

FLAT PLANTED ALFALFA SEED PROJECTED PRODUCTION COSTS 1987-1988

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 RATE	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR		COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
SEED PRODUCTION COSTS						
Irrigate 4x		Water 2 ac/ft	18.00	2	11.00	29.00
Insect Control 3x	4.90	Insecticides	41.00			55.70
Bees		3 colonies (\$18)	48.00			48.00
Defoliation	6.00		15.00			21.00
TOTAL GROWING PERIOD COSTS						153.70
GROWING PERIOD & LAND RENT						
Land Rent (net)						125.00
Cash Overhead--		10% of preharvest and land rent				27.87
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS						306.57
HARVEST COSTS						
Combining	35.00					32.00
Hauling	.25/cwt.	@ 300 lbs/acre				.75
Cleaning Seed	5.00/cwt.					15.00
Bags	.75/cwt.					2.25
Alfalfa Seed Research Fee	.08/cwt.					.24
TOTAL HARVEST COSTS						50.24
TOTAL ALL COSTS						356.81

PROJECTED INCOME ABOVE COSTS (PER ACRE)
price/lb.

	.60	.80	1.00	1.20	1.40	1.60
Pounds	200	-234	-194	-154	-114	-74
400	-126	-46	34	114	194	274
600	-18	102	222	342	462	582
800	90	250	410	570	730	890
1000	198	398	598	798	998	1198

ALFALFA SEED CULTURE

1987-1988

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>YIELD/ACRE (LBS)</u>	<u>VALUE/LB.</u>
1986	15,700	477	\$.81
1985	16,600	368	.83
1984	7,400	433	.85
1983	15,500	478	1.00
1982	10,100	387	.80

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. Later 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. Occasionally small amounts of dormants will be 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.

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. 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.

PEST CONTROL: Lygus control is necessary throughout the season. Stink bugs can cause damage to maturing seed and should be controlled. Seed chalcid is best managed by proper cultural practices, insecticides have not been cost effective. Consult your farm advisors' office for information on pests and their control.

HARVESTING: Most seed alfalfa is defoliated using spray compounds applied by airplane in 8 to 12 gallons of diesel oil per acre. Windowing is also used.

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