

AF-SI-52-1

ALFALFA
HAY & SEED

1952

COST STUDY

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

UC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

INTRODUCTION
ALFALFA COST STUDY

Six alfalfa growers in the Mojave Valley cooperated in keeping Cost Records during 1952. Two growers produced certified seed; one grower produced common seed, plus hay. Three growers received their income entirely from hay production. There was a total of 285 acres for which records were kept. The total acreage of alfalfa hay and seed in the Mojave Valley was slightly over 17,000 acres.

Hay prices received varied from \$33.50 to \$35.00 per ton. By December of 1952, the price was \$28.00 to \$30.00 per ton. In March of 1953, old hay was selling for \$25.00. The growers included in this Study had yields averaging from 6.7 tons to 8.7 tons. These are above the average for the area.

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TABLE I -- GENERAL SUMMARY OF YIELD, INCOME, COSTS AND EARNINGS PER ACRE

ITEMS	SERIAL NUMBER						Your Costs
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
YIELD							
Hay, ton per acre	.36	8.7	7.43	6.7	1.8	-	
Seed - pounds per acre	465	-	-	-	265	243	
Straw & screenings - ton	.28	-	-	-	-	.15	
INCOME PER ACRE							
Hay	5.41	304.50	260.08	229.50	45.00	-	
Seed	279.07	-	-	-	74.12	95.08	
Straw & screenings	6.42	-	-	-	-	1.90	
Pasture	-	-	13.04	-	-	-	
TOTAL INCOME PER ACRE	290.90	304.50	273.12	229.50	119.12	96.99	
COSTS PER ACRE							
Cultural labor & F.P.	24.37	11.49	6.45	25.80	7.94	20.50	
Harvest labor and F.P.	13.49	62.20	56.58	49.31	25.00	17.55	
Materials	50.93	31.80	24.74	23.43	23.13	13.91	
Cash overhead	5.94	24.28	28.01	11.30	5.80	4.10	
TOTAL CASH COSTS	94.73	129.77	115.60	109.84	61.87	56.06	
DEPRECIATION	16.51	10.50	17.04	17.98	13.00	13.55	
INTEREST ON INVESTMENT	19.76	18.50	20.13	20.49	18.50	10.63	
TOTAL ALL COSTS	131.00	158.77	152.77	148.31	93.37	80.24	
CAPITAL & MANAGEMENT INCOME	179.66	164.23	140.48	101.68	44.25	27.37	
MANAGEMENT INCOME	159.90	145.73	120.35	81.19	25.75	16.74	

The above table shows the yields, cost, income and earnings per acre for the six records in the 1952 Study. Records 1, 5, and 6, produced alfalfa seed and the other three produced hay. Note the wide range in net profits per acre. These records are from the desert area.

TABLE II -- SOME MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND OTHER COSTS

ITEMS	SERIAL NUMBER					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age of stand - year -	1	1	2-6	1-6	5	1
Number of cuttings - hay	-	5	5	5	1	-
Selling price						
Hay per ton - dollars -	-	35.00	35.00	33.50	-	-
Seed per pound - cents -	60	-	-	-	28	39.3
Straw per ton - dollars -	23.00	-	-	-	-	16.00
Investment and Costs						
Investment per acre	395.00	370.00	402.00	409.00	370.00	212.00
Total cost hay per ton	-	18.75	20.56	22.16	-	-
Operations and Mgmt. Practices						
Number cultivations	2	-	-	-	-	1
Number dustings	4	-	2	1	1	2
Number irrigations	10	19	20	18	-	9
Eees for pollination	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Source of water	Wells	Wells	Wells	Wells	Wells	Wells
Cost water per acre*	9.88	24.10	17.93	15.76	16.59	4.50
Cost of baling per ton	-	4.00	3.50	3.50	-	-
Cost to combine seed per acre	6.50	-	-	-	5.50	7.50
How planted	Row	Borders	Borders	Borders	Borders	Row

*Power bills only.

WATER DATA

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Well - Depth in Feet	185'	150'	126'	140'	160'	130'
Size of Casing	16"	14"	16"	14"	12"	12"
Pumping Lift	90'	90'	90'	85'	80'	94'
Miners Inches	75"	68"	68"	120"	175"	62"
Number of Irrigations	20	19	20	18	7	Sprinkler 49
Acre Inches per Irrigation	2.0	4.8	4.0	5.9	5	2
TOTAL ACRE FEET	3.3	7.6	6.7	8.9	3.0	2.5

The 1953 season is starting with prices below the yearly average of 1952. Dividing the total of all costs in Table I by the yields in tons for the hay growers, you will notice that the cost of production per ton varies from approximately \$18.75 per ton for the highest yielder (8.7 tons) to \$22.00 per ton for the lowest yielder (6.7 tons).

Many of our fields in San Bernardino County are producing less than six tons. The costs of production of these will exceed \$22.00.

For the past two years hay quality has not been as important an item as it will be this year. When prices start to lower, the pressure is felt first by lower grades of the commodity. Farmers who gear their operation to the production of quality hay, will find that higher yields usually follow.

The records on certified alfalfa seed production, Serial Numbers 1 and 6, were for the first year of the alfalfa stand. Since these were planted in the spring of 1952, we are justified in assuming that the yields are below their average for the six year life.

Under the water data, notice the difference in acre feet used between Serial Numbers 1, 5, and 6, which produce seed and the remainder which produced hay. This might be one factor in deciding which enterprise is right for your farm.

Support prices have been taken off of alfalfa seed. Therefore, in calculating the returns in a planned program of your own, 25¢ per pound might be a better price return than those indicated in this report.