BILL: And good morning and welcome into our Thursday edition of Ag Talk. This is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz and we’re going to discuss alfalfa today, Ed, specifically lower yields.

ED: Bill, we are getting reports of people out there saying there alfalfa looks really good but there yields have been lower than what they expected or been lower than they had been from other years. And we really attribute this most likely what we call smaller growth or shorter growth because we had a colder spring than we’ve had for a couple years. Then we had a couple freezes that came in the latter part that really slowed the growth of the alfalfa so we just don’t have the height into it and that’s probably why they are seeing the lower yields we just don’t have as many of the stems in there because things were just slowed down because of the cooler spring and these couple of freezes that came in late. The other thing is it seemed to take longer for the alfalfa to mature. Generally that’s a bad thing, I mean, normally our alfalfa is mature and we can’t get it cut because of weather so it’s probably been a blessing for us that it did slow it down because we were probably able to cut the alfalfa more at the correct stage which is going to give us better quality. We do know that some of these things that could have happened in a field will also enhance some of these differences and may have led to more of the lower yields. We do know your soil fertility program is a big player here. If your soil pH was too low or if you P and K levels have been too low, that that’s going to affect also that yield on there. We also know it’s the cutting history of an older stand. If you push what we call how many harvest we get per year, you pushed it by not giving it enough time to recover between cuttings in previous years, that that may have also may have caused less growth this year. We do know the younger stands being that they are more vigorous they are more able to adapt to cold weather better than the old and so they may actually have better yields than some of the our older stands or have more growth. The good news is our quality is better because they are less mature when we harvest them compared to other years so the animals will be able to utilize the forage better and get better gains so what we lost in yield we probably gained in quality. And one that’s really unusual this year, Bill, is that we’ve had good weather for cutting and drying hay. It is usually a battle we have so much rain that we just can’t get the hay cut and dried at the right moisture for baling purposes and this year we’ve had some excellent days to do that. So we may have some lower first cutting hay yields out there but I think over all I think we’ll be pleased we can make it up with the second and third cuttings but overall the quality is going to be good and a lot of people have some pretty good alfalfa out there.

BILL: Thank you Ed. For Ag Talk this is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz. Good morning to you.

Ed: Good morning.