

Cooperative Extension

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Alfalfa Report Yuma County, Arizona February 26, 2001

Production Update:

Bale Size: Three wire bales of about 120 pounds have been the standard bale size in Arizona for years. During the 1970's, large 1 ton bales were introduced to the state but quickly obtained a bad reputation due to barn fires with these bales. The larger bales required lower moisture content for safe storage. Big bales are currently making a comeback due to ease of handling in total mixed ration feeding. Big bales require a shorter period of time per ton than small bales to break open and remove the twine. Current models of the big balers are different than their predecessors in the '70s since they do not constantly pack the hay but a packing stroke is engaged only when the chamber has a certain amount of hay in it. This feature produces a bale that is less likely to spontaneously combust.

Insect Management: Cowpea aphid is a warm weather pest found on several crops and weeds. In the western United States, cowpea aphid has emerged as a cool season pest of alfalfa. When rapidly growing cowpea aphid populations threaten alfalfa fields, treatment with an insecticide may be warranted. However, treatment thresholds have not been established for cowpea aphid on alfalfa. Cowpea aphid is attacked by several predators (big-eyed bugs, damsel bugs, lacewings, lady beetles, and syrphid fly larvae) and parasites. Aphid parasites, *Lysiphlebus* sp. and *Diaraetiella* sp., have been reared from cowpea aphid mummies collected from both the high and low desert. Many alfalfa fields not sprayed with insecticides are now nearly free of cowpea aphid due to buildup of seven-spotted lady beetle, *Coccinella septempunctata* and aphid parasites.

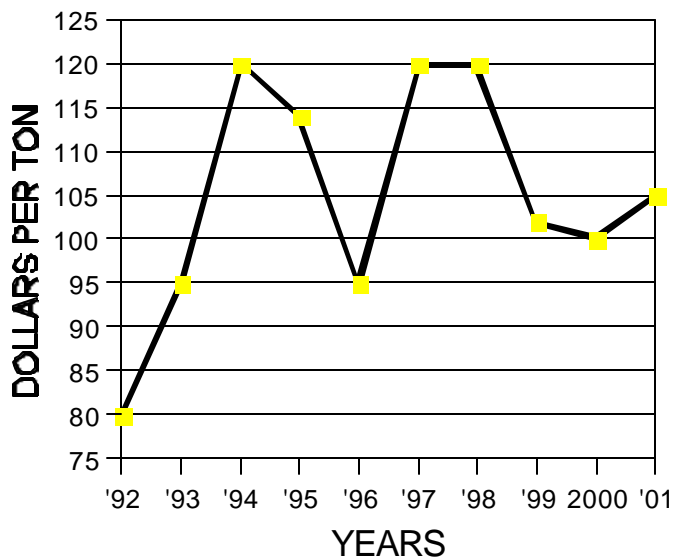
Weed Control: Applications of EPTAM for the suppression of nutsedge and bermudagrass should be started now and should be repeated throughout the summer. This treatment will reduce but not eliminate these difficult perennials.

Market Summary:

	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Off grade</u>
Past 2 Weeks (Feb. 12 to Feb. 26, 2001)	110	95	105	70-90
Last Year (Feb. 12 to Feb. 26, 2000)	105	90	100	80-90

10 Year Summary

(February 12, to
February 26, 1992 - 2001)



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