

Premium vs Common Alfalfa

Often, it is easy for growers to become nearsighted and focused on the price of the seed and forget that alfalfa is a four-year investment. Is the added cost of a premium or elite alfalfa really worth the price? Consider that there are four tiers of alfalfa (common, improved, premium and elite) and each tier has its own price range. Don't expect to pay common pricing for premium or elite alfalfa.

Factors to Consider:

When considering buying alfalfa seed, one size does not fit all, nor are they all priced the same. Premium and elite alfalfa are more expensive due to research and development inputs. When purchasing alfalfa seed, here are a few factors to consider:

- It takes years of research and development to bring out new and better genetics
- Genetics with high disease resistance are more productive for longer
- New genetics offer better traits or attributes
 - Better yield
 - Pest resistance
 - Herbicide resistance
 - Improved quality potential such as HarvXtra™
 - Flexibility in harvest management with genetics (HarvXtra™)
- Example: \$100/bag translates to \$7.50 per acre per year difference with a 15 lb. seeding rate
 - That is about two small square bales per acre per year
- The step to Roundup Ready® Alfalfa or HarvXtra™ also offers greater returns
- Premium alfalfa varieties generally have better customer support around them



Better disease resistance can lead to better establishment

AGRONOMY BULLETIN

Action Plan:

When considering planting alfalfa, weigh the purpose of the plan and what an increase in performance is worth.

1. Determine your production goals. Select an alfalfa that fits your objective (fall dormancy, disease resistance, winter hardiness, herbicide resistance or pest resistance) by talking with your Legend Seeds representative.
2. Ask yourself, "Will an alfalfa outlast, out produce, offer more flexibility, provide better quality or deliver more financial benefit when selling the hay? Will it produce more beef or milk when harvested?"
3. Don't solely consider alfalfa products based on price. If an alfalfa offers a better yield, quality, or flexibility, then it should be worth more. Paying more for the seed upfront is an investment that has a higher payout in the end.

Summary:

When considering your alfalfa seed purchase, don't view the alfalfa as a commodity and become engrossed over the price. In other words, one alfalfa variety is not always like the next and they don't all perform the same. The National Alfalfa and Forage Alliance publishes an Alfalfa Variety Ratings booklet annually to help compare varieties. Your Legend Seeds representative can provide perspective around the value of each product offered and help you to evaluate the cost vs your return.



Example of weed control with Roundup® vs no weed control



Example of weed control with conventional herbicides

To view Legend Seeds alfalfa portfolio, visit legendseeds.net/products/alfalfa

Resources

[What is the "Cost" of Seeding Low-Cost Alfalfa Seed? | University of Wisconsin-Madison](#)

[Roundup Ready, Low Lignin and Other New Traits in Alfalfa's Future | University of Wisconsin-Madison](#)