How to Select an Alfalfa Variety:

1. **Determine an appropriate fall dormancy class** - Alfalfa varieties differ in fall dormancy defined as growth during the fall. Nondormant alfalfa varieties are usually planted in mild winter areas for their ability to grow in the late fall, winter, and early spring. However, cool season growth of nondormant alfalfa may be undesirable in areas subject to repeated frosts or freezes. Nondormant and very nondormant alfalfa varieties (fall dormancy class 8 and 9) are adapted to elevations below 4000 feet in Arizona while moderately nondormant varieties (fall dormancy class 7) may be grown from 3000 to 5000 feet. Semi-dormant and dormant varieties (fall dormancy 6 and below) are adapted to colder winter areas above 4000 feet.

2. **Identify potential pest problems** - Select alfalfa varieties that have resistance to potential pest problems. Variety resistance is not available or not characterized for many important pests. However, pest resistance ratings are provided in this publication for Verticillium wilt, Fusarium wilt, anthracnose, Phytophthora root rot, various aphids, and stem and root knot nematode. Verticillium wilt is not currently a problem in Arizona, but it has been identified in southern California and may eventually invade Arizona. Fusarium wilt is rarely a problem due to varietal resistance. Anthracnose occurs in the lower Colorado River area during hot, humid weather. Phytophthora root rot can be a problem on poorly drained soils during cool weather. Aphids occur in most production areas. Stem nematode has been reported in Maricopa, Pinal, and Graham Counties. Root knot nematode has been identified in the lower Colorado River area, but usually is not important.

How to Select an Alfalfa Variety (con'd):

3. **Identify several promising varieties** - Alfalfa variety trials are conducted by universities, private industry, and farmers. A summary of University of Arizona yield trials is contained on the facing page. This information is useful to narrow your choice to several varieties.

4. **Field-test several promising varieties** - Plant several promising varieties in a small area and evaluate performance under your own conditions.

5. **Choose a variety (or two) for large-scale planting** based on your small-scale field test results. Plant new varieties on no more than 80 acres or 25% of the newly seeded acreage. Planting a poorly-adapted variety costs in the long-run. A difference in seed cost of $1.00 per pound is easily recovered by a more productive variety in the first year. Non-certified seed is also undesirable due to poor seed quality, introduction of weeds, and the possibility of planting an incorrectly identified variety with undesirable characteristics.

Summary: *Nondormant alfalfa varieties are adapted to mild winter areas in Arizona. An alfalfa variety should be selected based on dormancy class, potential pest problems, university yield trials, and on-farm tests. Choosing a variety based solely on seed cost rarely pays in the long run. This publication contains pest resistance ratings and a summary of University of Arizona yield trials for nondormant alfalfa varieties.*

Nondormant Alfalfa Varieties for Arizona

2001

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University of Arizona
Cooperative Extension

Pest resistance ratings and University of Arizona yield trial summary for nondormant alfalfa varieties (2001).

		Pest Resistance Ratings*									Yield (% of CUF 101)			Final Stand (% of CUF 101)		
Variety	Originator	Verticillium Wilt	Fusarium Wilt	Anthrac-nose	Phytoph-thora Root Rot	Spotted Alfalfa Aphid	Pea Aphid	Blue Alfalfa Aphid	Stem Nematode	Southern Root Knot Nematode	Parker-Yuma	Maricopa	South-east Arizona	Parker-Yuma	Maricopa	South-east Arizona
						Nondormant (Fall Dormancy Class = 8)										
13R Supreme	America's Alfalfa	MR	R	MR	R	R	R	MR	MR	R	93	93	99	81	105	92
58N57	Pioneer Hi-Bred	LR	R	HR	HR	R	HR	HR	MR	HR	--	--	--	--	--	--
Alto	Great Plains	--	HR	R	HR	HR	HR	HR	R	R	104	--	93	--	--	--
Condor	Novartis Seeds	--	HR	--	HR	HR	HR	HR	MR	HR	96	100	99	126	108	67
CutMor	Union Seed	R	HR	HR	HR	R	HR	HR	R	R	--	--	--	--	--	--
DK 189	Monsanto	MR	HR	HR	R	HR	R	R	MR	R	104	--	106	--	--	89
Dura 843	Farm Valley	--	HR	--	HR	HR	HR	HR	R	MR	--	--	--	--	--	--
El Tigre Verde	Simplot	LR	HR	LR	R	HR	R	MR	R	R	--	--	--	--	--	--
Fiesta	Eureka Seeds	R	HR	R	HR	HR	HR	R	R	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
GT 13R Plus	America's Alfalfa	--	HR	--	R	R	MR	LR	R	MR	--	--	86	--	--	--
Magna 8	Dairyland Seed	--	HR	MR	R	HR	--	R	MR	HR	--	106	--	--	--	--
Maricopa	MBS Genetics	MR	HR	LR	R	HR	HR	R	R	HR	99	96	100	137	118	89
Mesa	MBS Genetics	--	HR	--	R	HR	R	R	R	--	99	88	102	--	--	88
Moapa 69	Public	--	HR	--	--	R	--	--	--	MR	102	--	--	104	--	--
Pershing	MBS Genetics	LR	HR	LR	HR	HR	R	R	R	R	--	--	--	--	--	--
Prestige	Cargill Hybrid	LR	HR	MR	HR	HR	R	MR	MR	HR	98	--	96	--	--	112
Rio Grande	Great Plains	--	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	R	MR	--	--	--	--	--	--
Rodeo	AgriPro Seeds	MR	HR	MR	R	R	R	R	R	R	--	--	--	--	--	--
SW 8112	S&W Seed	--	HR	R	R	HR	R	HR	LR	R	--	--	--	--	--	--
SW 8200	S&W Seed	LR	HR	R	R	HR	R	R	LR	R	--	--	--	--	--	--
SW 8210	S&W Seed	MR	HR	MR	HR	HR	MR	R	MR	R	101	91	95	80	--	56
Tulare	Novartis Seeds	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	R	HR	MR	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
WL 525 HQ	W-L Research	--	HR	--	HR	HR	HR	HR	R	HR	99	100	96	--	94	164
Yolo	MBS Genetics	LR	HR	LR	MR	HR	HR	R	MR	HR	--	--	99	--	--	95
						Very Nondormant (Fall Dormancy Class = 9)										
5939	Pioneer Hi-Bred	S	HR	R	HR	HR	R	R	MR	--	--	--	86	--	--	57
Coronado	Novartis Seeds	MR	HR	R	R	HR	HR	HR	R	--	--	96	118	--	--	--
CUF 101	Public	--	HR	--	MR	HR	HR	HR	--	MR	100	100	100	100	100	100
DK 191	Monsanto	R	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	R	HR	98	95	116	--	--	--
Highline	Public	--	HR	S	R	HR	HR	R	--	HR	--	--	--	--	--	--
Magna 901	Dairyland	--	HR	MR	--	--	HR	R	R	R	--	96	--	--	--	--
Mecca	MBS Genetics	--	HR	LR	MR	HR	HR	MR	LR	HR	99	107	102	114	113	67
Mecca II	MBS Genetics	LR	HR	LR	R	HR	HR	HR	R	--	96	92	96	--	--	69
Mecca III	MBS Genetics	--	HR	--	R	HR	HR	R	R	R	--	101	117	--	--	--
Salado	America's Alfalfa	S	HR	LR	LR	R	MR	HR	MR	HR	96	--	--	--	--	--
Sundor	Novartis Seeds	--	HR	--	MR	HR	HR	MR	MR	--	94	103	101	115	98	57
SW 14	S & W Seed	LR	HR	S	R	HR	HR	R	S	HR	100	85	97	83	--	45
SW 9301	S & W Seed	--	HR	--	MR	HR	R	R	MR	HR	101	92	92	--	--	87
SW 9400	S & W Seed	MR	HR	--	R	HR	MR	MR	LR	R	--	--	--	--	--	--
SW 9500	S & W Seed	--	HR	--	R	HR	HR	R	--	HR	--	102	--	--	--	--
SW 9628	S & W Seed	--	R	LR	R	HR	R	R	--	HR	--	--	--	--	--	--
WL 612	W-L Research	--	HR	LR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	MR	99	99	90	--	--	99
WL 625 HQ	W-L Research	--	HR	--	HR	HR	HR	HR	R	HR	--	--	--	--	--	--
UC Cibola	Public	--	HR	--	MR	HR	R	LR	--	R	98	100	93	149	107	85
						Extremely Nondormant (Fall Dormancy Class = 10)										
WL 711DF	W-L Research	--	HR	--	R	R	HR	HR	R	HR	--	112	--	--	--	--

*Pest resistance ratings are reviewed but not verified by the National Alfalfa Variety Review Board and published in "Fall Dormancy and Pest Resistance Ratings for Alfalfa Varieties 2000/2001 Edition", Alfalfa Council, 10920 Ambassador Dr, Suite 302, Kansas City, MO 61453, www.alfalfa.org.