

SAMPLE INPUTS AND COSTS OF GREEN CHOPPED ALFALFA

With a Yield of 35 Tons per Acre, about 7 Tons of Hay Equivalent
Average for 3 Years Life of Stand

	Man Labor Hours	40 hp Tractor per acre	Pick up	Cost per Acre	Cost per Green Ton
Misc. cultural care, fertilizing, etc.	3.0	1.0	0.5	\$ 5.85	
Irrigate about 9 times	9.0		0.5	12.00	
TOTAL CULTURAL CARE	12.0	1.0	1.0	\$ 17.85	\$.51
Cutting with power take off chopper	10.0	10.0		26.00	.74
Hauling to corrals and unloading	4.0	4.0		10.40	.30
TOTAL HARVESTING	14.0	14.0		\$ 36.40	\$ 1.04
TOTAL LABOR AND FIELD POWER				\$ 54.25	\$ 1.55
Irrigation water, power to pump, 54 acre inches, 125 ft. lift				14.22	
Fertilizer 400 lb. single super phosphate at \$2.40				9.60	
Insecticides, predacious insects and miscellaneous materials				4.00	
TOTAL CULTURAL MATERIALS				\$ 27.82	\$.79
TOTAL LABOR, FIELD POWER AND MATERIALS				82.07	\$ 2.34
General expense, office phone, car, etc. (estimated at 5% of above)				4.10	
County taxes on equipment				3.00	
Land rent				45.00	
Repairs, other than tractor and pick up included above				9.00	
Compensation insurance and miscellaneous other				2.00	
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD COSTS				\$ 63.10	\$ 1.80
TOTAL CASH COSTS				\$115.17	\$ 4.15
Investment overhead based on 60 acres of alfalfa and 100 acres farmed	Original total cost	Av. Value	Int. on Invest.	Depreciation	
		Dollars per acre			
Alfalfa stand-planting cost \$45	2700.	22.50	1.35	15.00	
Tractor with PTO etc. 40 HP	5000.	25.00	1.50	3.33	
Chopper, flail type	1600.	13.33	.80	5.33	
Unloading wagon, used 100 A	3500.	17.50	1.05	2.00	
Pick up and misc. other equip.	3000.	15.00	.90	1.50	
TOTAL INVESTMENT & DEPRECIATION	93.33	5.60	27.16	\$ 27.16	\$.77
TOTAL CASH AND DEPRECIATION COSTS				\$172.33	\$ 4.92
INTEREST ON INVESTMENT IN EQUIPMENT				\$ 5.60	\$.16
TOTAL ALL COSTS				\$177.93	\$ 5.08

Labor costs shown above are figured at the following hourly rates: Man labor \$1.25, 40 hp wheel tractor \$1.35, pick up \$1.50. Tractor and pick up rates are estimated at total cash costs including repairs, insurance and license.

The above costs result in a cost per green ton of \$5.08. Local experience indicates a green to dry hay ratio of about 4.25 to 1, so costs of the feed would be equivalent to hay at \$21.59 a ton. This is delivered to feed managers so is cheaper than alfalfa hay shipped in from other areas. Yields per acre vary with age and density of stand. The table below shows costs per ton at varying yields. Costs aside from harvesting are the same. Harvesting costs vary somewhat according to yield.

Yield green tons per acre	25	30	35	40	45	50
Tons of hay equivalent	5.88	7.06	8.24	9.41	10.59	11.76
All costs except harvesting	139.71	139.71	139.71	139.71	139.71	139.71
Harvesting & 5% general expense	30.97	34.65	38.22	42.00	45.68	49.35
Total cost per acre	170.68	174.36	177.93	181.71	185.39	189.06
Cost per ton, green chop	6.83	5.81	5.08	4.53	4.12	3.78
Cost per ton, hay equiv.	29.03	24.70	21.59	19.31	17.51	16.08

GREEN CHOPPED ALFALFA IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

by

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and

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Alfalfa is grown in the coastal area largely as a feed for dairy cows. Since it is difficult to make hay of good quality in this sometimes foggy climate, alfalfa is fed in green chopped form. Inquiry was made of a small group of dairymen and others interested to develop this sheet of typical costs as they are on these local dairy farms. The sample schedule of costs on the other side is based on the typical rented dairy farm of around 100 acres with about 60 acres of alfalfa, to feed a herd of around 125 cows about 8 months of the year. This should produce enough green feed to furnish one feeding of green alfalfa per day throughout the period. In peak production periods, there will be an excess to use for dry hay or put up as silage.

Rent: Since most local dairy farms are rented, this cost schedule is computed on a rental basis. The most common rent is said to be \$45 an acre with the landlord furnishing the land and irrigation system. Rents vary with a few as high as \$60 but dairymen say they cannot grow forage at higher rents, so they cannot compete in land rent with vegetables on the better land.

Alfalfa Stands: It was ascertained that it costs around \$45 an acre to rework the ground and plant a new stand. Life of stand varies from 2 to 4 years with about a 3 year average. So we show this cost depreciated over a 3 year productive life.

Yields: The yield per acre varies somewhat with age of stand and cultural care. In green chopping about 7 or 8 cuttings are made annually with a total tonnage that can range from 30 to 50 tons per acre for the year. The ratio between green chop and dry hay is said to be about 4.25 to 1 in this area. The table at the bottom of the other side shows costs with varying yields and the cost for a ton of hay equivalent.

Conclusion: Although this schedule of costs is not presented as average for the area, it does show that excellent feed in the form of green chopped alfalfa can be produced locally at a cost per ton of hay equivalent somewhat below the local price of good alfalfa hay.

Sample Costs: This schedule shows quantities and costs typical of well managed alfalfa fields. It is intended as a source of management information in making decisions as to growing the crop and in comparing individual farm results with a view to making changes and improving profit.