

## PROFITABLE ALFALFA

### Sixty Dollars Per Acre for the Present Year's Product Realized by an Imperial Farmer

Some time ago Mr. W. B. Waldrop brought to our office a sample of a crop of alfalfa seed he was raising on the W. H. Brooks place four miles southwest of town, that we thought was a little the best we had ever seen.

Mr. Waldrop now informs us that he has at least twenty acres of this crop which will produce more than four hundred pounds of seed per acre and that over the entire ninety acres he has in a seed crop he will average well above three hundred pounds per acre. With alfalfa seed going at fifteen cents per pound, this looked like pretty profitable farming, to us, so we asked about his operations for the year.

He furnished us facts and figures to show that this entire field of ninety acres will yield a net profit of more than sixty dollars per acre during the present year. The field was pastured till April 1, netting \$3.50 per acre for pasturage. Then after that it was mowed twice for hay and yielded at least one and a-half tons per acre at each cutting or three tons per acre in hay. This is worth five dollars per ton in the field. That makes fifteen dollars per acre for hay. Now it has produced a crop of seed worth at least forty-five dollars per acre. It will produce one more cutting of hay which will be worth at least \$7.50 per acre on the ground, and then, pasturage for the balance of the year.

This figures up as follows: Hay, \$22.50; seed, \$45 and pasturage at least \$5 per acre, a total of \$72.50 per acre. Irrigating water has cost \$1.25 per acre and Mr. Waldrop thinks ten dollars per acre for labor and threshing will be ample to cover the expense. Then the threshed alfalfa straw is good feed, too, and that hasn't been counted in at all. Even should alfalfa seed go to twelve and a-half cents per pound, the estimate of \$60 per acre would still hold good.

As the production of alfalfa seed is evidently a very profitable business in this Valley, we asked Mr. Waldrop what his methods were in the irrigation and care of his crop. He then informed us that he believed he had solved the question, but that it had cost him considerably to do it, as, had he known just how to handle the matter and not

been obliged to experiment in order to learn, he might just as well had four hundred pounds of alfalfa seed per acre over his entire field, as to only have it on twenty acres. When he began his crop of alfalfa he divided his field into five tracts, each of which he treated differently from the rest, in order to determine the proper way to treat the crop to produce the most and best seed. One of these tracts he irrigated just the same as if he was going to cut it for hay. The plant grew too thick on the ground and kept too green. Result, probably 250 to 300 pounds of seed per acre. Another tract he let stand two weeks after taking off the hay before irrigating and only irrigated once a month thereafter. Result, a light crop of straw, evidently not enough irrigation, but a very heavy crop of seed on what straw there was; will produce about 250 pounds of seed per acre. Third tract was not irrigated for two weeks after crop was removed, but was irrigated every three weeks during the growth of the seed crop. This did very nicely and will produce more than 300 pounds per acre. Fourth tract was not irrigated for three weeks after taking off crop and once in four weeks while seed crop was growing. Result, poor stand and light crop, probably only about 200 pounds of seed per acre. On the fifth tract was his most successful experiment.

On this tract he waited one week after the hay was removed before irrigating. By this means all the strongest shoots started to grow and had such a start of the weaker ones that the stand of plants was not too thick and the production of seed was uniform and perfect. This tract he irrigated every three weeks and the result has been truly surprising.

It is as pretty a piece of alfalfa and as heavy a crop of seed as one will ever see. Mr. Waldrop thinks he can pick out small areas in it that would make 600 pounds of seed per acre and is confident the entire twenty acres will make more than 400 pounds per acre.

His experiments have determined both the time and the methods to use in raising a crop of alfalfa seed. He cut his last hay crop the third week in July, so this best piece of seed received its first irrigation about August 1 and has been irrigated twice since, once about August 22 and once September 12. It takes two months to produce a crop of alfalfa seed.

The secret of the whole operation, Mr. Waldrop says, is to not have it start too thick and to not force its growth as you would for hay. On land you would irrigate every two weeks for hay, only irrigate once in three weeks for seed. Delay your first irrigation till the strongest growing shoots are well started, then they will force ahead of the others and your crop will not be too thick and choke out. On some lands in the Valley, three weeks might be too long to go between irrigations and in such cases farmers should be governed by the condition of the plants and their usual practice in irrigating for hay. The point being that the plant does not want to be forced, as in producing hay, nor does it need to be stunted.

If alfalfa is not too thick on the ground and is not irrigated enough to make it put out new shoots or sprout up from the ground after the plants are grown, it will produce a good crop of seed anywhere in Imperial Valley.

There are a number of other farmers in the Valley growing alfalfa seed and we have no doubt the time is at hand when Imperial alfalfa seed will be a staple in the markets and a new record in profitable farming will be established in our Valley.

### A New Era for Number Five

The outcome of the stockholder's meeting of Imperial Water Co. No. 5, which was held at Holtville, last week, is certain to have a profoundly beneficial effect on the development and prosperity of that important part of our Valley, and to incidentally benefit the entire Valley as well. For a long time there was more or less controversy between Number Five and the California Development Co., the beginning of the trouble dating back almost to the organization of the Company itself. What with water shortages, destruction of headgates and losses by delays in construction, the lot of the east side farmer was not a very rosy one. So in the course of time quite a substantial sum came to be claimed by the farmers for damages. There was also dissatisfaction with the canal system and the plans followed in its construction. So on May 16th last a contract was entered into between Mr. Heber, who was then the executive head of the California Development Co., on behalf of his company and Imperial Water Co. No. 5, by which all old scores were wiped out and a clean

slate presented on which to write future transactions. This contract, while turning over to Number Five all its unsold stock, thereby returning its assets, also made it incumbent upon that company to finance itself in the work of completing its irrigation and drainage system. To do this it was necessary to vote bonds or raise the funds by assessment. The present management of the California Development Co. very properly took the ground that unless Number Five was willing to vote bonds, or in some way show its ability to carry out its part of the trade, the contract would fail and the work of completing the canal and drainage system fall back on them under the old contract. A factious opposition in No. 5 sought to distort this attitude of the California Development Co. into one of hostility to and repudiation of the contract and at the election called to consider the matter, they were able to defeat the bonds by a small margin. However, the Directors of Number Five, not willing to believe they had made a mistake in their contract with Mr. Heber, immediately made a call for an assessment of 50 cents per share on the issued stock of the company and submitted the question of bonds to the people a second time for their consideration. This resulted in the authorization of the bonds at the meeting above referred to. As soon as the bonds were authorized, the assessment was recalled and Number Five became at that moment a real Mutual Water Company, owning its own stock and with assets at its own disposal, free to make whatever disposition its stockholders and Directors might see fit to make of the same. Being thus in so happy a condition, it was decided to recompense those stockholders who had suffered damages. This was done by issuing to each one scrip of the company, receivable in payment for its stock at twenty dollars per share for an amount equal to 85 per cent. of the full sum of his claim.

The total amount of damages claimed was \$139,643, of which \$64,350 was for damages sustained during the crop season of 1903-4 and \$75,293 for damages during the season of 1904-5 just passed. These sums were arrived at by allowing \$15.00 per acre for all grain crops lost during 1903-4 and \$9.60 per acre for the same in 1904-5. In payment of these claims scrip for \$120,000 will be issued and delivered to the damage sufferers. This scrip can be used in the purchase of water stock, either to make payment

in full, or to make part payment and will be accepted as cash by the company at its face value in any of such purchases. This is a very important thing for the farmers of Number Five, as it gives them an actual real payment, in a thing that is immediately available and that is of full equal value with "coin of the realm" now or at any time. The issue of the bonds will soon build canals to the lands on which stock can be located and this very fact makes this damage claim scrip in the hands of the farmers possess a value equal to cash in hand. The pioneers of Number Five and the farmers who have braved the water shortages and withstood the hardships encountered in the work of desert redemption in that part of the Valley, are to be congratulated on this happy outcome. They now have the certainty of just as good a canal, irrigation and drainage system as they care to build and also, what is of great importance to many of them, and that is, payment for their damages. This water stock scrip will no doubt come to many of them in a very opportune time, as it will enable them to carry forward the development of their ranches, and place them in a highly productive condition at an early date. It is expected now that at least 10,000 acres of alfalfa will be sown on the East side during the present season, and everything gotten in readiness for the stock and dairy business on an extensive scale as soon as possible. The natural fertility of that part of our common Valley and the loyalty and courage of its people would guarantee equally rapid improvement of the East side with other portions of our Imperial domain. But with \$120,000 distributed among the farmers for damages and \$100,000 to be expended in the construction, repair and completion of their irrigation works it can be readily seen what an era of prosperity and bustling activity is imminent in those parts. And for this happy outcome, great credit should be given Mr. Heber for his breadth of business foresight in seeing the solution of Number Five's difficulties in the first place, and to President Randolph for carrying out the plan. Number Five will soon become a scene of activity from Holtville to Bernice and from the Alamo to the Main Canal. In peace and harmony long may they prosper.

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