



County	Contact	Premium Hay (\$/ton)	Top Quality Hay (\$/ton)	Other Hay (\$/ton)	Cut Complete	Market Activity
Chaves	Sandra Barraza, County Agent	\$200+ \$225, small bales	\$185-200 large bales	\$165-175, striped; \$120-145, dry cow	Finished	Good/low supplies
De Baca	Leigh Ann Marez, County Agent	\$220, small bales	\$200, small \$160-170, large bales	\$180, light striped \$150, med striped \$125, dry cow	Finished	Good/limited supplies on #1
Eddy/Lea	Woods Houghton/ Wayne Cox County Agents	\$200-210	\$185-195	\$175 and up	Finished	Strong/low supplies

### Cropping Trends Shift to Meet Dairy Demands

Mark A. Marsalis, Extension Agronomist, NMSU Agricultural Science Center at Clovis

There is little doubt that the growing dairy industry in New Mexico has had dramatic effects on the state's economies and the landscape. Statewide milk production is at an all-time high (Fig. 1) and is due mostly to increased cow numbers. Just as evident is the effect of dairy expansion on regional agricultural practices. Over the past 15 years, crops and management strategies have shifted to systems that supply necessary feed to the large numbers of dairy cows in the state, especially on the eastern side (Fig. 2). For example, let's take corn into consideration. Although corn has been grown in the area for many years, historically, it has been grown for grain production to be shipped out to other parts of the U.S. for utilization. In recent years however, corn has been grown primarily for the purpose of producing large quantities of silage utilized by local dairies in feeding rations. According to New Mexico Agricultural Statistics (<http://www.nass.usda.gov>), of the 21,200 acres of corn grown in 1990 in Curry County, 80 percent was harvested as grain. Compare that to 2006, when only 27 percent of the corn acres was harvested for grain. Since 2001, more than 65 percent of the corn grown in Curry and Roosevelt counties has gone toward silage production. In most of those years, silage constituted 75 percent or more of the total acres planted to corn. Over 100,000 acres (2.4 million tons) of corn and sorghum silage were harvested in New Mexico in 2006.

Another major component of dairy cow diets is hay, specifically alfalfa hay. Alfalfa is a high quality and high value commodity and is the number one cash crop in the state, generating more than \$150 million annually. New Mexico produces a significant amount of alfalfa hay; in fact, 260,000 acres (1.4 million tons) were harvested in 2007. New Mexico's leading alfalfa producing counties are: Eddy, Chaves, San Juan and Dona Ana. Although the majority of alfalfa is produced in other parts of the state, alfalfa acreage in Curry and Roosevelt Counties has increased in recent years, from 4,500 acres in 1990 to nearly 10,000 acres in 2006. Chaves County, New Mexico's leading county in dairy cow number (> 90,000 cows), alone produces over 30,000 acres of alfalfa each year.

These increases in feed crops directly correspond with the process of dairy expansion into eastern New Mexico beginning in the early 1990s. In some instances, corn and alfalfa have replaced acres of other crops such as grain sorghum and peanuts, both of which have experienced a declining trend in acreage since the mid-to late 1990s. Often, the change over to any particular forage crop increases the value of the resource inputs into the cropping system and benefits both the grower and dairy consuming the crop. Other times, a shift from high value crops such as peanuts may not be advantageous if the forage crop fails or is not of adequate quality for the dairy. It is up to the grower and dairyman alike to decide what is best for their particular operations and how to work together to achieve a common goal of maximized productivity. Some argue that these new systems consume more water than our old farming practices. This may or may not be true, and regardless of what is being grown, each producer should make every effort to conserve our most precious resource.

Change is both good and bad and is always inevitable. It is how we adapt to changes that define our successes and survival, and the agricultural industry is no exception. How will we adjust to this change, and can we sustain natural resources and economies while enduring it? Only time will tell. Food for thought ... and COWS.

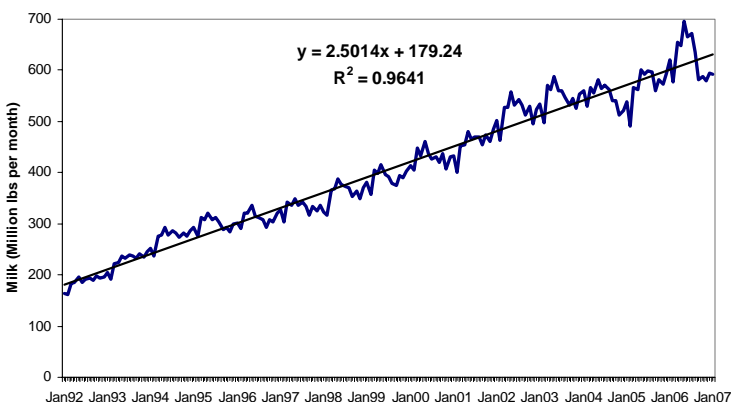


Figure 1. Increase in milk production in New Mexico 1992-2007.

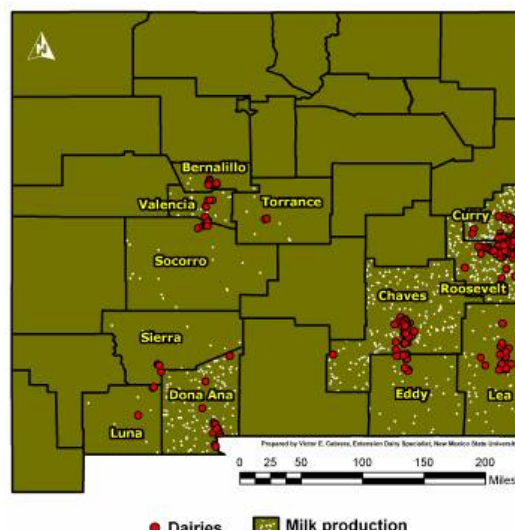


Figure 2. Locations of dairies in New Mexico.

## NM Alfalfa Variety Trial Results

Every year alfalfa variety tests are conducted at several of the science centers throughout the state. Results are summarized in the annual 'New Mexico Alfalfa Variety Test Report' publication. The 2007 report will be forthcoming and results will be summarized in the January 2008 issue of 'Alfalfa Market News'. Previous years' results of all NM variety trials can be accessed at: [http://www.cahe.nmsu.edu/pubs/variety\\_trials/](http://www.cahe.nmsu.edu/pubs/variety_trials/).

### \*\*\*\*\* UPCOMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*\*

- 2007 California Alfalfa & Forage Symposium, Monterey, CA, December 17-19, 2007 (<http://alfalfa.ucdavis.edu>)
- 2008 Southwest Hay & Forage Conference, Ruidoso, NM, January 17-18, 2008 (<http://www.nmhay.com>);  
Registration form enclosed.

*Mark Marsalis*, Mark Marsalis, Extension Agronomist—New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity employer. All programs are available to everyone regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap or national origin, New Mexico State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

## Southwest Hay and Forage Conference to Spotlight Corn/Forage Issues

Ruidoso, NM – The New Mexico Hay Association is proud to announce the addition of corn and forage issues to its usual line up of hay topics at the Southwest Hay Conference, slated for January 17<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> at the Ruidoso Convention Center in Ruidoso, NM.

The NMHA board of Directors acknowledges the increase in corn silage production and dairy involvement in New Mexico. “Typically, we have only addressed forages that can be wrapped in twine, but realize there is not an organized forage consortium in our state” said Doug Whitney, NMHA President. “We hope to assist farmers with education on corn production and related topics as well as hay production, since in many parts of the state, farmers focus on both in their cropping rotations.”

Topics in this year’s agenda include the latest in biotechnology of corn and alfalfa, maximizing production, fertilization, organic alfalfa, irrigation needs, alternative crops, and nutrient and nitrate management. In addition, the forage section will feature water and fertilizer efficiency, maximizing silage production, manure utilization, and a project using biomass is converted to energy and fertilizer as a by-product.

The two day conference will feature a large machinery trade show, featuring the latest in farm equipment, as well as booths with various alfalfa/forage related products, two sponsored meals, women’s interest sessions involving crafts and entrepreneurships, a social hour and entertainment by cowboy poet and story teller Justin Flowers.

“The conference is always a great opportunity for farmers to improve their vocation, as well as visit with their across-state counterparts, and we welcome out of state producers and end users from all over the southwest”, said Justin Boswell, newly appointed NMHA executive director. “The addition of other forage topics hopefully will fill a void in the educational pipeline for southwest farmers.”

NM Pesticide Applicator and Certified Crop Advisor CEU’s have been applied for.

For more information on the Southwest Hay And Forage Conference, please visit: [www.nmhay.com](http://www.nmhay.com), or contact secretary Gina Sterrett at [nmhay@yahoo.com](mailto:nmhay@yahoo.com), or by phone at 575-626-5677, or Justin Boswell at 575-840-9908 or email Justin at [juboswel@yahoo.com](mailto:juboswel@yahoo.com). Booth space is still available.

Topics Include:

**Meeting the Trends in Area Dairy Rations**-Dr. Robert Hagevoort, Extension Dairy Specialist, NMSU  
**Organic Alfalfa – Can It Work?**-Dr. Mark Marsalis, Extension Agronomist, NMSU  
**Sanfoin and Other Prospective Alternative Feed Crops**-Leonard Lauriault, Forage Agronomist, NMSU  
**Corn and Alfalfa Fertilization Trends**-Paul Wayland, Agronomist, Wilbur Ellis  
**Maximizing Silage Production/Tech Trait Overview**-David Peterson, Agronomist, Pioneer Hi-bred Int’l  
**Alfalfa Removal of Nitrates in Heavily “Manured” Cropland?**-Dr. Robert Flynn, Agronomist, NMSU  
**NMSU Alfalfa Breeding Program Update**- Ian Ray, NMSU Dept. of Plant and Environmental Sciences  
**Manure Utilization: Pecos Valley Biomass Project**-Kyle Hoodenpyle, Consultant, Agri-Energy



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<http://www.NMHAY.com>

FED TAX ID# 85-0315633

**MEMBER PRE-REGISTRATION SOUTHWEST HAY  
 CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW RUIDOSO  
 CONVENTION CENTER, JAN 17-18, 2008**

NAME OF PERSON(S) ATTENDING \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL(OPT:): \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR REGISTRATION INCLUDES: 2-DAY CONFERENCE, 2 MEALS**

INDICATE BELOW: .00

\_\_\_\_ I'D LIKE A STANDARD INDIVIDUAL PRE-REGISTRATION @ \$55 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (LATE REGISTRATION FEE AFTER JAN 5<sup>TH</sup> IS \$65.00, AT THE DOOR)

\_\_\_\_ I WANT THE FAMILY & FOREMEN PACKAGE - UP TO 3 PERSONS FOR \$145.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (LATE REGISTRATION FOR PACKAGE IS \$175.00 AND \$55.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ ADDITIONAL PERSONS @ \$45.00 EACH OVER 3 IN PACKAGE  
 (LATE REGISTRATION FEE IS \$55.00 FOR ADDITIONAL PERSONS)  
 THEIR NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I ALSO NEED TO PAY MY ANNUAL DUES OF \$45.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I AM ENCLOSING A CHECK FOR: TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING NMHA!

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM ALONG WITH YOUR CHECK TO ADDRESS ABOVE POST-MARKED BY  
 JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2008 TO AVOID LATE REGISTRATION