

Alfalfa Report

6-27-05

Insect Management: Spider mites do not often cause wide spread damage to alfalfa grown for hay and damage may be associated with water stress. Spider mites feed by inserting long needle-like mouth parts into leaves removing plant sap causing a yellow stippling on leaves and leaves are covered with webbing. Severe feeding causes necrosis, leaves turn brown, become dry and drop from the plant.

Infestations are usually confined to the lower leaves so damage starts in the lower plant canopy moving upward. Feeding damage reduces yield, quality and retards regrowth. Spider Mite Species in Western Arizona & Southern California include: carmine spider mite (*T. cinnabarinus* Boisduval); desert spider mite (*T. desertorum* Banks); strawberry mite (*T. turkestanii* Ugarov & Nikolski); and twospotted spider mite (*Tetranychus urticae* Koch). Avoid using pyrethroid insecticides for alfalfa pest control; they can flare spider mite infestations. Minimizing crop stress through improved irrigation; when fields are watered, infestations often clears up in a few days. When severe infestations occur, sulfur may be used to suppress the populations.

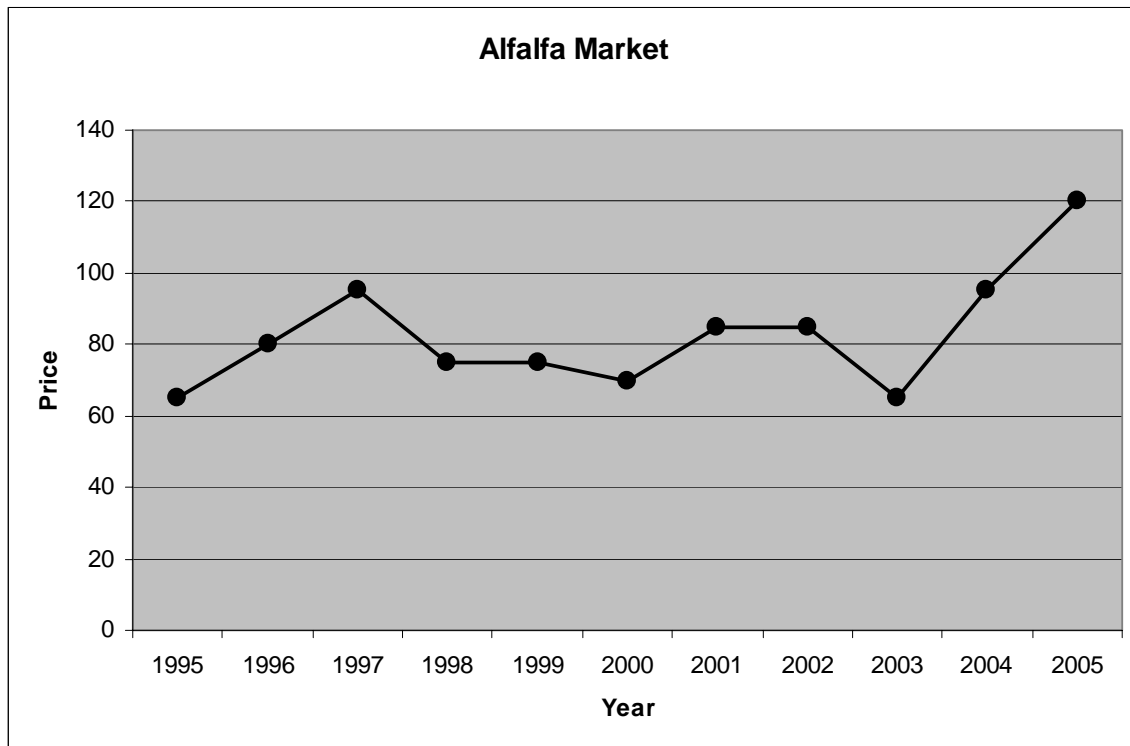
Weed Control: Annual weeds that are present in fields that are fallow now but will be planted to alfalfa in the fall, can be controlled with repeated irrigations and tillage prior to planting. This is not true with perennial weeds such as bermudagrass and nutsedge. Tillage spreads perennial weeds, it does not control them! Bermudagrass and nutsedge can survive and emerge from several feet below the surface.

Barn fires: Baled hay can catch fire if stored between 30 to 40% moisture due to heat produced by microorganisms and plant respiration. Hay baled at safe moisture levels of 20% or less may rise to a temperature of 130 to 140°F for a few days before gradually cooling off. If hay temperature rises above 140°F, temperature should be monitored every few hours. At temperatures between 150 and 160 °F, it is time to prepare to remove hot hay from the stack or secure a source of water in case temperature continues to rise. It would be wise to call the fire department when hay temperature exceeds 180°F. When temperature reaches 200°F, bales may burst into flames when removed from the stack if not wetted.

Market Summary	High	Low	Average	Offgrade
Past 2 weeks	135	125	130	100-120
Last year	115	90	105	80-90

10 Year Summary

2005 - 120
2004 - 95
2003 - 65
2002 - 85
2001 - 85
2000 - 70
1999 - 75
1998 - 75
1997 - 95
1996 - 80
1995 - 65



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