

Alfalfa Report

4-14-05

Insect Management: Alfalfa caterpillar, *Colias eurytheme* also known as alfalfa butterfly, is a warm weather pest of alfalfa. There can be as many as seven generations between May and October, in the low desert. Start checking fields for alfalfa caterpillars when yellow alfalfa butterflies first appear in May. When alfalfa butterflies are seen flying over tall alfalfa, they most likely emerged from that field. Eggs are laid singly, standing on end, on the upper surface of leaves in fields with re-growth under 6 inches. Larvae hatch in 3 to 10 days, grow to about an inch long and pupate in approximately two weeks. Alfalfa caterpillars are green with white stripes down their sides and are distinguished from beet armyworm by their velvety appearance. Monitor fields weekly from June through October, checking 2 to 3 times per week during periods of heavy infestations. Take 5 sweep counts in 4 to 5 field locations. Check worms for parasitism by pulling heads off an alfalfa caterpillar larva, squeeze out the body contents, and look for an *Apanteles* wasp larva. Treat when field counts average 10 non-parasitized caterpillars per sweep.

Weed Control: It is well worth the effort to shut the sprayer off for a few randomly spaced spots in the field to see how much good a herbicide has worked. When weed infestations are heavy, even 70 or 80 percent control can look like no control without an untreated check. Growers worried about leaving weeds in the field can come back and spray them before they have gone to seed.

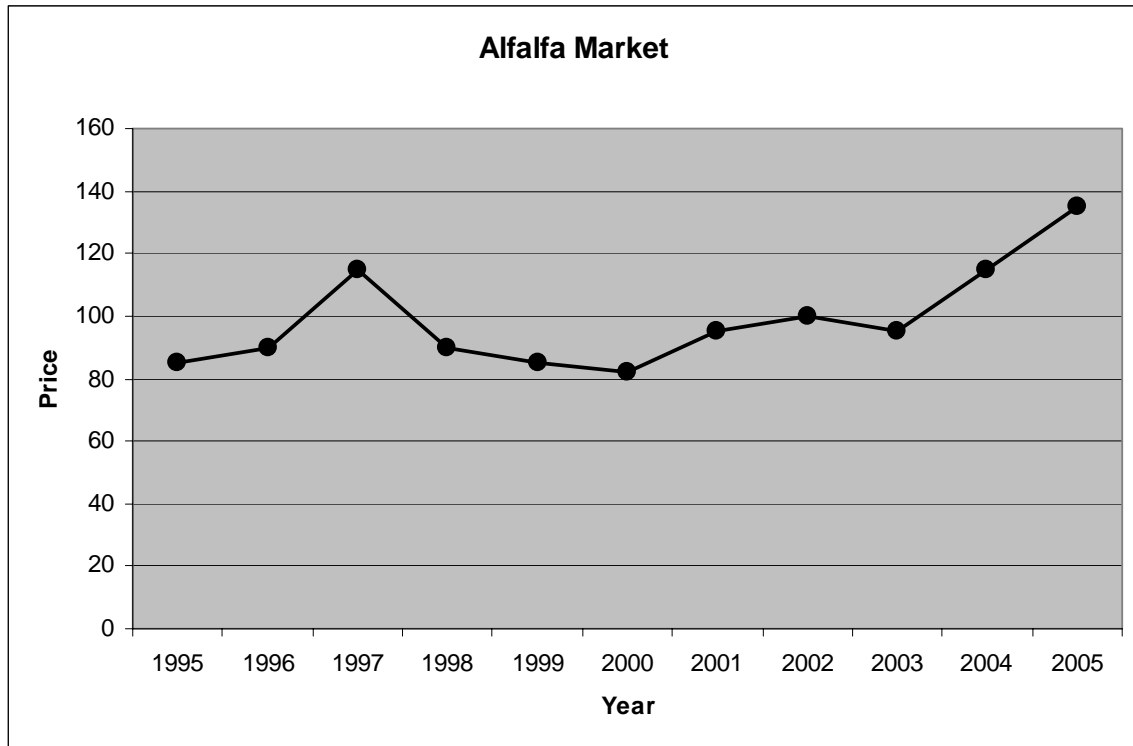
Alfalfa cutting: Alfalfa leaves can increase in weight by 30% during the day, and lose this weight during the night through respiration and transport to the root or growing points. Alfalfa leaves comprise about half the plant weight, so yield increases can theoretically be gained by harvesting in the evening. Yield increases may not be realized by cutting in the evening since respiration continues in cut alfalfa, but at least transport of sugars to the root will be stopped.

<u>Market Summary</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Offgrade</u>
Past 2 weeks	140	120	135	90-110
Last year	120	90	110	70-90

10 Year Summary

2005 - 135
2004 - 115
2003 - 95
2002 - 100
2001 - 95

2000 – 82
1999 – 85
1998 – 90
1997 – 115
1996 – 90
1995 – 85



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