

DLF Alfalfa

Questions & Answers



DLF Alfalfa is designed to give farmers an easy, reliable and more profitable farming

- The extremely drought tolerant crop delivers more protein than soybean and maize
- It does not need to be fertilized with nitrogen and it's an excellent mixture partner

Do you still have questions regarding DLF Alfalfa?

Read on and get the answers to the most frequently asked questions about alfalfa:

1. What are multi-leaf varieties, and what are the benefits?

Multi-leaf means more than three leaflets. Most varieties of alfalfa are trifoliate (three leaflets). The multi-leaf trait can contribute to a higher forage quality, but not always. There are trifoliate varieties with equal or higher forage quality than multi-leaf varieties.

2. What are the differences between alfalfa and clover?

Alfalfa is more persistent than red clover. It requires fewer cuts for hay or silage than white clover. Alfalfa is far more drought tolerant and can easily be grown as a pure crop.

3. What is fall dormancy?

Fall dormancy indicates when the growth of a variety begins to decline. The lower the number the earlier in the autumn growth stops. FD1 varieties stop growing very early in the autumn whereas FD10+ varieties will hardly stop growing, making them more vulnerable to low temperatures.

4. What is the consequence of fall dormancy on the number of cuts per year?

The FD number indicates the probable number of cuts per year. Therefore 3 cuts for FD3, 8 cuts for FD8 etc.

5. Why is lodging resistance important?

Alfalfa is usually grown for cutting rather than grazing. Cutting can sometimes be delayed past the optimal harvest date due to the weather, breakdown or other work. Lodging resistance is very important to avoid loss of yield and quality.





6. Can alfalfa be grazed?

Most varieties are not suitable for intensive grazing because if the plants crown is damaged the plant dies. There are some prostrate varieties with a lower crown that are better suited to grazing.

7. Should alfalfa be inoculated and what does this mean?

The nitrogen fixing ability of legumes such as alfalfa is a symbiotic relationship between the plant and *Rhizobium* bacteria. In areas where alfalfa is not regularly grown it is unlikely that the *Rhizobium* will be naturally occurring in the soil. Therefore inoculation of the seed with *Rhizobium* is essential.

8. How does the protein content of alfalfa compare to maize, grass and clover?

Typically alfalfa has a protein content of 19%. This compares to 8% for maize, 15% for grass silage and 17% for red clover.

9. Why is alfalfa so drought tolerant?

Alfalfa has a very long tap root that will draw moisture from deeper in the soil than other plants allowing it not only to survive but continue growing in very dry conditions.

10. Can alfalfa be mixed with grass?

Alfalfa can be mixed with grasses. This is a good way to achieve an optimal ratio of energy to protein.

11. Why should alfalfa be allowed to flower at least once a year?

Letting the crop flower allows the plants to build up reserves of nutrients to survive during the winter. It is usually best to allow the plants to flower before the last cut of the year.

12. Can cows be fed purely on alfalfa?

No. The protein to energy ratio of alfalfa is not the optimal diet for cows. The alfalfa should be supplemented with grass silage to increase the energy content of the ration.

13. When is the best time to cut alfalfa?

Alfalfa should be cut at the early bud stage. This gives the best yield whilst maintaining a high protein content.

14. Why is care required when cutting and harvesting alfalfa?

The leaves of alfalfa are delicate and dry faster than the stems. Unless care is taken the leaves can shatter and this may account for yield losses of up to 40%.



Find out more about DLF Alfalfa and improved farm profitability

Our local product managers have all the expertise you need.
To find out more, contact your local DLF sales representative.

DLF Alfalfa – start growing your return today!

