ECONOMICS OF

ALFALFA HAY PRODUCTION

WITH

WHEEL LINE SPRINKLERS

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ALFALFA HAY PRODUCTION
WITH WHEEL LINE SPRINKLER IRRIGATION

Yield - 6.0 Tons/Acre. Equipment use based 200 Acres.
Labor @ $2.00 Including Social Security & Compensation Insurance.

		CASH & LABOR COST PER ACRE			
Operation	Hours Per Acre	Labor	Fuel & Repairs	Materials	Total
Cultural					
Irrigate 10 times	2.9	$5.75	$1.50	Power for 4.4 Acre Feet $17.90	$25.15
Fertilize				400 lbs.Gypsum every other year 2.50	2.50
Total Cultural Cost		$5.75	$1.50	$20.40	$27.65
Harvest					
Swath 3 times	.8	1.60	2.85		4.45
Rake 1 time	.2	.40	.30		.70
Bale 3 times	.9	1.80	2.10	Wire $1.00 Ton 6.00	9.90
Haul Contract				6 Tons @ $2.50 15.00	15.00
Total Harvest Cost		$3.80	$5.25	$21.00	$30.05
Cash Overhead					
Miscellaneous overhead				5.75	
Taxes				1.50	
Insurance				.65	
Total Cash Overhead				$7.90	$ 7.90
TOTAL CASH AND LABOR		$9.55	$6.75	$49.30	$65.60

		ANNUAL COST		
Investment	Per Acre	Depreciation	Interest	
Land	$300.00		$18.00	
Irrigation System	235.00	$17.10	7.05	
Stand	70.00	11.70	2.10	
Equipment	100.00	10.00	3.00	
Hay Storage	15.00	1.00	.45	
Total Investment	$720.00	$39.80	$30.60	$ 70.40
TOTAL COST PER ACRE				$136.00
Cost per Ton @ 6 Ton Yield				$ 22.65

Suggestions For Achieving High Yielding, High Quality Alfalfa Hay

1. Select well drained, deep soil that is free from alkali forming salts.
2. Apply 400-600 pounds of gypsum per acre every other year. Most of our soils are very deficient in sulphur which is supplied economically by fertilizing with gypsum.
3. Plant certified, inoculated seed of recommended varieties such as Vernal alfalfa.
4. Prepare a good firm seed bed. Plant 10 pounds of seed per acre at a depth of not greater than one inch for most soils. Sow seed in early spring (March and April).
5. Companion crops are not generally recommended.
6. Cut when alfalfa reaches 1/10 bloom or new growth from the crown is 1/4 inch in length. Use a swather and do not turn hay unless it is unavoidable. Three cuttings can be taken if the first cutting is harvested on time.
7. Bale when the moisture is in the 10-15% range. (Stems can be broken with a slight twist.)
8. Do not graze or cut between September 10 and October 15. This is the recovery period alfalfa needs to overwinter and begin growth early in the spring.
9. Irrigate to the needs of the alfalfa plant. During peak water use, July and August, plan to irrigate every 10-15 days. Experience has shown that a quarter mile wheel line will do a good job of irrigating up to 40 acres of alfalfa.