

Alfalfa Report

6-07-05

Insect Management: Western yellowstriped armyworm is a common pest in low desert alfalfa from June through September. Egg masses, covered with gray cottony scales, are deposited on the upper side of leaves. Eggs hatch in a few days and larvae reach full size in 2 to 3 weeks. Larvae pupate on or under the soil surface. Larvae appear smooth and are usually black with two prominent orange yellow stripes and many narrow stripes on each side. An intense black spot on the lateral margin of the first legless segment is a distinguishing characteristic. First instar larvae web terminal leaves together and skeletonize the leaves, later dispersing through the crop. Spiders and predacious bugs prey on larvae and larvae may be parasitized by *Hyposoter exigua* wasps. Monitor fields weekly using a sweep net and check fields 2 to 3 times per week if heavy populations begin to develop. Make 5 sweep counts at each of 4 to 5 locations in the field. Treat when there are 15 non-parasitized armyworms of more than 1/2 inch per sweep.

Weed Control: There are over 150 species of Dodder throughout the world. Field Dodder (*Cuscuta Campestris*) is the one most commonly found on alfalfa. Dodder germinates at or very near the soil surface and is dependent on carbohydrates stored in the seed until it attaches to a host. If no host is found, it dies. Once attached, it is entirely dependent on the host for nutrients and water. It is spread by contaminated seed, equipment and soil movement. The best control is achieved with two applications of the highest labeled rate of Trifluralin applied in the spring and mid-summer.

Banking water: Many growers apply more water than alfalfa needs during the winter in order to have “water in the bank” during the summer. This practice does have some merit on deep soils if irrigation water is in short supply during the summer. Subsoil moisture can contribute to yield and stand survival when alfalfa is stressed for water. Alfalfa is a deep-rooted crop and can take up water from depths of 8 feet or more. Subsoil moisture at a depth of 20 to 30 feet has been reported to contribute to alfalfa survival in drought years under dryland conditions.

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

10 Year Summary

2005 - 130

2004 - 105

2003 - 65

2002 - 88

2001 - 88

2000 - 75

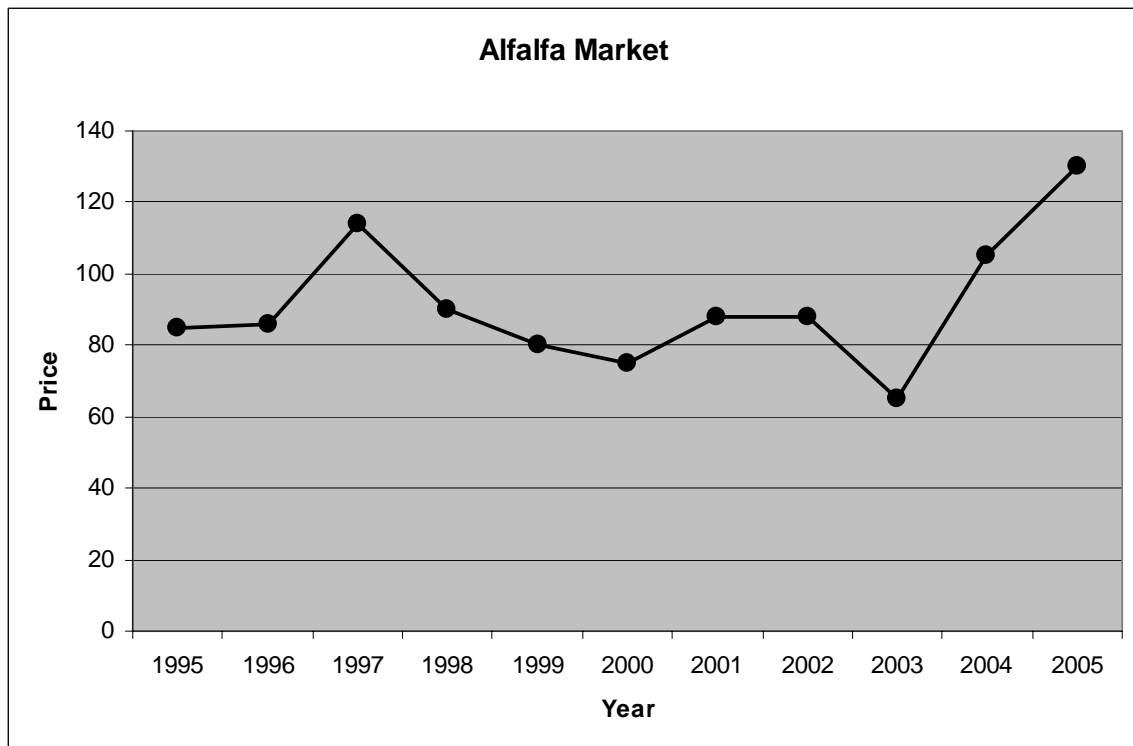
1999 - 80

1998 - 90

1997 - 114

1996 - 86

1995 - 85



Information provided by:

Barry Tickles, btickes@ag.arizona.edu Extension Agent, Yuma County

Michael Ottman, mottman@ag.arizona.edu Agronomy Specialist

College of Agriculture, The University of Arizona.

Eric Natwick, etnatwick@ucdavis.edu UCCE Imperial County - Farm Advisor

University of California, Davis, CA.