said Miller.

Because of this year's drought, soybeans have a tremendous value as forage and are in high demand. Soybeans make decent quality hay or silage at any stage before the beans are fully developed. The quality of soybean hay can be variable, but generally contains 16-19 percent

protein and 50-55 percent TDN.

Because stems and pods dry slower than leaves, crimping the hay with a mower conditioner will help make drying more even. Pods should dry fully before baling to reduce the chance of molding.

Harvesting methods used for alfalfa hay should be used for soybeans to limit leaf loss. Chopping beans for silage or making baleage is preferred over hay to minimize leaf loss and increase quality.

Estimated tonnage for hay ranges from 2 to 4 ton/acre with removal rates of about 10 lb phosphate, 25 lb potash, and 45 lb of nitrogen per ton.

"Soybean hay does not weather well when stored outside and will deteriorate much more rapidly than grass hay, with common losses of 50 percent when left unprotected," said Miller.

It is important for soybean hay to be stored in a well-drained and covered stack or in a barn. It is also imperative for producers to check pesticide labels before harvesting soybean forages. Soybeans that have been treated with many herbicides cannot be used for livestock feed. Δ



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