



GROWER CASE STUDY

VIKING FLEX PRO ALFALFA PLACES 6TH IN WORLD DAIRY EXPO FORAGE SUPERBOWL

“The seed sets the floor. Management sets the ceiling.”

CASE STUDY DETAILS

- **Grower:** Mark Hostetler
- **Location:** Milford, Indiana
- **Product:** Viking Non-GMO Flex Pro Alfalfa Blend
- **Recognition:** Sixth place in World Dairy Expo Forage Superbowl
- **Production year:** First full production year

GROWING CONDITIONS

- Fluctuating spring temps
- Summer heat with periods of heavy rainfall
- Later cold, wet conditions

FIELD CHALLENGES

- Clay-loam soil
- Poor drainage
- Aging tile

KEY METRICS

- RFQ
- Milk per ton
- Net energy from lactation
- Tonnage per acre

FINDINGS

Viking Flex Pro Alfalfa Blend combined resilient genetics with disciplined management to produce nationally recognized forage under challenging conditions.

GOOD GENETICS

Growing premium dairy forage starts with good genetics. But according to Mark Hostetler, genetics are only the beginning.

“The seed sets the floor on quality and your management sets the ceiling,” he says. And that philosophy was tested on his farm, where Flex Pro produced a forage sample that finished sixth in the 2026 World Dairy Expo Forage Superbowl.

DISCIPLINED MANAGEMENT

Mark's management system is intentionally built around forage quality. The system reflects an important lesson: start with genetics capable of producing premium forage, then build a management plan around the labor, equipment, timing and resources available on the farm.

RESULTS AND TAKEAWAY

Mark estimated the field produced approximately six tons per acre, although the figure still needs to be finalized because the sixth cutting had not yet been included.

That production came without irrigation and under field, fertility and weather conditions characterized as less than ideal.

High-quality forage becomes considerably more valuable when a producer can also generate meaningful tonnage per acre, particularly when seed cost and overall production economics are considered.

“What we have on offer can be turned into a premium product,” Mark says. Strong genetics establish the potential. Good management captures it. The World Dairy Expo finish provides third-party evidence of what that combination can produce.



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MARK'S MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Mark is both an Albert Lea Seed agronomic resource and a producer putting these ideas into practice. His experience includes different hay-production systems and nearly a decade working in the seed industry. Mark uses this experience to help growers think through seed selection, planting, harvest management, equipment and cutting timing.

- Use a disc cutter-bar mower without rollers
- Replace knives every cutting and lay the crop wide
- Rake approximately 1.5 - 2 hours after mowing
- Bale the forage the same day
- Wrap the forage that evening
- Minimize delays that may reduce forage quality
- Track accumulated heat units between cuttings
- Use weather information to identify potential cutting windows
- Do not rely solely on the calendar

Read more from Mark about Flex Pro: alseed.com/FlexProBlog



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VIKING FLEX PRO ALFALFA BLEND PRODUCT INFO

- A blend of two of our best selling, high-yielding alfalfas with the newly released, top-of-the-line, creeping root alfalfa (45% Viking 374HD, 45% Viking 394AP, 10% Viking 350CR)
- Highly digestible, high-quality mix
- Excellent disease resistance
- Differing dominant root and crown characteristics provide flexibility across various environments
- High expression of branch rooted trait, and includes a portion of plants in the mix with sunken crowns, dominant tap roots, and the creeping root trait
- Superior performance on wetter/heavier soil
- Will stand up to high traffic due to the sunken crown and creeping root traits
- Available with OMRI-approved inoculant

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