



County	Contact	Premium Hay (\$/ton)	Top Quality Hay (\$/ton)	Other Hay (\$/ton)	Cut Complete/Condition	Market Activity
Chaves	Sandra Barraza, County Agent	\$195-230 large; \$230-250 small or \$8.50/bale	\$175-195 large, light striped	\$175 large, bleached, heavy striped; \$180 oat	4 th 95%, 5 th started in areas; rain & worm pests	Demand high
De Baca	Leigh Ann Marez, County Agent	\$210 large; \$230 small; \$30 back per grade	\$200 small, light stripe	\$170 small, heavy stripe	5 th Starting	Good demand; short supply on large bales
Dona Ana	Rafa Realivasquez, County Agent	\$180 large; \$7.00/bale small	\$140 large; \$5.75/bale small	\$100 large; \$3.00/bale small	4 th 100%, 5 th started	Good, short supply due to rain
Eddy	Woods Houghton, County Agent	\$220-240 large; \$230-240 small	\$160-190 large light striped	\$180-200 small light striped	4 th 75%, 5 th started in some areas	Most growers contracted
Hidalgo	Christy Rubio, County Agent	\$180-190 large	\$168-180 large	\$150 oat hay large	4 th 75%, rain delays	Good, high demand
Lea	Wayne Cox, County Agent	\$215-225 large	\$205-210 large	\$185 and up	4 th 75%, 5 th started in S. Lea	Active
Roosevelt	Patrick Kircher, County Agent	\$210 and up large	\$200 large; \$6.50-7.00/bale	\$175 and up	4 th 60%; spotty rain/worm damage	Active
Torrance	Gene Winn, County Agent	\$180-200 large	\$160 large striped	\$130 large black	3 rd - 2 wks behind and rained on	Good, premium in short supply
SE & SW Colorado	USDA-CO	\$180-200 large; \$7.00/bale small	\$175-185 large \$6.00/bale small	\$140-175 large fair quality	3 rd - slowed due to rains	Active; demand is good; supplies tight

Update on Recent Furrow-Irrigated Alfalfa Research

Leonard Lauriault, Forage Agronomist, NMSU Agricultural Sci. Center at Tucumcari

A considerable amount of alfalfa management research is ongoing throughout New Mexico. Because alfalfa varieties are being developed specifically to break the winter survival – fall dormancy connection to improve yield, alfalfa variety tests at most of New Mexico State University’s research facilities throughout the state evaluate which fall dormancy categories are best adapted to a specific region. The 2007 New Mexico Alfalfa Variety Test Report is available at your County Cooperative Extension Service office or Online at http://cahe.nmsu.edu/pubs/variety_trials/avt07.pdf. This article highlights some research that is being conducted at NMSU’s Agricultural Science Center at Tucumcari.

Several studies have shown that there is no benefit to increasing seeding rates above 20 lb/acre (up to 40 lb/acre) when good management practices are used for establishment. In fact, seeding rates as low as 5 lb/acre have established stands that produced equally well to 20 lb/acre seeding rates. Another study evaluates the effects of irrigation termination for selected harvests on performance of furrow-irrigated alfalfa. Within a given harvest, irrigated alfalfa generally outyielded unirrigated alfalfa (duh!). Withholding irrigation for more than one harvest

reduced total annual yields compared to the fully irrigated treatment. When using flood or sprinkler irrigation, which are more efficient than furrow irrigation, the reduction in irrigation should probably be spread across the growing season rather than applied to a single cutting. Still, alfalfa is more water-use-efficient in spring than summer and if water is limited, yield can be maximized by concentrating irrigation at that time. Additionally, if a warm spring is forecast, yields will likely be significantly increased (by 1 ton/acre or more) by beginning to irrigate earlier (2 to 2½ months prior to the typical first harvest date).

More studies compared methods of terminating alfalfa (glyphosate and/or tillage) to maximize nitrogen recovery by the next crop. Either tillage or glyphosate application increased wheat forage yield measured at boot stage; however, use of both techniques was not necessary to maximize yield. Similar results were observed for fiber components of nutritive value. Haygrazer forage yield tended to be maximized by either tillage or glyphosate with glyphosate being more favorable; but, for crude protein (CP), tillage was more favorable. For one study, the glyphosate application was ineffective to reduce alfalfa stands, even after two applications. Consequently, tillage would be the choice of the options tested in this study. Perhaps other herbicides would be more effective to eradicate alfalfa but none others were tested.

Another set of studies evaluated selected rotation systems (one or two years of haygrazer, wheat followed by haygrazer, and continuous alfalfa) for renovation of alfalfa fields. Alfalfa stands are poorest in the wheat/haygrazer rotation making it apparent that including wheat in alfalfa rotation was detrimental to establishment and yield of replanted alfalfa. First cutting haygrazer yields were 1.42, 1.30, and 1.01 tons/acre for 1st year haygrazer, 2nd year haygrazer, and haygrazer following wheat, respectively, suggesting a detrimental effect of wheat on the subsequent haygrazer crop in addition to the already mentioned effect on replanted alfalfa. Consequently, current recommendations are to avoid using wheat when rotating out of alfalfa when plans are to replant alfalfa. At this time, this recommendation does not include using wheat as a companion crop for re-establishment of alfalfa. Figures 1 & 2 show the effect of including wheat in renovation studies



Figure 1. From left to right, two years of haygrazer, one year of haygrazer (the darker strip in the middle), and wheat – haygrazer, all following alfalfa.



Figure 2. The effect of including wheat in the alfalfa rotation on replanted alfalfa.

Research on the management of alfalfa in New Mexico is important and needs to continue and even be expanded because alfalfa is New Mexico's #1 cash crop. If you have any questions about alfalfa in New Mexico, call your local County Cooperative Extension Service Agent for Agriculture.

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