

Alfalfa Report

5-24-05

Insect Management: Spider mites) are not common in alfalfa grown for hay and serious damage is often associated with water stress. When infested fields are watered, the problem often clears up in a matter of days. In recent years, spider mites have been more common in alfalfa hay fields during the spring/summer months. Spider mites infestations are usually confined to the lower leaves. They feed by inserting long needle-like mouth parts into leaves removing plant sap. Leaves become stippled with chlorotic spots. Infested leaves are covered with webbing and turn yellow. With severe feeding, leaves turn brown from necrosis and desiccation causing defoliation. Damage starts in the lower plant canopy moving upward. Feeding damage can reduce yield, quality and retard growth. Definitive monitoring and treatment guidelines have not been developed for spider mites in alfalfa grown for hay.

Weed Control: The time has passed when the contact herbicides, Gramoxone and Buctril, can be safely and effectively used in alfalfa. Hot, dry conditions, rapid crop regrowth, and preharvest intervals make it difficult to safely and effectively use these products between March and October. They also are weak on grasses, which are the predominate summer weeds.

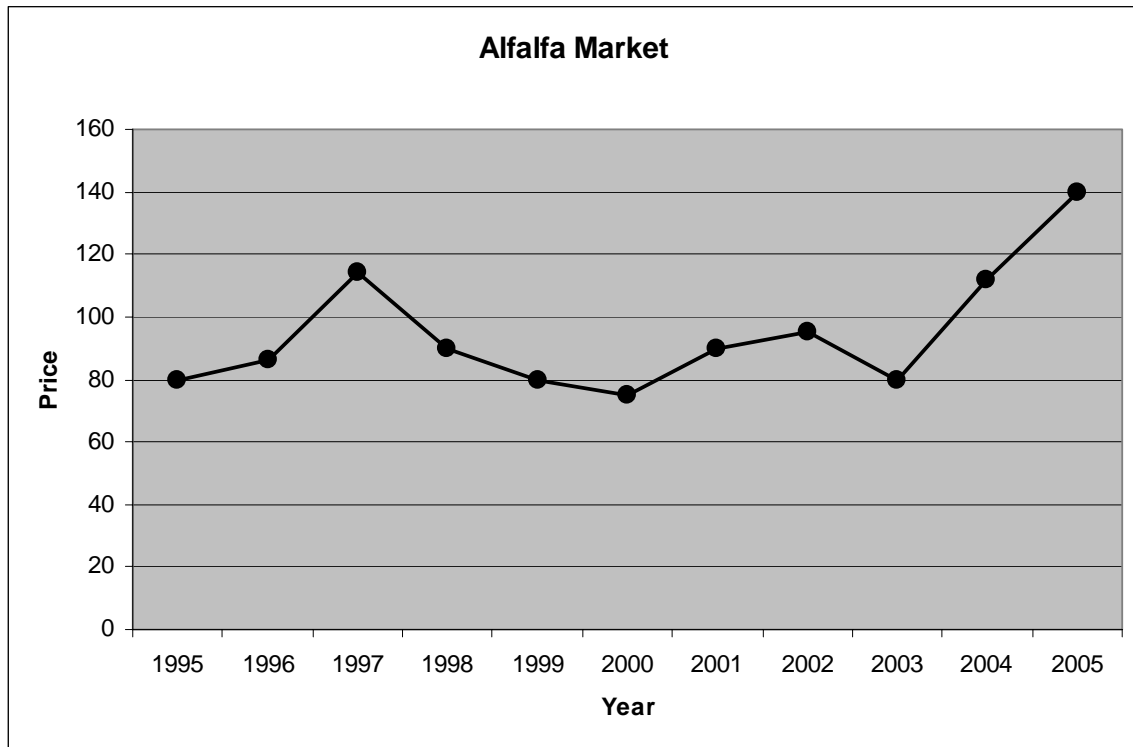
Alternatives to alfalfa: Alfalfa is the most widely adaptable and valuable forage legume grown in Arizona. Other legumes have been grown in Arizona for forage, however, but with limited success. Cowpeas and soybeans examples of warm season legumes that were been tried in Arizona at the turn of the century. Cowpeas are drought tolerant and soybeans are susceptible to salt and whiteflies. Cool season legumes include berseem clover, vetches, winter pea, birdsfoot trefoil, annual medics, and various clovers. The cool season legumes do not establish as quickly as cool season grasses such as oats or barley, and may be behind in growth by a few weeks to a month.

<u>Market Summary</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Offgrade</u>
Past 2 weeks	145	135	140	95-125
Last year	120	95	112	80-95

10 Year Summary

2005 - 140
2004 - 112
2003 - 80
2002 - 95

2001 – 90
2000 – 75
1999 – 80
1998 – 90
1997 – 114
1996 – 86
1995 – 80



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