

**SAMPLE COSTS**  
**TO PRODUCE**  
**ALFALFA**  
**IN THE LOWER**  
**SACRAMENTO VALLEY**  
**1974**

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**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

SAMPLE COSTS TO PRODUCE ALFALFA  
Lower Sacramento Valley - 1974

Based on 200 acres of alfalfa on a 1,000 acre ranch. Yield: 7 tons. Labor rates including fringe benefits \$3.50 and \$2.60 per hour.

| Operation                     | Hours per acre | Cash and labor cost per acre |                |                             |                    | Total         |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
|                               |                | Labor                        | Fuel & repairs | Materials Kind and Quantity | Cost               |               |
| <u>Cultural Costs</u>         |                | dollars                      |                |                             |                    |               |
| Irrigate 8X                   | 8.0            | 20.80                        |                | Water 4.5' @ \$4.00         | 18.00              | 38.80         |
| Ditch                         | .1             | .35                          | .40            |                             |                    | .75           |
| Insect control 3X             |                |                              |                | Contract                    | 16.00              | 16.00         |
| Spring tooth                  | .1             | .35                          | .40            |                             |                    | .75           |
| Miscellaneous                 | .5             | 1.75                         | 1.00           |                             | 1.00               | 3.75          |
| Winter weed control           |                |                              |                | Contract                    | 15.00              | 15.00         |
| Crop loan interest            |                |                              |                |                             | 2.65               | 2.65          |
| <b>TOTAL CULTURAL COSTS</b>   |                | <b>23.25</b>                 | <b>1.80</b>    |                             | <b>52.65</b>       | <b>77.70</b>  |
| <u>Harvest Costs</u>          |                |                              |                |                             |                    |               |
| Swath 6X                      | 1.5            | 5.25                         | 6.25           |                             |                    | 11.50         |
| Combine windrows 6X           | .4             | 1.40                         | 2.00           |                             |                    | 3.40          |
| Bale                          |                |                              |                | 7 ton @ \$10.00             | 70.00              | 70.00         |
| Bankout                       |                |                              |                | 7 ton @ \$3.00              | 21.00              | 21.00         |
| <b>TOTAL HARVEST COSTS</b>    |                | <b>6.65</b>                  | <b>8.25</b>    |                             | <b>91.00</b>       | <b>105.90</b> |
| <u>Cash Overhead</u>          |                |                              |                |                             |                    |               |
| Misc., office, etc.           |                |                              |                |                             | 10.05              |               |
| Taxes on equipment            |                |                              |                |                             | 1.00               |               |
| Rent                          |                |                              |                | 25% of 7 ton @ \$60         | 105.00             |               |
| <b>TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD</b>    |                |                              |                |                             |                    | <b>115.05</b> |
| <b>TOTAL CASH COST</b>        |                | <b>29.90</b>                 | <b>10.05</b>   |                             | <b>259.70</b>      | <b>299.65</b> |
| Management 5% of 7 ton @ \$60 |                |                              |                |                             |                    | 21.00         |
| <u>Investment</u>             |                | <u>Per Acre</u>              |                | <u>Annual Cost</u>          |                    |               |
|                               |                |                              |                | <u>Depreciation</u>         | <u>Interest 8%</u> |               |
| Equipment                     | \$100          |                              |                | \$10.00                     | \$4.00             |               |
| Crop Stand                    | 100            |                              |                | 33.35                       | 4.00               |               |
| Total                         |                |                              |                | \$43.35                     | \$8.00             | 51.35         |
| <b>TOTAL COST PER ACRE</b>    |                |                              |                |                             |                    | <b>372.00</b> |
| Cost per ton @ 7 ton yield    |                |                              |                |                             |                    | 53.14         |

COST OF PRODUCTION AT VARYING YIELDS

| Yield per acre-tons        | 5       | 6       | 7       | 8       | 9       |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Cost of production per ton | \$61.15 | \$56.48 | \$53.14 | \$50.64 | \$48.70 |

## ALFALFA CULTURAL BRIEFS

Soil Requirements: Three feet or more in depth; fertile; well drained; loams preferred; well supplied with organic matter; free from acidity or alkali, hardpan or gravel streaks; and high water table.

Planting Dates: May be planted in the fall or in the spring. A fall planting will normally yield a full crop during the following season.

Harvest Dates: About every 4 weeks, April to September.

Varieties: Depends on the soil type. Check with your Farm Advisor.

Seeding Rate: 15-25 pounds.

Fertilizer: Test your soil for phosphate needs. 200-400 pounds of single superphosphate per year may be applied every other year.

Irrigation: Irrigate after each cutting applying 3-6 inches per time. Extra irrigations may be required in the spring, during the hottest part of the summer and in the fall.

Weed Control: Control as many weeds as possible before the alfalfa is planted. Winter weed control is usually required.

Insect Control: Use resistant varieties to control the spotted alfalfa aphid. Parasites will usually control the pea aphid, and the alfalfa caterpillar. Use chemical controls only with heavy infestations that cannot be controlled by cutting the crop. Plant resistant varieties to control nematode. Control of weevils is universally required.

Diseases: Use resistant varieties to control bacterial wilt and downy mildew. Use good irrigation practices to control Phytophthora root rot.

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