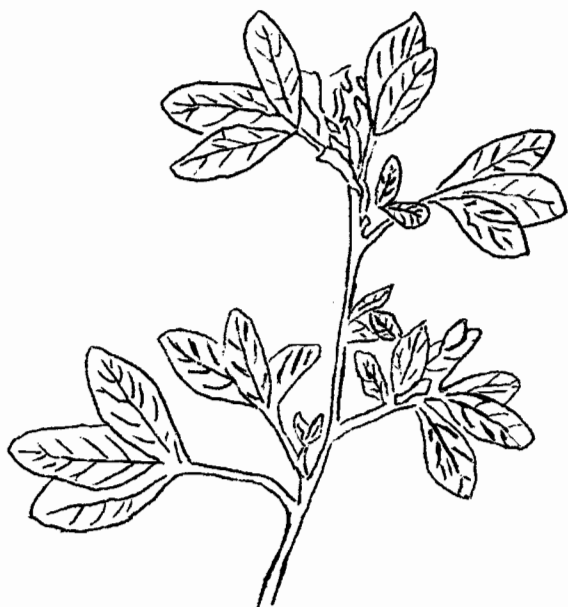


alfalfa hay  
sample costs  
of establishment  
and  
production



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Cost Data Sheet No. 9

COST OF ESTABLISHING A STAND OF ALFALFA  
(CONTRACT PRICE)

ITEMS	<u>SAMPLE COSTS</u> Per Acre
<b>LAND PREPARATION</b>	
Fertilize 1x	\$ 2.00
Subsoil 1x	6.50
Disc 2x	4.00
Land Plane 2x	5.00
Borders	1.00
Float or corrugate	1.75
Planting	2.50
Irrigate 2x @ .86	1.72
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION	\$ 24.47
<b>MATERIALS</b>	
Irrigation water - 8"	1.35
Seed - 20# @ .30	6.00
Fertilizer - 100# P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> @ .10 lb.	10.00
TOTAL MATERIALS	\$ 17.35
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION AND MATERIALS	\$ 41.82

GENERAL INFORMATION

The costs included in this fact sheet are mainly contract prices or an average of costs estimated by several alfalfa hay growers.

Many growers use their own equipment and will have lower costs than contract prices. In addition not all prepare their land in the same manner and after certain crops, some operations can be eliminated. Different planting rates, varieties of seed, insecticide and herbicide programs, irrigation and fertilization, procedures and harvest methods all vary in costs and help change the final costs of hay production. For these reasons it should be understood that this publication is simply a guide to costs and should be used as such.

ANNUAL COSTS OF HAY PRODUCTION - 3 YEAR LIFE  
 BASED ON ANNUAL YIELD OF 6 TONS/ACRE

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS	
	Per Acre	Per Ton
<b>LABOR AND MATERIALS</b>		
Irrigation 16x @ .86	\$ 13.75	
Water 5' @ \$2.00 per ft.	10.00	
Fertilizing	1.35 <sup>1/</sup>	
Fertilizer - 66# P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> @ .10	6.60 <sup>1/</sup>	
Insect control 4x @ \$3.00 per treatment	12.00	
TOTAL LABOR AND MATERIALS	\$ 43.70	
<b>HARVESTING</b>		
Mow and rake 6x @ \$2.50 <sup>2/</sup>	15.00	
Bale @ \$4.00 per ton	24.00	
Haul and stack @ \$1.75 <sup>2/</sup>	10.50	
TOTAL HARVEST	\$ 49.50	
<b>CASH OVERHEAD</b>		
5% of above	4.66	
<b>DEPRECIATION ON STAND</b>		
1/3 of cost of stand	13.37	
<b>LAND RENT</b>		
	40.00	
TOTAL ALL COSTS	\$ 51.23	\$ 25.20

<sup>1/</sup> One third included in cost of establishing stand.

<sup>2/</sup> Use of swather and Harobed will make little difference in cost.

VARIETIES

Certified Moapa alfalfa is recommended because of its resistance to the spotted alfalfa aphid. Africa will produce as much hay as Moapa, but is susceptible to the aphid. Chilean, Indian and California common are susceptible to damage by the spotted alfalfa aphid and even prior to the occurrence of the aphid in the valley have consistently produced less hay than Africa on year long tests.

## FERTILIZATION

Approximately 100 lbs. of phosphate is taken from the soil by each 7-8 tons of alfalfa. This must be replaced to maintain maximum hay production.

A preliminary application of at least 100-150 pounds of phosphate per acre is recommended prior to planting. Preferably it should be applied prior to subsoiling in order to distribute it at the root zone.

Additional annual applications of 100 pounds of phosphate per acre should be applied in early spring before active growth occurs.

## PLANTING DATES

Late September through November is the preferred time for planting. Later plantings often result in poor germination. Spring plantings, if necessary, are suggested in February and March.

## PLANTING RATES

One pound of seed will provide 4 to 5 seeds per square foot per acre. At this rate, 15 lbs. are equal to 60 to 75 seeds per square foot.

Growers use 15 to 30 lbs. seed depending on condition of their

field, cost of seed, method of planting and time of planting.

## IRRIGATION

Two or three irrigations per cutting are necessary depending on the type of soil.

## PESTS AND DISEASES

The spotted alfalfa aphid usually causes damage in the spring on non-resistant alfalfas. Alfalfa weevil in February and the alfalfa caterpillar and beet armyworm often need to be controlled in mid to late summer.

See the Field Crop Pest & Disease Control Guide for more specific information on pests and control.

## PESTICIDE RESIDUES

All precautions should be taken to produce hay without illegal pesticide residues. If possible do not grow hay adjacent to cotton or vegetable fields. In some cases it is possible to produce seed during July and August when approximately 2/3 of all insecticides used during the year are applied.

Hay can be analyzed by the stack or load by local laboratories.

## YIELDS

An average of 6 to 7 tons can be

expected, although up to 10 tons have been reported on good land. Reports of higher tonnage are often based on second year alfalfa which will produce the most hay.

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