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University of California
Agricultural Extension Service
Imperial County
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ALFALFA HAY
1956

WHAT DOES IT COST YOU TO GROW ALFALFA?
(Based on 6 Ton yield per acre)

COST OF ESTABLISHING A STAND PER ACRE - CONTRACT PRICE				
LAND PREPARATION - LABOR AND FIELD POWER	SAMPLE COSTS		YOUR COSTS	
	Fertilize 1x	2.00		
Sub soil 1x	6.00			
Disc 2x	3.00			
Land plane 2x	4.00			
Borders (scrape)	3.00			
Float	1.75			
Seeding (drill)	2.00			
Irrigate 2x	.60			
TOTAL LABOR & FIELD POWER	22.35			
MATERIALS				
Irrigation water - 8"	1.35			
Seed - 20# @ 30¢	6.00			
Fertilizer - 100# P ₂ O ₅	10.00			
TOTAL MATERIALS	17.35			
TOTAL LABOR AND MATERIALS	39.70			
ANNUAL COSTS OF PRODUCTION - 3 YR. LIFE (Based on yield of 6 tons/acre)				
ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS		YOUR COSTS	
	Per Acre	Per Ton	Per A.	Per T.
LABOR AND MATERIALS				
Renovate 1x	2.00			
Irrigation 16x	4.80			
Ditch & misc.	2.00			
Fertilizing	2.00			
Water - 5'	10.00			
Fertilizer - 50# P ₂ O ₅	5.00			
Insect control	???			
TOTAL LABOR & MATERIALS	25.80	4.30		
HARVESTING				
Mowing & windrow 6x @ 2.50	15.00			
Bale - 4.25 per Ton	25.50			
Haul & stack - \$2.00/Ton	12.00			
TOTAL HARVEST	52.50	8.75		
DEPRECIATION ON STAND	13.23	2.21		
CASH OVERHEAD 5% OF ABOVE	4.58	.76		
LAND RENT	35.00	5.84		
TOTAL ALL COSTS	131.11	21.86		

The above sample costs are based on contract rates which presumably are higher than efficient owner operator costs. Taxes are included in rent. Estimate your own costs by filling in the last two columns based on yields you could reasonably expect and costs of operations and material that would be required on your land.

ALFALFA PRODUCTION

YIELDS: The county average is probably from 5 to 7 tons, which does not include one or two winter pasturings.

VARIETIES: Africa, Common, and Arizona 21-5 are the varieties usually planted. Africa has an appreciable tolerance to spotted alfalfa aphid, not present in common or 21-5, and is the preferred variety.

PRICES: U. S. No. 1 Hay - Los Angeles

	<u>July</u>	<u>Dec.</u>	<u>Acres</u>
1955	\$32.00-33.00	\$34.00-35.00	171,192
1954	27.00-29.00	33.00-34.00	161,128
1953	29.00-30.50	30.00-31.00	151,988
1952	38.00-40.00	36.00-37.00	172,277
1951	37.00-38.00	45.00-47.00	170,307

SOILS: The medium textured well drained soils are best adapted. The very heavy soils with restricted drainage are less suited. The very sandy soils will produce good alfalfa but water use is too high.

PLANTING DATES: October-December; February-March. Fall plantings are favored. Earlier or later plantings are sometimes made during "breaks" in the weather.

LAND PREPARATION: See reverse side. Since the crop is in for two or more years, extra care should be taken to properly prepare the field.

IRRIGATION: Irrigation is by flooding between borders. Borders are 48 feet to 72 feet or more apart. Long winter irrigations are often necessary to obtain adequate water penetration. Length of runs of one quarter to a half mile are common. The longer runs are favored on heavy soils where water penetration is more of a problem. In general, two to three irrigations are needed between cuttings. Fields are often dried up during late July, August, and part of September to avoid scalding. With good leveling, more fields are irrigated through this period than formerly.

FERTILIZERS: Phosphate only is recommended. 100 lbs. available P_2O_5 per acre at planting and annual applications of 50 lbs. P_2O_5 per acre are adequate for maximum yields.

HARVESTING: The harvesting may be done by pasturing, selling in the field to dehydrators, or cut and baled for sale. For costs, see reverse side. Ealing is usual method of harvest.

PESTS AND DISEASES: Aphids may bother, generally in the spring. Control is expensive. Alfalfa butterflies are often serious in summer. Rhizoctonia is present but not serious except in small localized areas of fields. Specific recommendations for control should not be given here as treatment varies considerably depending on conditions. Consult your insecticide supplier or the farm advisor. No insect control costs are shown on the reverse side. They necessarily must be added to costs of production.

SEE REVERSE SIDE

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