

Calif. Univ. Agric. Ext. Serv. Contra Costa
Co.

ALFALFA HAY COSTS

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CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

P. W. Lamborn, Farm Advisor
Arthur Shultis, Extension Economist

University of California
Agricultural Extension Service
960 East Street
Pittsburg, California
Telephone: 757-7535
439-8282, Ext. 201
682-8601

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SAMPLE INPUTS AND COSTS FOR ALFALFA HAY

Mature stand with a yield of 6 tons per acre, 5 cuttings

	Hours Per Acre			Cost	Cost
	Man Labor	Tractor	Pickup	Per Acre	Per Ton
Mowing 5 times @ .5 hrs.	2.5	2.5		5.63	.93
Rake and turn 5 times @ .4 hrs.	2.0	2.0		4.50	.75
Baling - contract @ \$3.50 a ton				21.00	3.50
Hauling - contract @ \$2.00 a ton				12.00	2.00
Total harvesting, labor & power	4.5	4.5		43.13	7.18
Irrigation Labor	6.0			7.50	1.25
Irrigation water, 3 acre feet				15.00	2.50
Misc. materials, fertilizer, weed control				1.00	.17
Total labor, materials and harvesting	10.5			66.63	11.10
Gen. Expense - Office, car, insurance, etc., Est. at 5% of above				3.62	.60
County and irrigation district taxes				20.00	3.33
Repairs to equipment and facilities				2.50	.42
Total cash overhead costs				26.12	4.35
Total cash costs				92.75	15.45

Investment overhead based on a 100 acre unit	Original Cost	Average Value	6% Int.	Depreciation		
	100 A	Dollars	per acre			
Stand costs \$36, 4 year life	3,600	18.00	1.08	9.00		
Irrigation system	8,000	40.00	2.40	4.00		
Mower, rake and misc. equipment	1,500	7.50	.45	1.50		
Tractor	3,000	15.00	.90	1.80		
Land	70,000	700.00	42.00	----		
Total investment and deprec.	86,100	780.50	----	16.30	16.30	2.72
Total cash and depreciation costs					109.05	18.17
Interest on investment			46.83		46.83	7.80
Total ALL costs					155.88	25.97

Labor costs above are figured at the following hourly rates: Man labor, \$1.25, wheel tractor, \$1.00. The last two rates cover cash costs only for fuel, oil, repairs, etc. Depreciation and interest on investment are included with those items in the investment section of the schedule.

Investment overhead is based on a 100-acre unit with the investment shown above. Investment could be more or less with affect on total costs. Average value for depreciable items is estimated at one-half the original cost. The stand is estimated as having a preparation & planting cost of \$36 an acre and a production life of 4 years.

Total costs as figured above are high at current local costs, even with the good commercial yield of 6 tons per acre. Higher yields are however obtainable, but may involve higher cultural costs, such as pest control, fertilization and more efficient irrigation. Below are shown costs for the yields with the same cultural overhead costs per acre and the same harvesting costs per ton as shown above.

Costs per Acre and per Ton for Varying Yields

Yield Tons Per Acre	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cultural and overhead costs per acre	112.74	112.74	112.74	112.74	112.74	112.74
Harvesting costs an acre @ 7.18 a ton	35.90	43.13	50.26	57.44	64.63	71.80
Total cost per acre	148.64	155.87	163.00	170.18	177.37	184.54
Total cost per ton	29.73	25.98	23.29	21.27	19.71	18.45

Alfalfa Production in Contra Costa County

The tables in the leaflet give a sample of the costs of growing alfalfa in Contra Costa County. They are based on conditions that would represent above average farming practices and above average yields.

The blank column on the right hand side of the schedule is provided for you to compare your costs with those in the table. As you compare your costs, try to account for the reason for any differences that might show up.

The table showing the costs per ton at varying yields illustrates the possibility of increasing efficiency if the yield per acre can be increased.

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The following questions have proven to be significant in checking out possible ways to increase yield and cut costs.

- | | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Do you use Lahontan seed? | | |
| 2. Is your stand free of root rot problems? | | |
| 3. Is the field leveled and layed out for efficient irrigation? | | |
| 4. Do you irrigate at the right time? | | |
| 5. Do you use an integrated program for insect control? | | |
| 6. Do you cut at one-tenth Bloom stage? | | |

	Yes	No

If you don't know the answer to these questions, or if your answer is "no" to any of these questions, then consult with the Farm Advisors' Office for ideas on how to increase yield and cut costs.