

Alfalfa Report

5-10-05

Insect Management: Alfalfa caterpillar, *Colias eurytheme*, also known as alfalfa butterfly, is a warm weather pest of alfalfa. There can be as many as seven generations between May and October, in the low desert. Start checking fields for alfalfa caterpillars when yellow alfalfa butterflies first appear in May. When alfalfa butterflies are seen flying over tall alfalfa, they most likely emerged from that field. Eggs are laid singly, standing on end, on the upper surface of leaves in fields with re-growth under 6 inches. Larvae hatch in 3 to 10 days, grow to about an inch long and pupate in approximately two weeks. Alfalfa caterpillars are green with white stripes down their sides and are distinguished from beet armyworm by their velvety appearance. Monitor fields weekly from June through October, checking 2 to 3 times per week during periods of heavy infestations. Take 5 sweep counts in 4 to 5 field locations. Check worms for parasitism by pulling heads off an alfalfa caterpillar larva, squeeze out the body contents, and looking for an *Apanteles* wasp larva. Treat when field counts average 10 non-parasitized caterpillars per sweep.

Weed Control: Some herbicides, such as Sencor, can be impregnated onto fertilizer to increase crop safety and soil deposition. This can be effective with soil applied herbicides that are taken up through the roots or shoots of target weeds.

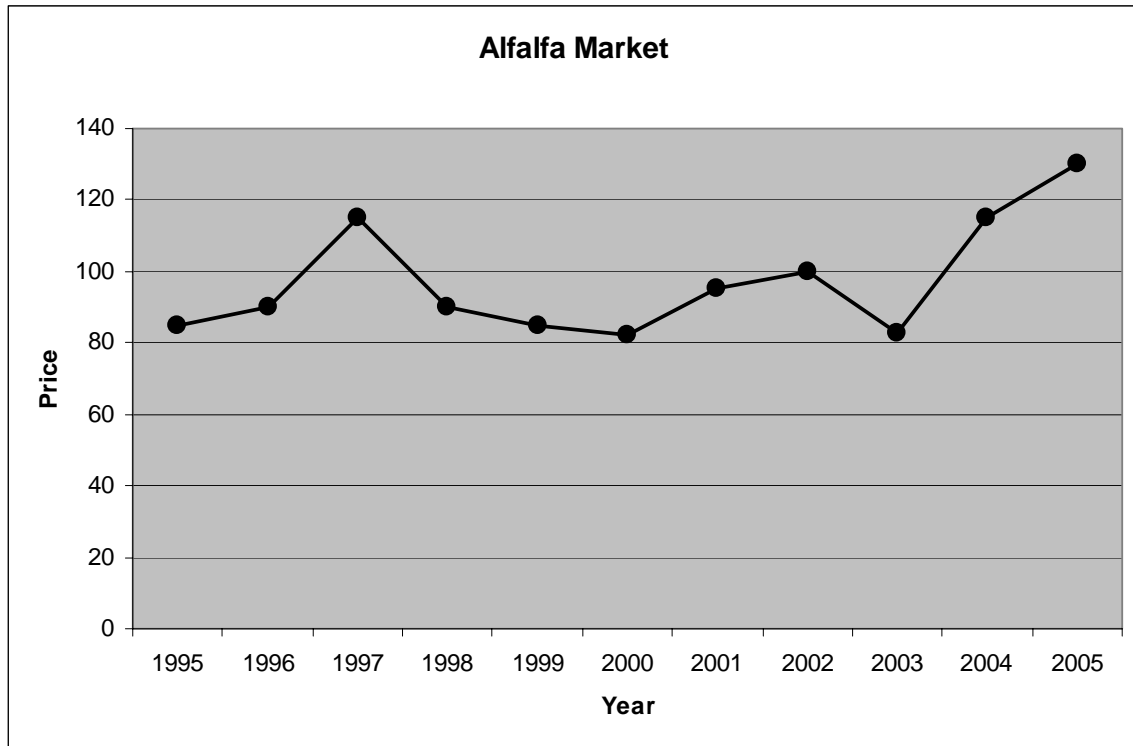
Alfalfa termination: Alfalfa may be terminated either by tillage or herbicide kill. Termination by tillage results in a rapid release of nitrogen in the soil from breakdown of alfalfa residue and roots. A crop should be planted about 2 to 8 weeks after termination of alfalfa by tillage in order to obtain the maximum benefit from nitrogen release from residues and roots. In the case of herbicide kill, nitrogen release from alfalfa residue and roots will be relatively slow but will be accelerated when the ground is prepared for the next crop.

<u>Market Summary</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Offgrade</u>
Past 2 weeks	140	120	130	95-110
Last year	120	95	115	80-90

10 Year Summary

2005 - 130
2004 - 115
2003 - 83
2002 - 100
2001 - 95

2000 – 82
1999 – 85
1998 – 90
1997 – 115
1996 – 90
1995 – 85



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