



New Mexico State University

Extension Plant Sciences

Alfalfa Market News

New Mexico Hay Association, www.nmhay.com



Hay Prices for New Mexico

Volume 14, Issue 2

June 25, 2015

County	Contact	Premium+ Hay (\$/ton)	Top Quality Hay (\$/ton)	Other Hay (\$/ton)	Condition/ Market Activity/Cut Complete
Chaves	Sandra Barraza, County Agent	\$220-280 large for all cuts of green hay; \$300-310 small, in the barn		\$200 striped large bales; \$155-190 cow hay; \$180/ton wheat	2 nd cuts 95%, 3 rd cuts started; market slow; variable temps; some grasshopper pressure
Dona Ana	Teresa Dean, County Agent	\$160-190 large; \$8.00 small		\$140-150 wheat and oat; \$6-8.00 wheat and oat small	3 rd cuts 60%; moderate demand; good growing conditions; low pest pressure
De Baca	Various Contacts	\$200-220 large; \$270 small; Barns still full with not much moving		\$7-8.00 beardless wheat; \$3.00-5.00+ cow hay rained on	2 nd cuts started; slow market, dairies have good inventory; much of first cut rained on
Eddy	Woods Houghton, County Agent	\$238 large; \$280 small or \$9 per bale		N/A	3 rd cuts 90%, 4 th cuts 30%; slow market; some cheaper hay coming in from TX
Guadalupe	Leigh Ann Marez, County Agent	\$10/bale; \$8 in the field		\$5-6 striped; \$4 striped in the field	1 st cuts 100%, 2 nd 25%; steady market; scattered showers; low pests
Lea	Wayne Cox, County Agent	\$230-250 large; \$9-10+ small	\$200 large; \$8 small	\$180+ striped early cuts	2 nd cuts 100%, 3 rd started; 50% of 1 st cuts rained on; scattered showers
Luna	Jack Blandford, County Agent	\$200-220; \$7-9.00 small;		\$140-150 wheat hay; \$6-7.00/bale small	3 rd cuts 50%; market moderate as dairies still have surplus; hot/dry/some wind
Roosevelt	Patrick Kircher, County Agent	\$200-240 large; \$265-270 small		\$70-95/bale round grass/wheat hay or \$120-160/ton	2 nd cuts 50%; slow market; rainy weather has slowed harvest and market; striped hay; some grasshopper pressure
Valencia/Socorro	Newt McCarty, County Agent + Other Contacts	\$230-270 small or \$7.00-9.00 per bale in the barn; \$6-8.00, in the field if not rained on		\$7-9.00 grass in barn; \$5-8.00 grass/wheat/oat hay; \$3.00-5.00+ cow hay rained on	1 st cuts 100%, 2 nd started (severe weevil delays); market slow; recent hot/dry weather; rained on hay early

Prices are a compilation of Agent information and other area estimates.

N/A = prices and/or supplies not available at this time

Celebrating National Forage Week

Mark Marsalis, Extension Forage Specialist, NMSU Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas

Jane Moorman, NMSU Senior Public Information Specialist, Albuquerque

The first ever National Forage Week was held June 21-27, 2015, and was introduced by the American Forage & Grassland Council (AFGC). The AFGC is an international organization established to promote the profitable production and sustainable utilization of quality forages as a primary feed source. According to the AFGC press release, "The goal of this week is to promote the value of forages in the U.S. and the recognition that forages are one of the largest agricultural industries in this country."

In New Mexico, it is no different, and raising forage in the state is an important part of the agricultural industry. Forages comprise the greatest amount of crop acres in the state and their overall value in the state is second to none. Without forage, the \$3.16 billion beef cattle and dairy industry could not feed its animals.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Census of Agriculture, New Mexico cattle and calves generate \$1.75 billion, and milk from cows generates \$1.41 billion in annual sales. Forage is ranked third in sales at \$393 million, but this figure does not include the impact of wheat pasture or sales of small grain silages. Of all the forages grown in New Mexico, alfalfa is, by far, the most economically important, comprising over 220,000 acres and worth more than \$280 million.

New Mexico State University's College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences' Forage Team strives to help farmers meet the state's forage needs. The team consists of Cooperative Extension specialists and agricultural research faculty.

In addition to conducting research, the team presents the latest research-based information at conferences, including the annual Southwest Hay and Forage Conference, the Valencia County Forage Growers Workshop, and various other county-level and regional meetings. Besides face-to-face contact with NMSU faculty and county agents, producers receive information through workshop and field day events, on-line publications, and other resources. A wide range of topics and resources on the various aspects of New Mexico forages is available at <http://forages.nmsu.edu>.

The impact of forages goes well beyond the direct value of the marketed product (Fig.1). The ripple effect of a hay, pasture, or silage feed is far-reaching and impacts our daily lives in many different ways that many people may not realize. Forages are the basis for our dairy, meat, wool, and even honey products. Alfalfa has been referred to as 'Ice Cream in the Making' because it is used so extensively in the diet of dairy cows. Forages also contribute a significant amount to New Mexico's economy through support industry job creation, horse, goat, and alpaca industries, in addition to providing environmental benefits such as soil protection and improvement of wildlife habitat.

Forage crops in New Mexico include alfalfa and other hay, wheat for pasture, and corn, sorghum, and small grain silages. These crops are not only grown as stored feeds, they also are used for livestock pastures that are frequently visited by big game, migratory birds and other wildlife. Many also are used as cover crops for soil conservation and improvement.

Hay acreage remains fairly constant from one year to the next in the state and the value of New Mexico's hay per ton is usually higher than the national average. We have the perfect climate in New Mexico to grow excellent, high-quality hay, that is, as long as we have irrigation to do so. However, dwindling irrigation supplies and recent droughts have severely hindered our producers' ability to grow alfalfa and other forage crops. It is this urgency of water shortage and future sustainability that drive much of the research conducted by NMSU's forage team.

The forage team includes Marsalis, who is also superintendent of the Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas; Leonard Lauriault, forage crop management specialist and superintendent of the Agricultural Science Center at Tucumcari; and Ian Ray, NMSU professor of agronomy in Las Cruces. The team also includes cooperating faculty specializing in the various classes of livestock that utilize forages, insect, disease and nematode pests, weeds, other crops, and soils.

The research being conducted at NMSU's facilities includes a wide array of applied projects that focus on various forage species that are either currently utilized to a large degree in New Mexico, such as alfalfa, or alternative species that show promise or are underutilized. One such species being investigated is perennial cereal rye (PCR). This crop, which was developed in Canada, is very similar to the traditionally grown annual cereal rye, but can persist for 3 or more years and may provide a short-lived perennial pasture for grazing operations, but without the annual input costs and soil disturbance associated with other small grains such as wheat. It may also have higher forage quality than many of the perennial species used currently for pasture. It is uncertain if it will persist under New Mexico's growing conditions, so it is being studied at both the Los Lunas and Tucumcari science centers for persistence, yield, and

quality characteristics. In addition to the PCR, other non-traditional forages are being studied for potential utilization in the challenging environment of New Mexico. These include teff, guar, canola, and perennial forage kochia.

It is important to consider other crops to see if they have a fit in the different forage-based systems throughout New Mexico. It is especially critical to identify those species that may be a better fit in severely water-limited conditions or those that diversify an operation to provide greater drought mitigation and economic stability.

Of course, several research projects focus on New Mexico's number one cash crop, alfalfa. These include alfalfa planting date and irrigation timing studies, insect and weed pest control, as well as variety performance trials at several of the science centers. Other forage variety performance tests are conducted on corn, sorghum, and small grain silage crops.

Because forage crops and their contribution to livestock production comprise the largest agricultural industry in New Mexico, providing significant economic returns as well as environmental services, the opportunity to emphasize National Forage Week can bring to light, especially to the non-agricultural community, the importance of forages and the impact they have on their lives.

Let's continue to promote our industry, and agriculture as a whole, at all times and everywhere we go.

For more information on forages in New Mexico, visit: <http://forages.nmsu.edu/> or contact your local Cooperative Extension Service County Agent.

***** Upcoming Events *****

- Texas Tech Univ. Forage Field Day, New Deal, TX, July 9, 2015. <http://www.orgs.ttu.edu/forageresearch/>
- NMSU ASC Field Days: Tucumcari, August 6, 2015
Clovis, August 7, 2015 <http://aces.nmsu.edu/calendar/>
Los Lunas, August 12, 2015

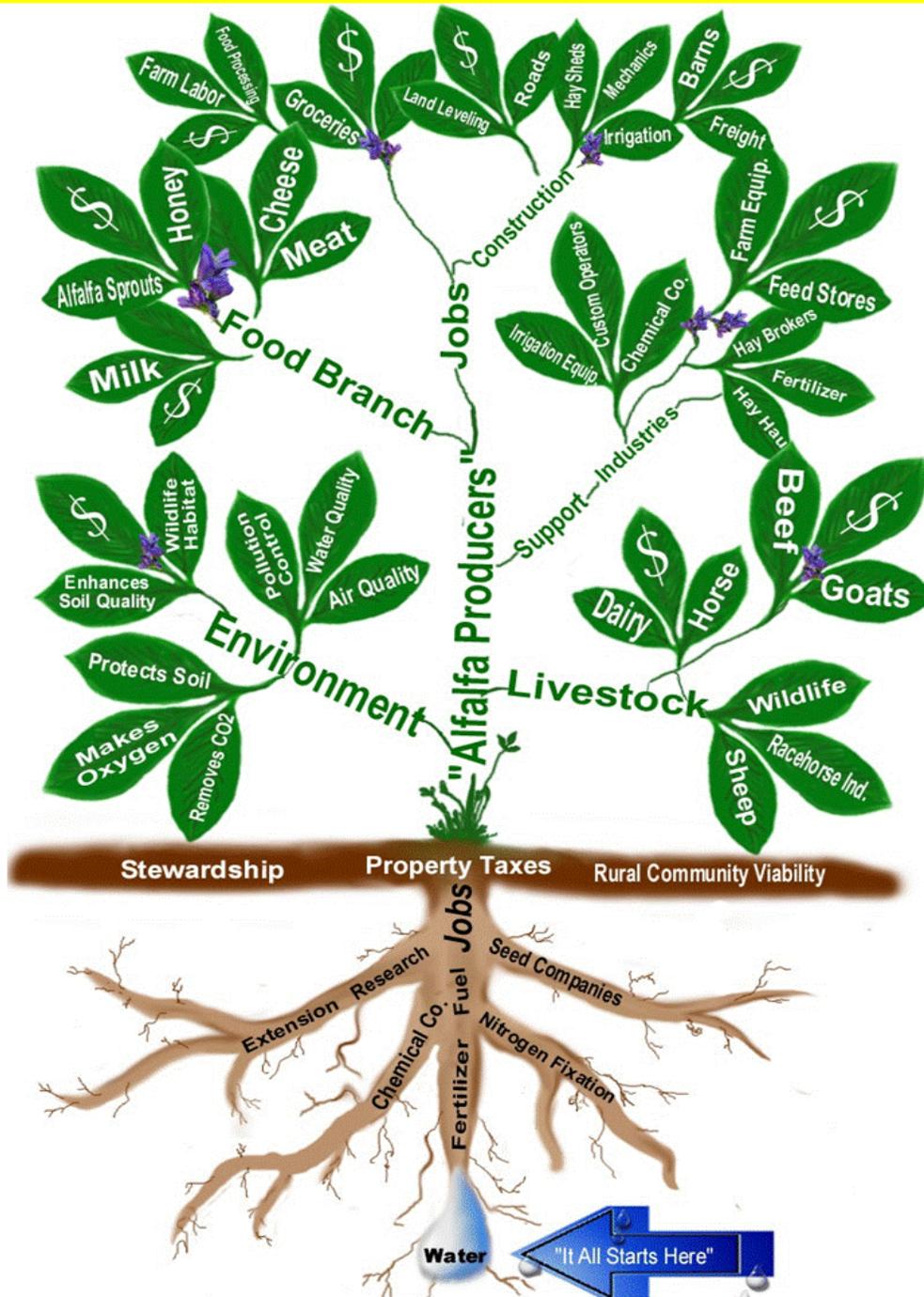
Mark Marsalis

Mark Marsalis, Extension Forage Specialist—New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity employer. All programs are available to everyone regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap or national origin, New Mexico State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.



Figure 1. Importance of agriculture and alfalfa's impact to New Mexico.

New Mexico Agriculture
"Worth \$6.0 Billion and 42,000 Jobs"
Importance and Benefits of the New Mexico Alfalfa Industry



Alfalfa Hay is New Mexico's #1 Cash Crop



Worth \$282 Million in 2012
Source: NMDA 2012 New Mexico Agricultural Statistics