



Alfalfa Market News

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New Mexico State University • Cooperative Extension Service • U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Farm Hay Prices—September 18th

Price (\$) per ton or by bale

County	Contact	Premium Hay (\$/ton)	Top Quality Hay (\$/ton)	Other Hay (\$/ton)	Contract (\$/ton)	Cut Complete	Market Activity
Chaves	Shawn Dennis, County Agent	\$185 small, \$225 custom baled for premium hay.	\$170/ton and holding steady.	\$110/ton. Conditions in many fields remained wet until this week.	Varies. Some rain scattered in region.	Now finished with the 5th of 6 cuts for the season.	Strong.
Dona Ana	John White, County Agent	\$6.50-7.00 small/heavy, \$185-220 per ton.	\$175-185/ton delivered, \$6.50-5.50 for small bale.	\$175 or less, round bales \$85, small at down below \$5.50 to \$3.50 on black.	\$3.00 to \$7.00 small, \$135-190 or more contract	65% 6th cut.	Strong.
Eddy	Woods Houghton, County Agent	\$185 and up per ton small; \$180-big bale.	\$170 small bales and \$175-big bales.	Running about \$150-165 for better supplies.	\$145 to 150 or more.	85% of 6th cut.	Strong.
Guadalupe	Geno Lujan, County Agent	\$6-7 per small bale. \$180 per ton for small bales.	Varies, ask your supplier for pricing and quantity.	\$135 per ton.	\$6-7 for premium custom baled hay.	3rd cut is complete this week.	Strong.
San Juan	Gary Hathorn, County Agent	\$200 per ton pricing currently. Demand good.	\$150-200 per ton. Scattered showers making short supplies.	\$85-145 per ton.	Varies.	3rd cut is complete in south, 80% to the north.	Strong.



Western Alfalfa Symposium will Sharpen Growing Skills

Statewide. Plan on an informative series of innovative ideas to sharpen your alfalfa and pasture skills at the 2006 Western Alfalfa Symposium to be held in Reno, Nevada December 11-13. Information and the web site for registration are also listed in the news release below if additional information or a direct telephone contact number is required, please call the Plant Sciences office at 505-646-1715 for additional information.

The 2006 Western Alfalfa & Forage Conference planning is nearing completion. This multi-state program will be held at John Ascuaga's Nugget in Reno (Sparks), Nevada, **December 11-13, 2006**. A bus field tour will visit special features of Nevada agriculture (alfalfa, dairy & specialty crops) and tourist sites on Monday, December 11, 2006. Session topics include Emerging Issues & Market Trends, Water, Economics & Profitability, Pest Management, Utilizing a Wide Range of Forage Crops, Irrigation & Soils, Future Trends with Alfalfa & Forages, Harvesting Technology & Quality and Risk Management in Forage Production. The conference will feature a full trade show on December 12 and 13 and will introduce a novel event -- an auction featuring farming supplies and equipment -- to benefit grower groups from Western States. General registration is \$120.00 prior to November 21, 2006.

Co-Chairs for the program are Glen Shewmaker (ID), Steve Orloff (CA), and Dan Putnam (CA). Representatives of 11 Western States – Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming – comprise the planning and development committee. Full program information and registration materials are available on the conference Web site: <http://alfalfa.ucdavis.edu/+symposium/current/index.html>.



Consider attending the 2006 Western Alfalfa Symposium to learn the latest on alfalfa and improved pasture management and use. The agenda promises to cover pasture management from seeding to final cutting and will provide an opportunity to see others within the western growing region as well as a chance to enjoy the scenic beauty of Reno, Nevada this December. See how producers across the western United States are faring with hay supplies and quality.

Alert! Alert! Alert! Alert!

- ♪ *Clean out supplies of lower quality hay and prepare for winter hay supplies with last alfalfa cut green and good in quality and quantity.*
- ♪ *Make fall phosphorus and potassium granular applications as suggested by soil test recommendations.*
- ♪ *Continue controlling fall weeds from earlier showers. In particular, keep pigweed, morningglory and kochia seed supplies from reinfesting weed seed banks.*
- ♪ *Finish fall seeding of all alfalfa and cool-season grasses.*
- ♪ *Finish up corn silage harvest and begin corn grain harvest as soon as possible—with grain harvested under 20 percent moisture so storage will be below 18 percent moisture. Corn silage was hit the most with rains so much was harvested below optimum moisture of 64-68 percent.*
- ♪ *Red chile harvest is progressing, with much of the green harvest out.*
- ♪ *Consider a winter cover crop on fields most affected by flooding or heavy rainfall. This will help return soil tilth to better form and allow added erosion control in case additional rain occurs.*
- ♪ *While behind by about two weeks, peanut production continues toward its fall harvest period. Decide on rotation of fields for next year's peanut production and crops to place in this year's fields.*
- ♪ *In fields hit hard by southwestern corn borer, armyworms, bollworms or white flies, consider border crops that could serve on windward edges that could become catch crops next year to help limit insect development or serve to provide a catch area for controlling these pests.*
- ♪ *Limit tillage trips across fields—not only will it conserve moisture for winter cover crops or next spring's fields but will limit compaction, will possibly lessen bringing up deep buried weed seed and will encourage better soil aggregate formation with proper care.*
- ♪ *Lasting wet spots in fields may require split management, separate fertilization and care.*

New Hay Transportation Regulations Go into Effect December 2006

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

Nationwide. Hay growers and buyers in New Mexico should be aware of the new hay transporting regulations that are coming down the road in December of this year. In an effort to protect the nation's feed and food supply, the Food and Drug Administration has included as part of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 regulations that affect the sale and transportation of hay and other agricultural products in the U.S.

According to FDA's Bioterrorism Recordkeeping Regulations, Section 1, "those who manufacture, process, pack, transport, distribute, receive, hold (i.e., store) or import food into the United States shall establish and maintain records sufficient to identify the immediate previous source(s) and immediate subsequent recipient(s) of such food, as well as transporters used to haul such products". Animal feeds, including hay, are considered food by FDA definitions and will be regulated under the new rules. Other examples of 'food' are: raw and processed grain, rice and oilseeds, animal feed and premixes, feed ingredients, live food-producing animals, processed agricultural commodities and dietary supplements. Other feed manufacturers, grain elevators, alfalfa processors and entities that process or store farm products are required to comply also. This recordkeeping requirement is defined as a one-step-back and one-step-forward product-tracing documentation.

In fact, no matter what the size of your commercial hay production operation, you will be required to keep more extensive records of your business activities relating to hay production. Transporters are not exempt and will be affected by these new regulations as well. The rules are designed to protect the food supply from threats that could be introduced during transportation of animal feed and to enable FDA to trace contamination problems, if they arise, back to their source.

Essentially, anyone who buys, sells, barter, gives away or ships from a farm hay to be used as a livestock feed, must keep extensive documentation on the source and recipient of the product.

Specific Records:

Non-transporter recipients must keep records on the immediate previous *source(s)* of the product [e.g., name, address, telephone number, fax number and email address (if available), type of food (including variety), date released, quantity, type of packaging] and the immediate transporter (name, address, telephone number, fax number and email address) of the product. *Producers* or manufacturers must keep similar records on the immediate recipient and transporter of their products. So, whether you are the source or the recipient, you must keep detailed records of where the product originated and who received the hay product.

Transporters, defined as "persons who have possession, custody or control of an article of food in the U.S. for the sole purpose of transporting the food, whether by road, rail, water or air *or* foreign persons that transport food in the U.S." must maintain detailed records also. These records must include a description of the freight, the immediate previous *source* and the immediate subsequent *recipient*, origin and destination points, date shipment was received and date released, quantity, route and transfer points through which the shipment moved.

If existing business records *contain the required information*, there is no need to create new records to meet the requirements.

'Farms' are excluded from these regulations. The FDA defines 'farms' as "facilities that manufacture, process, pack or store food, provided that all food used in such activities is grown, raised or consumed on that farm or another farm under the same ownership". In other words, those who grow hay for use exclusively on their own farms do not have to comply with the new changes if all of their hay stays on-farm.

Dates of compliance with the new recordkeeping requirements are listed in Table 1 and are dependent upon size of operation. According to FDA, large companies (500 or more employees) were required to begin establishing and maintaining records on covered activities that occurred on or after December 9, 2005. Smaller companies (11 to 499 employees) were to begin compliance on June 9, 2006. Businesses with 10 or fewer employees will be required to comply with new recordkeeping regulations on December 11, 2006. The requirements are *not* retroactive and apply only to covered activities that occur on or after the effective dates.

Table 1. Effective dates for recordkeeping requirements.

Business Size	Total Number of Full-Time Equivalent Employees	Compliance Date
Large	≥ 500	Dec. 9, 2005
Small	11 to 499	June 9, 2006
Very Small	≤ 10	Dec. 11, 2006

Records must be created when the hay is received, released or transported if the information is not contained in already existing records. Records for animal food, including hay, must be kept for at least **1 year** for both transporters and non-transporters alike. Raw grains or oilseed records must be retained for **2 years** from the date when the covered activity occurred. If FDA suspects that any hay or other feed has been tampered with and is a serious health threat to humans or animals, any and all records to which FDA has access to by these regulations must be available for inspection within **24 hours** from their request.

Failure to establish, maintain and present the required records (if requested) is a prohibited act and the federal government can bring civil or criminal action against individuals who do not comply.

More information on these regulations, exemptions and alternative methods for food transporters can be found online at: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fsbtac23.html>.

Limit Field Forage Losses

Statewide. Large hay losses in the field can often be prevented. Field-drying hay to prevent spoilage during storage and to lower moisture that might cause fire in stacked hay in the barn can limit losses—if weather cooperates. Indeed, harvest losses include both mechanical as well as respiration and leaching losses. Mechanical losses from mowing, conditioning, chopping, raking, packaging as well as handling can all contribute to less hay. Storage losses decline with decreasing moisture level in the hay at the time of storage, but field losses can increase due to more physical losses, especially when hay is handled or processed in a drier condition.

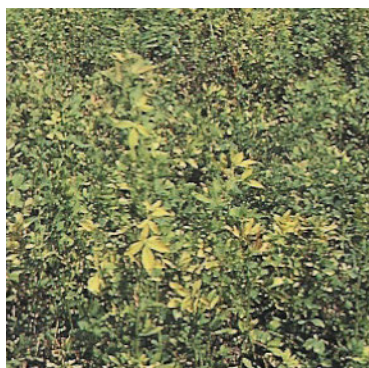
Physical losses are often higher for legumes than for grass forages at a given moisture level due to differences in shoot morphology (Savoie, P. 1988. Hay tedding losses. *Can. Agric. Eng.* 30:39-42 and McGechan, M.B. 1990. A review of losses arising during conservation of grass forage: part 2, storage losses. *J. Agric. Eng. Res.* 45:1-30). Leaflets of legumes are attached by a very brittle petiole (stem) while grasses are attached firmly to the leaf sheath at the collar, making less loss usually seen in grass hay. Losses during mowing, tedding and raking for alfalfa is about twice that for perennial ryegrass (Klinner, W.E. 1975. Design and performance characteristics of an experimental crop conditioning system for difficult climates. *J. Agric. Eng. Res.* 20:149-165). These physical losses to alfalfa were increased even more to 10 to 30 percent more with additional operations such as flail mowing or flail conditioning. In other words, the more physical operations that are used on alfalfa, the more chance of leaflet and/or leaf shatter and loss.

Respiration losses continue even after cutting due to the natural activity of plant enzymes and microbes on the surfaces of the plants. Minimal losses in grass hay is usually 2 percent in good conditions and up over 5 percent in poor harvest conditions (Rucker, G. and O. Knabe. 1980. Non-mechanical field losses in wilting grasses as influenced by different factors. In *Proc. 13th Int. Grassl. Congr., Leipzig, Germany*, pp. 1379-1381). As you would guess higher loss rates are seen when hay is put up in high temperatures. Besides quantity losses, forage quality is also affected by plant respiration losses. The nonstructural carbohydrates lost during respiration of the drying plants is also those energy carbohydrates most readily digested by livestock, too. A loss to respiration is a loss of quality for feed. Even switching from hay to silage, some respiration losses are seen. Silage fermentation does not eliminate respiration but redirects it from an aerobic to an anaerobic type of loss. But, because this process lowers the pH of the product toward preservation, the respiration losses in silage can be less. Either rapid drying or fermentation can lessen but not stop respiration losses to forage feed.

Forage losses can be prevented by examining the common means that do minimize hay hauled to the final feeding operation. In general, the loss in quantity occurs with:

- **Mechanical or physical losses—mowing, conditioning, chopping, raking, packaging as well as handling and rain or disease**

- **Storage losses—moisture level too high or too low, respiration of plant material, fermentation losses, heat damage, fire, or mold.**



With recent cool nights, some disease has shown up in spots in alfalfa fields.

Rain damage is yet another loss seen with hay. Rainfall damage can affect both yield and quality by delaying dry down and giving nutrient losses through leaching as well as by increasing physical losses (Collins, M. 1983. Wetting and maturity effects on the yield and quality of legume hay. *Agron. J.* 75:523-527). Observing 54 hay harvests, research revealed that alfalfa loss with rain damage could reach up to 17 percent on the average while with rain damage the losses were closer to 22 percent (Collins, M. 1990. Composition and yields of alfalfa fresh forage, field cured hay and pressed forage. *Agron. J.* 82:91-95). The in vitro dry matter disappearance (IVDMD) of rained on hay from a first harvest can be twice as much as that hay with no rain. Waiting to cut can also limit hay quality as advancing crop maturity can reduce hay quality even if rain does not if extended periods of showers are seen. Rain primarily affects the leaf fraction in alfalfa (Collins, M. 1991. Hay curing and water soaking: effects on composition and digestion of alfalfa leaf and stem components. *Crop Sci.* 31:219-223). When running dry matter (DM), nitrogen (N), ash and IVDMD, 60 percent of losses from these components came from leaf fractions and 40 percent came from the stem. Looking at both respiration and leaf shatter, over three-fourths can be attributed to leaf losses and only a fourth from the stem fraction.

Baling losses constitute another physical loss when going from the windrow to the bale. For rectangular bales of alfalfa, losses generally range from 2 to 5 percent (Friesen, O. 1978. Evaluation of hay and forage harvesting methods. In *grain and forage harvesting*, St. Joseph, MI, Am. Soc. Of Agric. Eng., pp. 317-322). Losses in round bales range from about one percent for grass hay to up to 15 percent in legume hay at very low moisture. In dry environments, night baling could sometimes cut losses to less than one percent by allowing leaves to remoisten and not be lost by shattering.

Even during storage, hay can change in yield and quality due to microbial activity and varies with differences in these variables. Anti-quality compounds in storage can also contribute to losses. Prussic acid, high nitrates, tannins, blister beetle contamination from cantharidin and funguses including endophytic fungus can all lead to hay use losses as can heat damage, fire or mold. Limit hay losses by management, cut timing and storage needs. Hay preservatives can only limit losses so much but management makes the difference.

Hail Damage on Alfalfa

Statewide. Some alfalfa was caught in small bands of hail this last week. With several fields just about ready for harvest at the time of the hail storm, both yield and quality will be affected. In alfalfa, where the terminal or highest portions of the plant have been damaged, the stem growth will stop on these stems. In severe hail, both the top and quality portions of the plant can be defoliated. If only partially damaged, harvesting as soon as possible and practical can allow new stem growth to emerge from the crown base of the plant and still allow time before the first killing frost to establish some carbohydrate reserves in the plant. If stands are completely defoliated and severely damaged and there is no matting over the crowns, harvest may not be necessary. If severely damaged and matting over the crown occurs, a week to ten days may be needed to get some growth before harvesting to allow unimpeded regrowth and limit further damage to the alfalfa crown. Remember that when harvesting lodged alfalfa, disc mowers may pick up more forage than sickle bar mowers, if available. Also, harvesting against the direction the forage is leaning will allow more to be harvested. With the use of either a sickle bar or disc mower, the cutter bar can be slightly tilted forward and the reel can be moved forward and down to help pick up downed forage.



Mark your calendar for December 11-13, 2006 for the 2006 Western Alfalfa & Forage Conference in Reno, Nevada at John Ascuaga's Nugget (Sparks).



Hail Damaged Cotton

Statewide. Small bands of hail also affected some cotton this last week. When looking at a hail-damaged field, examine the plants and determine what percent have a terminal, what percent do not, and what percent sustained branch damage, boll losses and even percent defoliation. This late in the season, cotton that sustained damage on the terminals will probably cut out and with the cooler temperatures have less regrowth than previously possible with the recent rains. However, with damage to the plant and *Alternaria* disease from rain splashes from the soil affecting leaves and possibly bolls on the plant, terminal and branch damage may hasten this disease's effects on cotton. Any branch or boll losses will directly translate into yield losses, depending on boll load loss or damage. Leaf losses can also limit yield potential. With cotton plants translocating nutrients and carbohydrates from the leaves into boll development at this time, this process of translocation will not affect yield but will also slow harvest maturity. This will extend the need for a long fall in order to finish off boll opening and completing a full, one-pass harvest. After a hail use of growth regulators or boll openers can help in hastening the harvest timing; however,

right after a hail allow the plants time to recover before making an application of any growth regulator or boll opener for a week to ten days, if possible. This will allow the plant to recover enough to have any chemical application to be more effective and to have the plant react in a more "even" way to any chemical application. In general, when using growth regulators after hail, it has been found to be more effective with mepaquat chloride than other formulations to hold back plant regrowth. However, on boll openers, no one formulation has been shown to be more effective after a hail event. However, in some late maturing fields in 2003, three research strategies were found to work in some regions. The first strategy was to apply a pre-treatment of 4-6 ounces of Ginstar at 6 nodes above cracked boll followed by later treatments at about 3-4 nodes above cracked boll of Ginstar at 8 ounces or Ginstar in combination with a boll opener material such as Prep, CottonQuik, Finish or others or simply to use Def/Folex plus a boll opener. Within this first strategy, Ginstar had to be adjusted with changes in air temperature during application or expected changes after application. Also, a final application of sodium chlorate and Paraquat or Harvade were also useful in fields needing further leaf desiccation and better boll opening. A second strategy used on conventional fields where bolls were slow to open used glyphosate as a pre-treatment. Not applying glyphosate to Acala cotton before 8 nodes above cracked boll was important to retain better yield and best yield was obtained by waiting until the 10th node above cracked boll occurred. This application of 1 quart per acre was followed 7 to 10 days afterwards with standard defoliation treatments of Def/Folex or Ginstar with or without boll openers as needed. A third strategy determined a harvest date, counted back 21 days and started a defoliation program with best results when these defoliations were initiated after the 10th node above cracked boll occurred. With Upland cotton already opening up bolls on the bottom of the plant but much of the Pima still without a cracked boll and in some cases still flowering, use of boll openers may be necessary not only on hailed on fields but on fields delayed due to luxury vegetative growth from rains. Consider your options, look back to what worked well for you in 2003 or that worked well for others and consider timing for getting the cotton out of the field in a timely but full harvest. Again, with El Nino a possibility this fall affecting the Gulf Stream air flow and possible rain, a clean, dry-as-possible harvest is needed to preserve cotton quality.



Remembering 2003, you want to be able to time cotton harvest around potential rain this fall to preserve quality and quantity in the field.

Get Corn Silage Out of the Field, Make Room for Grain Harvest

Statewide. With the recent rains in much of the state, corn silage cutting has lagged behind previous years. With this delay, the quality of the silage has greatly decreased. Cutting below 58 percent and even below 50 percent in corn silage can have the final feed product be less than optimum. Also with the mix of maturity, feed rations will have to be tweaked on dairy and beef cattle on corn silage on a batch by field batch basis. Also, even more careful handling of the silage will have to be done with this drier product this year. Additions of water to the silage pile will have to be carefully monitored to keep fermentation and quality up while poorer maintained silage must be more quickly used to gain the most from the feed.

This loss of quality from late silage cutting may also require rations to be supplemented with grain. If grain corn is to be used, consider the needs for best harvest of the crop. Most grain corn is harvested at drier moisture in order to ease storage for multiple uses. The preferred moisture range for harvesting shelled corn for grain is 16-22% moisture, preferably at 18% or less so that when the grain goes either to the elevator or a grain bin it will be at 16% or slightly lower initially in short-term storage to limit any storage problems from fungus, bacteria or other problems that may result from high moisture corn. Just over winter in short-term storage, grain corn can be left at 13-15.5% moisture without problems unless heating around the storage unit may require a lower moisture content of the grain in order to preserve quality.

Harvesting grain corn at the proper moisture also results in reduced harvest losses and less kernel damage. Too dry of grain corn can also cause problems. Extremely dry corn can result in more cracked and broken kernels which could allow entry into seed from fungus and bacteria as well as storage insects. Storage of grain corn requires intense management. Fines and other dockage problems can cause problems to corn in storage as well as limit the quality of the corn for feed use. For long-term storage, grain corn should have a moisture content of 12-13.5% and bin aeration is advisable. Provide a dry harvest time table to optimize grain corn harvest.



With fall forecasted as having the possibility of more rain, grain corn will have to be harvested at optimum moisture in order to allow enclosed storage and shipments out so no outside grain is left this season.

Quality Hay—Even with Rain

Statewide. Versatility...hay is one of the few crops that can be kept for long periods of time with little loss of nutrients if protected from weather, can use a wide selection of crops in hay production, can be produced and fed in small or large amounts and stored in small or large bales, can have the production completely mechanized, can supply most nutrients needed to many different livestock and wildlife needs, and is one of the crops dependent on several steps in the harvesting process to insure quality and quantity. In fact, the handling aspect of hay harvest can make a big difference in hay losses.

Table 1. The effect of handling conditions on alfalfa hay loss.

	Raked and baled correctly	Losses			Total
		Raked too dry	Baled too dry	Raked and baled too dry	
	lb/A	lb/A	lb/A	lb/A	%
Dry hay	2900	700	100	1000	34
Crude protein	660	210	60	290	44
TDN*	1710	480	90	690	40

* Total digestible nutrients (TDN)

Source: Ball, D., T. Johnson, G. Lacefield and H. White. 1996. Alfalfa hay quality. Special publication of the Certified Alfalfa Seed Council, Davis, CA.

This is especially true if working with wet or rained on hay. Hay plants with an 80 percent moisture content much lose approximately 6,000 pounds of water to produce a ton of hay, if baling is attempted at 20 percent moisture. Mechanical conditioning or the use of chemical conditioners can reduce this time to baling—if rain stops. Still, the use of hay preservatives usually can only speed up this drying time by about a day when drying conditions are favorable. Use of these chemicals can help, but will not preserve hay at the same quality as dry conditions for baling can.

Table 2. The effect of hay preservative use on post-storage moisture concentrations, storage losses and visual alfalfa hay characteristics.

Treatment	Initial moisture (%)	Final moisture (%)	Peak temperature (°F)	Dry matter intake (% body weight*)	Dust rating**
Wet control	21.6	13.0 b***	88	2.11 a	4.72 a
Buffered propionic acid	21.0	14.8 a	80	2.20 b	3.32 b
Inoculant	22.0	12.1 c	90	2.11 a	4.79 a
Dry control	12.2	12.4 c	75	2.32 c	1.96 c

* Dry matter intake = 110/neutral detergent fiber

** Dust ratings are on a 1 to 10 scale, with 1 being dust-free and 10 being extremely dusty

*** Values within a column followed by different letters are statistically different.

Source: Ball, D., T. Johnson, G. Lacefield and H. White. 1996. Alfalfa hay quality. Special publication of the Certified Alfalfa Seed Council, Davis, CA.

Further, harvest, baling and storage processes can all combine to produce different hay quality. So, especially when baling hay in large bales, remember the following points.

1. Harvest at the proper stage of plant maturity.
2. Legumes alone usually have higher rates of spoilage from outside storage than grasses.
3. Make a tight, uniform package at 18 to 20 percent moisture content or below, if possible.
4. Store on a well-drained site.
5. Break direct contact between damp soil and hay using rock, tires, poles or pallets.
6. Top stacks properly to shed water.
7. Store hay of similar quality together.
8. Leave at least two feet between stacks, round bales can be stored end to end with two feet between rows.
9. Multiple storage lots will minimize risk of fire loss and excessive mud contamination.
10. High-quality hay should be stored inside or protected from weather and raised off the ground.



Current Crop Conditions

Statewide. New Mexico as of September 18, 2006 was set with 71 percent of the topsoil as estimated with adequate moisture and 11 percent at surplus for the first time in many years. Light hail this last week affected only limited areas and most crops still remained at fair to good in condition. Winter wheat has been reported as at 78 percent planted, taking advantage of the moisture this year. Likewise, new alfalfa plantings are mostly also in the ground and emerged. Cool nights and rain, however, have played havoc with some of the finishing crops. Corn silage appears to be one of the hardest hit in areas where timely harvest could not occur. Drier than optimum silage has resulted in partial fields being left until the ground has dried in much of south-central New Mexico. More uses for grain corn in the biomass and biofuel industries in the United States will keep silage as well as grain corn prices at competitive prices throughout the winter. Corn for grain is also down an estimated 4 percent from last year that will also combine in the play on prices throughout the winter. Also, grain corn harvest is about two weeks behind the average due to scattered showers. Peanuts in New Mexico are faring better than some fields in the southeast, but overall peanut production being down 34 percent from last year nationwide may allow some specialty marketing to occur with Valencias—where fields are in good shape. It is a low year for pecans in most orchards and although some losses were seen with hail, pecans in most areas are larger this year due to the added rainfall coming in a timely manner. Over 80 percent of the green chile has been harvested and trailers with red have already been leaving fields. Limited crews have harvest just starting back into fields that had rain as recently as last week in some cases. These last cuttings of alfalfa that will occur this week and next will have fairly good quality with good green color, if rains stay at bay. Cool nights have helped new alfalfa and cool-season improved pastures jump to a quick start. Some (less than 5 percent) of early planted fields had to be replanted due to flooding conditions. Cotton production across the United States is estimated as 15 percent less than last year—largely due to decreased production in Texas and California as compared to 2005. Although the New Mexico Upland is playing out to be a split crop with late cut out and some boll drop during the month of cloudy weather in August, hopes remain high that prices will increase from this lower USA production as well as that in China and other Asian countries. However, even at this writing, the wait for positive proof that China has opened up their quotas for this year is still in limbo, although rumor has it that some cotton already shipped and stored in warehouses in China are now being transferred out with purchases being made. These next few weeks will be the time to look at price slides upward if indeed the bullish market is exposed by further strong purchases in this market. The Pima cotton this year actually is holding better now than the Upland, with less Alternaria leaf disease and less boll rot even after some strong mid-canopy flower and square losses in the middle of August. Look in cotton fields now to see your strong contenders for variety choice that is less affected by disease. But, because of strong vegetative growth, some fields will be difficult to harvest. In some cases, boll openers will have to be used this year. This adds to input cost even with the offset of late irrigation use in the cotton crop hit by August rains. Quality will still be variable, depending on management, soil texture and date-of-planting. And, the idea on an early or extended fall is still one of the other variables that will have to be taken into account. After last year's early cold weather than warming to a long fall, it will be difficult to listen to all the El Nino, early snowfall in Utah and cold front messages coming out in the papers and radio and even guess at what this unique New Mexico weather can throw at us next. Grain sorghum is also behind in grossing toward maturity for harvest. Likewise, even the sudangrasses and sorghum-sudans are cutting back with the cool nights and heading out earlier than expected. Some late summer planted cabbage and lettuce look good in the south, but still vigilance against bollworms and armyworms is warranted this season. Apples are even reported at halfway through the harvest with most in fair condition after this season. Some white fly infestations have had to be sprayed earlier in grapes. Some shipments of onions are continuing into Mexico as are some of the remaining watermelons and other melon crops. Dry beans (pintos) are traveling from the Farmington area into Mexico, too. Even with late rains, these pinto beans are in good to excellent quality and are superior to northern dry beans in cooking and taste. New Mexico's dry bean production should be main lined into the United States markets as less disease and problems at harvest do create a better product than that from the North Dakota, Minnesota and Canada markets. Range and pasture land is looking better across New Mexico with the rains—in fact, fall grazing may be stretched this year due to more cool-season grass production that may make up some for limited hay supplies. This along with late summer planted small grains coming in well with moisture may help offset some demand on the land. Consider all winter feed demands now to prepare for higher feed prices that are expected.



Store winter feed supplies now.

The New Mexico Hay Association is one point at which to determine available hay or hay requests. The website is at <http://www.nmhay.com> and can be accessed easily online. You may also ask for additional information from the site by emailing your questions to the Association at info@nmhay.com.

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