

CONTROLLING WEEDS IN ALFALFA

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A good stand of alfalfa is the best method of controlling weeds in the crop. A good stand controls most annual weeds and keeps perennial weeds such as bindweed and nutgrass manageable by shading and competition. Some perennials compete with alfalfa. Winter annuals, such as the mustards and other weeds that become well established when the alfalfa is dormant, may need to be controlled with herbicides. Weed control with chemicals may also be necessary at or near planting time to protect the alfalfa seedlings from weed competition.

Weed problems increase in alfalfa as a stand thins out and competition is reduced. Yields decline at the same time, but some loss of alfalfa yield may be compensated for by weeds harvested with the crop, so yield and quality are both affected. In established stands, weeds like downy brome, flixweed, shepherdspurse, foxtail barley, and dandelion cause yield and quality losses. When stands begin to thin, many annuals like Russian thistle, pigweeds, foxtails (green and yellow), lambsquarters, barnyardgrass, and kochia can be problems during the summer months.

HERBICIDES FOR SEEDLING ALFALFA

Herbicide	Rate	Timing	Weeds Controlled
Balan DF	2-2.5 lbs/acre	Preplant Incorporate (PPI) before seeding	Pigweeds, carelessnessweed, lambsquarters, barnyardgrass, foxtails and sandbur
Buctril	0.5 - 0.75 pt/acre	Postemergence (POST) alfalfa minimum of 2 trifoliolate leaves	Broadleaf weeds only
Butyrac 200	2-6 pts/acre	Postemergence (POST), alfalfa a minimum of 2 trifoliolate leaves, temperature dependent	Broadleaf weeds only
Eptam 7E	3.5 pts/acre	Preplant Incorporate (PPI) immediately,	has chemigation label , nightshades, pigweeds, lambsquarters, barnyardgrass, foxtails, and sandbur
Pursuit	1.08-2.16 oz dry granuals (DG)/ acre	Postemergence, alfalfa a minimum 2 trifoliolate leaves	Nightshades, cocklebur, pigweeds, kochia, barnyardgrass, foxtails, crabgrass

HERBICIDES FOR ESTABLISHED ALFALFA

Herbicide	Rate	Timing	Weeds Controlled
Karmex DF	2-3 lbs/acre	Apply before alfalfa breaks dormancy (prior to greening up and actively growing)	Foxtails, Russian thistle, lambsquarters, pigweeds, mustards, downy brome
Zorial Rapid 80 DF	1.25 - 2.5 lbs/acre	Apply before alfalfa breaks dormancy	Downy brome, barnyardgrass, pigweeds, kochia, prickly sida
Sencor DF	0.33 - 1.3 lbs/acre	Apply before alfalfa breaks dormancy	Mustards, flixweed, kochia, pigweeds, downy brome, foxtail barley, wild oat
Poast Plus 1EC	0.75 - 3.75 pts/ acre	Can be applied anytime to alfalfa, weed heights depend on control, must have a COC added	Controls only grasses
Sinbar WP	0.5 - 1.5 lbs/acre do not use over 1.0 lbs/acre in San Juan County	Apply before alfalfa breaks dormancy	Mustards, lambsquarters, downy brome, cheatgrass, foxtails
Velpar L	1 qt/acre	Apply before alfalfa breaks dormancy	Mustards, filaree, chickweed, downy brome, cheatgrass