

THE PRODUCTION OF

# IDAHO Alfalfa Seed

## The Preface: Seeding the World

From its original home in southwest Asia, alfalfa spread to many new countries in the company of people who loved horses. The Persians took it to Greece about 480 B.C.; the Saracens took it to Spain; the Spaniards took it to Mexico and South America, and from there it reached California and Texas in the 1800's.

Idaho is a national leader in alfalfa seed production. Idaho producers continue the flow of alfalfa seeds around the world by exporting a quality product both nationally and globally.

*A maturing seedhead is a sign of success.*



## The Place: World Class Climate

Idaho's unique climate and geography help produce the finest alfalfa seed in the world. Rich soil, abundant water and a sunny growing season produce alfalfa seed that is winter hardy and vigorous. Continuous scientific seed research means that the resistance to disease, insects and other pests is genetically built into certified Idaho alfalfa seed. This translates into increased yields for growers and a healthier environment for us all.

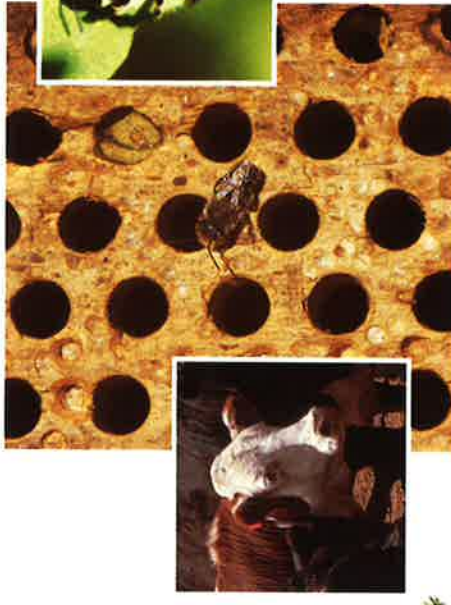
## The Plant: A Positive Fixation

Alfalfa is a perennial (regrows every year) legume (a nitrogen fixing plant). It is prized for its role in transforming nitrogen in the air and soil into a form that can be absorbed by plants, a process known as "nitrogen fixation." As farmers continue to care for the soil, and as the cost of nitrogen fertilizers climbs, alfalfa has proven to economically improve soil. No other forage crop adds higher levels of naturally occurring nitrogen while increasing soil tilth and reducing soil erosion. The plant's high nutritional value and the fact that animals like to eat it, make alfalfa hay a perfect feed for many classes of livestock.

## Attachment 2:

## The Process: From Bees to Burgers

Did you realize that your favorite burger and milkshake depend upon a small gray bee with taste for alfalfa blossoms? The leafcutting bee was discovered in Idaho in the late 1950's allowing Idaho alfalfa producers to become the premier seed producers in the world. Alfalfa leafcutting bees pollinate alfalfa blossoms which produce the seed that is planted for hay. Beef cattle and dairy cows graze in pastures with alfalfa or are fed alfalfa hay. This agricultural food chain – from seed and bee milk products and beef – is critical to our nation's food supply.

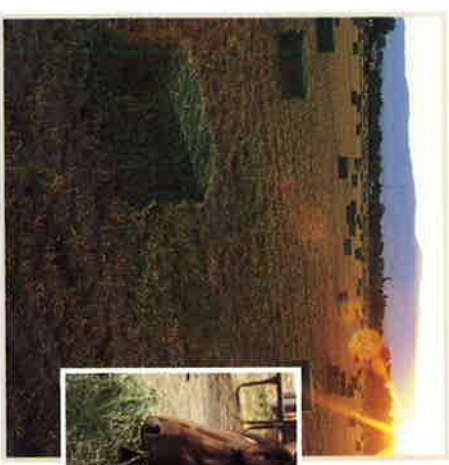


*Seed growers provide man-made housing for "herds" of leafcutting bees, which pollinate alfalfa flowers, making seed. Alfalfa seed becomes nutritious hay for cows, making milk and beef. Burgers and shakes begin with bees!*

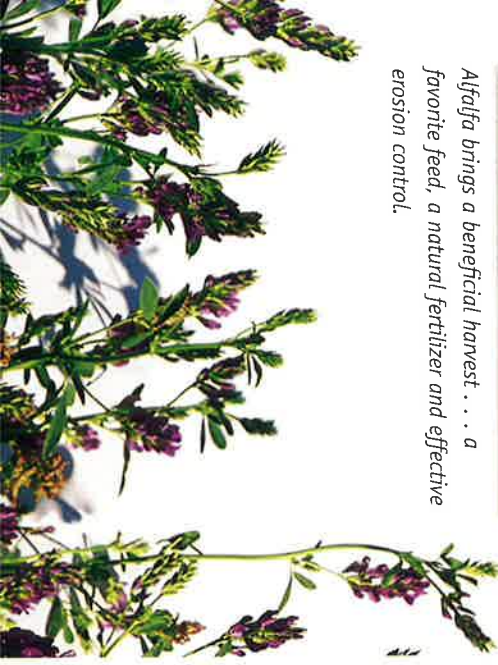


## The Product: A World of Uses

**H**igh quality alfalfa hay is a key to the efficient conversion of plant food into animal food products for human consumption . . . juicy T-bone steaks, ice cream, cheeseburgers . . . all get their start from alfalfa seed! People around the world still love horses, and the very best hay you can feed a horse is early cut alfalfa hay. Environmental concerns about erosion on cropland means that Idaho's alfalfa seed producers will continue their important role in worldwide soil conservation and improvement.



*Alfalfa brings a beneficial harvest . . . a favorite feed, a natural fertilizer and effective erosion control.*



THE IDAHO  
**Alfalfa Seed**  
COMMISSION

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