

alfalfa hay
sample costs
and
production



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Cost Data Sheet No. 9

ALFALFA HAY--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Cost of Establishing a Stand of Alfalfa

ITEMS	<u>SAMPLE COSTS</u> Per Acre
LAND PREPARATION	
Fertilize	\$ 2.00
Subsoil	7.00
Disc 2x	4.00
Land plane 2x	5.00
Borders	1.00
Float or corrugate	1.75
Planting	3.00
Irrigate 2x	2.00
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION	\$ 25.75
MATERIALS	
Water	2.00
Seed 20# @ .30	6.00
Fertilizer	10.00
TOTAL MATERIALS	\$ 18.00
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION AND MATERIALS	\$ 43.75

GENERAL INFORMATION

The costs included in this fact sheet are mainly contract prices or an average of costs estimated by several alfalfa hay growers.

VARIETIES

Certified Moapa alfalfa is recommended because of its resistance to the spotted alfalfa aphid. Sonora, a new variety released in 1963, shows considerable promise. Tests show it to be slightly higher in yield especially in winter and early spring. A few commercial varieties also look promising.

ANNUAL COSTS OF HAY PRODUCTION - 3 YEAR LIFE

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BASED ON ANNUAL YIELD OF 6 TONS/ACRE

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
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LABOR AND MATERIALS

Irrigate 16x @ 1.00	\$ 16.00
Water 8 acre ft. @ \$2.00	16.00
Fertilize	2.00 ^{1/}
Fertilizer	6.60 ^{1/}
Insect control 4x @ \$2.00	8.00
TOTAL LABOR AND MATERIALS	\$ 48.60

HARVESTING

Mow and rake 6x @ \$2.50 ^{2/}	\$ 15.00
Bale @ \$4.00 per ton	24.00
Haul and stack @ \$1.75 ^{2/}	10.50
TOTAL HARVEST	\$ 49.50

CASH OVERHEAD

5% of above	4.90
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DEPRECIATION ON STAND

1/3 of cost of stand	14.58
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LAND RENT

	50.00
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TOTAL ALL COSTS \$ 167.58

^{1/} One third included in cost of establishing stand.

^{2/} Use of swather and Harobed will make little difference in cost.

FERTILIZATION

Approximately 100 lbs. of phosphate is taken from the soil by each 7-8 tons of alfalfa. This must be replaced to maintain maximum hay production.

A preliminary application of at least 100-150 pounds of phosphate per acre is recommended prior to planting.

Additional annual applications of 100 pounds of phosphate per acre should be applied.

PLANTING DATES

Late September through November is the preferred time for planting. Later plantings often result in poor germination. Spring plantings, if necessary, are suggested in February and March.

PLANTING RATES

One pound of seed per acre will provide 4 to 5 seeds per square foot. At this rate, 15 lbs. are equal to 60 to 75 seeds per square foot.

Growers use 15 to 30 lbs. seed depending on condition of their field, cost of seed, method of planting and time of planting.

IRRIGATION

Two or three irrigations per cutting are necessary depending on the type of soil.

PESTS AND DISEASES

The spotted alfalfa aphid usually causes damage on nonresistant alfalfas. Egyptian alfalfa weevil in February and the alfalfa caterpillar and beet armyworm often need to be controlled in mid- to late summer.

See the Field Crop Pest & Disease Control Guide for more specific

information on pests and control.

PESTICIDE RESIDUES

All precautions should be taken to produce hay without illegal pesticide residues.

Hay can be analyzed by the stack or load for residues.

WEED CONTROL

Broadleaf weeds can be controlled with 2,4-DB in seedling or established alfalfa. Winter annual grasses can be controlled with IPC granules.

YIELDS

An average of 6 to 7 tons can be expected, although up to 10 tons have been reported on good land. Reports of higher tonnage are often based on second year alfalfa which will produce the most hay.

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