

FLAT PLANTED
ALFALFA SEED
SAMPLE COSTS
AND
PRODUCTION



Cooperative Extension
University of California
Imperial County
Court House, El Centro

Cost Data Sheet No. 2

FLAT ALFALFA SEED--PROJECTED PRODUCTION COSTS--1982-1983

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Labor at \$5.50 per hour (\$4.30 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 Rates	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR*		SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
SEED PRODUCTION COSTS						
Irrigate 4x		Water 2 ac/ft	15.00	2	11.00*	\$ 26.00
Insect Control 3x	4.25	Insecticides	40.25			53.00
Bees		3 colonies @ 18.50	55.50 ^{a/}			55.50
Defoliation	5.50		15.00			20.50
GROWING PERIOD						\$ 155.00
GROWING PERIOD & LAND RENT						
Land Rent (net)						\$ 110.00
Cash Overhead--10% of preharvest and land rent						26.50
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS						\$ 291.50
HARVEST COSTS						
Combining	34.00					\$ 34.00
Hauling	5.00/ton					.75
Cleaning Seed	4.50/cwt ^{b/}					13.50
Bags			1.00/cwt			3.00
Alfalfa Seed Research Fee						.60
TOTAL HARVEST COSTS						\$ 51.85
TOTAL ALL COSTS						\$343.35

<u>Yield Per Acre</u>	<u>Cost Per Pound**</u>
300 lbs.	\$ 1.14

a/ Eighteen dollars and fifty cents for the first 21 days and then \$0.70 per day per colony for each extra colony-day. Sacks - \$0.60 extra/colony.

b/ Add \$3.00 per cwt for dodder cleaning and \$15.00 for lab test for germination and purity per lot.

* Includes shovel labor, pipe setting, miscellaneous tractor work.

** Each cost based on unit cost.

GENERAL INFORMATION: The average yield, acreage and value for alfalfa seed during the last five years are given below.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>YIELD/ACRE (LBS.)</u>	<u>VALUE/LB.</u>
1977	4030	400	\$ 0.80
1978	8850	338	1.00
1979	15500	302	1.22
1980	12500	298	1.42
1981	39500	380	1.05

STARTING DATES: The best possibilities for a good seed crop occur when the last hay is cut between May 1 and May 15. By June 1 to 15 the field is in full bloom. Seed crops made at this time of the year avoid lygus, stink bugs and alfalfa seed chalcid infestations which build up from early spring until late fall when the weather breaks. Late 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 are grown in Imperial County. Varieties that are resistant to the spotted alfalfa aphid, such as CUF 101, are recommended. There are proprietary varieties that are also being grown.

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.

PEST CONTROL

Early season lygus control is necessary and more important than later in the season. Stink bugs can cause damage to maturing seed and should be controlled. Consult Farm Advisors' office for information on pests and their control.

POLLINATION

"Bees" are the only pollinators of any value on alfalfa. In Imperial County it is necessary to rely on honey bees because of a lack of sufficient solitary pollen-collecting bees. Usually, at least three colonies of bees per acre are used in the higher yielding fields.

Five or more colonies are suggested on seed fields with both high plant and flower populations.

HARVESTING

Most seed alfalfa is defoliated using dinitro compounds applied by airplane at rates from 1 to 3 pints in 8 to 12 gallons of diesel oil per acre.

INCOME ABOVE ALL COSTS

Price Per Pound

Pounds Per Acre	\$ 0.60	0.80	1.00	1.20	1.40	1.60
200	-217	-177	-137	- 97	- 57	- 17
400	-109	- 29	+ 51	+131	+211	+291
600	- 1	+119	+239	+359	+479	+599
800	+107	+298	+427	+587	+747	+907

Prepared By
Robert W. Hagemann
Farm Advisor

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To simplify our information, it is sometimes necessary to use trade names of products or equipment. No endorsement of named products is intended nor is criticism implied of similar products which are not mentioned.

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