Here are a few things that I saw this week while scouting.

It took a while, but I did find a heaved alfalfa root. This was on fairly-well drained soil. Observe alfalfa health as it begins growth. Will it survive past first cutting. Some plants heave so high that they are cut with first cutting, or they are diseased and will not re-grow.

I like ladino clover because it spreads to fill in gaps between clumps of grass and alfalfa crowns. The ladino is at the bottom of the picture. It spreads by stolons, stems that lie on the soil surface. Only the leaves are mowed off, so forage quality is excellent.
I do not like chickweed, a winter annual that started growing last fall and is already flowering. It also grows in bare spots between grass clumps and alfalfa crowns. “The book” says that chickweed is competitive with alfalfa. I can understand that in new seedings. I wonder if in established stands, it is there simply because of open space. It is edible and has good forage quality (if it grows above the cutter bar height and actually gets harvested). Here are a couple websites about chickweed in alfalfa. REMEMBER, the pesticide recommendations may not apply to New York.


There seems to be a lot of dead plant residue in fields from last fall. Here is an article that concludes removing it to improve alfalfa quality is not worth the expense or possible damage to alfalfa crowns from machinery traffic.


This article refers to alfalfa. I am not sure if it applies to a grass fields with heavy residue. I have no research to show what to do in grass field with a lot of dead plant residue. Be careful as you mow, rake, and bale first cutting.

CAN GRASS BE EVIL??
Yes!!! Native tall fescue, turf varieties, and Kentucky 31 have a fungus that grows in side the plant. The fungus (endophyte) produces alkaloids (nasty chemicals) that causes abortions, edema (collection of fluid in the legs), problems regulating body temperature, and reduced performance. **When you seed tall fescue for forage, ONLY use endophyte free or novel endophyte varieties. DO NOT USE KENTUCKY 31.**

Here is one of several websites that give more explanation, http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/endo-phyte_free_tall_fescue_should_i_be_concerned_about_endophytes_in_forage