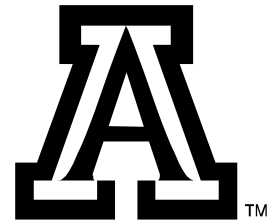


# Cooperative Extension

The University of Arizona  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Yuma Agricultural Center  
Yuma, AZ

**Alfalfa Report**  
**Yuma County, Arizona**  
**April 19, 2004**



## Production Update:

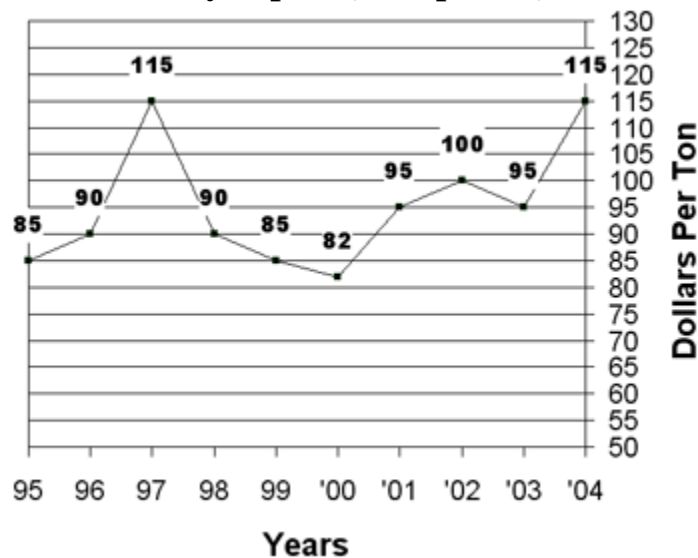
**Cutting Height:** The optimum cutting height for alfalfa varies from about 2 to 4 inches. As cutting height is increased, more growth occurs from buds originating on the stems and less from the crown. Stem buds are less productive than crown buds, so increasing cutting height often reduces yields. However, crown bud development is suppressed if alfalfa is cut at early stages of growth or on a frequent basis. In these cases, lack of crown bud development can be compensated for somewhat by increasing the cutting height and encouraging more regrowth from the stems. A cutting height of 3 inches resulted in prolonged stand life compared to a 1 inch cutting height in an Arizona study. Crop quality can be manipulated with cutting height since the lower part of the plant is poorer in quality than the top.

**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 look for an *Apanteles* wasp larva. Treat when field counts average 10 non-parasitized caterpillars per sweep.

**Weed Control:** Multiple applications of Eptam will suppress Nutsedge. It is recommended to make applications after the first, third and fifth cuttings. A maximum of 12 lbs. active ingredient per season is allowed with individual application of 3 lbs. active ingredient being common.

<b>Market Summary:</b>	<b><u>High</u></b>	<b><u>Low</u></b>	<b><u>Average</u></b>	<b><u>Off grade</u></b>
Past 2 weeks	120	90	110	70-90
Last year	98	90	95	80-90

## **10 Year Summary (April 6, to April 19, 1995-2004):**



This and other Alfalfa Reports can be found on the web at: <http://cals.arizona.edu/crops/counties/yuma/alfalfareports/>

Barry R. Ticks  
Extension Agent, Agriculture  
Yuma County  
Extension

Michael Ottman  
Extension Agronomist  
University of Arizona

Eric T. Natwick  
Farm Advisor, Entomology  
Imperial County Cooperative

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