

AF-SI-92-2

# **ALFALFA IMPERIAL COUNTY Flat Planted Alfalfa Seed 1991-1992**

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**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

UC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

FLAT PLANTED ALFALFA SEED  
PROJECTED PRODUCTION COSTS  
1991-1992

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Mechanical operations at custom rates. Labor at \$5.75 per hour (\$4.50 plus Social Security, unemployment and fringe benefits).

Typical yield of 300 pounds of clean seed in 90 days on an established alfalfa stand.

OPERATION	CUSTOM RATE	MATERIALS Type	Cost	HAND LABOR Hours	Dollars	COSTS Per Acre
<b>SEED PRODUCTION COSTS</b>						
Irrigate 4x		Water 2 ac/ft	23.00	2	11.50	34.50
Insect Control 3x	4.90	Insecticides	50.00			64.70
Bees		3 colonies @ 18.50	55.50			55.50
Defoliation	6.00		15.00			21.00
<b>TOTAL GROWING PERIOD COSTS</b>						<b>175.70</b>
<b>GROWING PERIOD &amp; LAND RENT</b>						
Land Rent (net acres)						140.00
Cash Overhead--		12% of preharvest and land rent				37.88
<b>TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS</b>						<b>353.58</b>
<b>HARVEST COSTS</b>						
Combining	45.00/acre					45.00
Hauling	.25/cwt. @	300 lbs/acre				.75
Cleaning Seed	5.00/cwt.					15.00
Bags	1.00/cwt.					3.00
Alfalfa Seed Research Fee	.15/cwt.					.45
<b>TOTAL HARVEST COSTS</b>						<b>64.20</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL COSTS</b>						<b>417.78</b>

PROJECTED INCOME ABOVE COSTS (PER ACRE)

		price/lb.					
		.60	.80	1.00	1.20	1.40	1.60
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Pounds	200	-291	-251	-211	-171	-131	-91
per	400	-184	-104	-24	56	136	216
acre	600	-77	43	163	283	403	523
	800	30	190	350	510	670	830
	1000	137	337	537	737	937	1137

# ALFALFA SEED CULTURE

1991-1992

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>YIELD/ACRE (LBS.)</u>	<u>VALUE/LBS.</u>
1989	17,783	475	\$1.35
1988	19,726	417	1.18
1987	19,961	456	.90
1986	15,700	477	.81
1985	16,600	368	.83

**STARTING DATES:** The best possibility for a good seed crop occurs when the last hay is cut between May 1 and May 15, so that by June 1 to 15 the field is in full bloom. Seed crops made at this time of the year have the best chance of avoiding lygus, stink bugs, and alfalfa seed chalcid infestations which build up from early spring until late fall when the weather breaks. Later crops, maturing in August and September, may be damaged by rain. Earlier seed crops may not bloom properly due to cold weather, and seed "set" may be light or delayed.

**VARIETIES:** A number of non-dormant varieties both public and proprietary are grown in Imperial County. Any of these varieties may be grown for seed. The grower should follow seed market trends and demand in making the decision to grow a seed crop. Occasionally small acreages of dormant varieties will be grown by special arrangement if seed demand indicates good potential returns.

**IRRIGATION:** Allow the plants to become slightly stressed for water up until the bloom period to prevent rank growth; after bloom begins, the plants should be irrigated no more frequently than necessary to prevent wilting and to help produce well-filled seedpods. The flowers of a slightly stressed plant contain higher concentrations of nectar and are more attractive to bees.

**POLLINATION:** Bees are the only pollinators of any value on alfalfa. In Imperial County it is necessary to rely on commercial honey bees due to the lack of sufficient wild or commercial solitary bees available for pollen-collecting. At least three colonies of bees per acre are needed to produce high yielding fields. Five or more colonies are suggested on seed fields with both high plant and flower populations.

**PEST CONTROL:** Lygus control is necessary throughout the season. Stink bugs can cause damage to maturing seed and should be controlled. Seed chalcid is best managed by proper cultural practices as insecticides have not been cost effective. Consult your farm advisors for information on pests and their control.

**HARVESTING:** Most seed alfalfa is defoliated using spray compounds applied by airplane in 8 to 12 gallons of diesel oil per acre. Mowing and windrowing to dry seed for combining is also practiced.

GUIDELINES TO PRODUCTION COSTS AND PRACTICES

Imperial County Crops, Circular 104F

1991-1992

CUSTOM RATE CHARGES

HEAVY TRACTOR WORK

PRICE/ACRE

Plow	\$ 24.75
Subsoil 2nd Gear	29.25
Disc, Regular	9.50
Disc, Stubble	18.25
Float	8.25
Triplane	8.75
List, Regular	11.50
Landplane	10.00
Chisel	20.75

PLANTING AND CULTIVATING

Plant and Shape Sugar Beet 40" Beds	15.50
Precision Plant 40" Beds	14.50
Plant	13.75
Cultivate 4-Row 30", 40" Beds	10.75
Spike and Furrow Out (2 row)	10.50
Lilliston	9.50
Furrow out alone	8.00

INCORPORATING, BORDER AND BED WORK

Power Incorporate	20.25
Scraper Borders	12.75
Border, Cross checks and Break Borders	15.00
Roll Beds	5.00

FERTILIZER APPLICATION

Broadcast Fertilizer	6.00
Inject Fertilizer (Flat)	10.00
Fertilize and Furrow Out 30", 40" Beds	10.50

IRRIGATION

Custom Sprinkle	\$130.00-140.00
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HARVEST

Swather	7.50
Rake	4.00

MISCELLANEOUS

Motor Grader/Hour	42.75
Chop Stalks, Etc.	11.00
Cultipacker	6.00
Power Incorporate Herbicides	20.25
Ground Spray Pesticides (4 Row)	7.50
Aerial Spray 5 Gal. (Insecticide)	4.75
Aerial Spray 10 Gal. (Fungicides)	5.00