



Dedication to **Dr. Vern Marble**

This manual is dedicated to Dr. Vern L. Marble, Extension Agronomist Emeritus, University of California, Davis. We can think of no one who has contributed more to the scientific basis of California Alfalfa Production than has Vern.

Dr. Marble has been known for many years as ‘Mr. Alfalfa’ in California, and has a tremendous depth of knowledge about this crop, about the history of alfalfa in the West, breeding, genetics, pest management, forage quality—just about any subject related to forage crops.

He is a true leader for forages. He was instrumental at promoting the introduction of multiple pest resistant varieties, particularly CUF 101 in the 1970s and 80s, which had a tremendous impact on California producers and on alfalfa producers worldwide. In some countries, the introduction of CUF 101 was so revolutionary, that growers mark the history of alfalfa in those countries as ‘before CUF101’ and ‘after CUF101’, particularly Argentina, Middle East, and Australia. He exhibited leadership in introducing forage testing to the industry, and promoting standardization, co-founding the National Forage Testing Association (NFTA) in the 1980s. Dr. Marble has served as a mentor to countless numbers of Farm Advisors and Agricultural Experiment Station scientists. For 50 years, everyone working with alfalfa in California has benefited from Vern’s gentle guidance and council.

Vern was born in Tremonton, Utah on 27 September 1928 and moved with his family four years later to Fillmore, Utah where his father taught Vocational Agriculture. In 1936, the family moved to Gustine, CA, then to Chino and subsequently Salinas, where his father taught Vocational Agriculture and Mathematics at Salinas Junior College, now Hartnell College. Vern had his first introduction to farm life at the beginning of WWII when, at the age of 13, he went to work for his grandfather

and uncle on the 3,000 acre dryland family farm near the Utah/Idaho border. He was paid the handsome sum of \$3 per day plus room and board, the same wages paid for the hired man who was drafted to serve in the army. While on the farm, he drove a D-6 tractor combining wheat, ploughing, and harrowing. He engaged in weeding, treating planting seed with fungicides, planting wheat, running and repairing combines, cutting, raking, and baling dryland alfalfa, milking cows and running a large herd of horses and mules.

Vern graduated with a B.S. and M. S. degree from Utah State Agricultural College, now Utah State University in Logan Utah. He served in the U. S. Army and at the end of the Korean War returned to California and in 1957 completed his PhD in Plant Physiology at the University of California, Davis. He worked for a short time as a regional agronomist for Chevron Chemical Company and in late 1957 accepted a position as Extension Agronomist at UC Davis.

Dr. Marble has been author or co-author of over 230 popular and technical publications during his career while providing statewide leadership to the important alfalfa hay and seed production industry. He devised the alfalfa hay quality evaluation system used by hay growers and dairymen in California. He also chaired the National Alfalfa Hay Testing Association, a program aimed at eliminating test differences among states. An important part of his applied research was on alfalfa varietal evaluation and production of high quality hay and seed.

With the cooperation of UC Farm Advisors, researchers, and members of industry, Dr. Marble organized the California Alfalfa Symposium in 1971. This important annual gathering rapidly became the premier forage meeting for California, if not the West. This symposium continues today to provide critical and timely information to alfalfa producers, dairymen and industry representatives, a well-appreciated University meeting begun by Dr. Marble.

Additionally, Vern saw the need for greater cooperation between UC Cooperative Extension Farm advisors and campus-based researchers, and organized the California Alfalfa Workgroup in the early 1970s. This was one of the first UC workgroups organized, a model that was subsequently followed by the UC President's office for many other subject areas. Dr. Marble developed funding for Workgroup members for cooperative projects that provided new information to benefit the alfalfa industry.

During his career, Dr. Marble has been a consultant in more than a dozen foreign countries. He completed an FAO evaluation of alfalfa research capabilities in the Near and Middle East, as well as a book on alfalfa production for the region. He has served on various university committees concerned with programs and policies in agricultural research and extension. In recognition for his work, Dr. Marble had received numerous awards and in 1990 received the Outstanding Alfalfa Extension Specialist Award for the USA from the American Society of Agronomy.

Dr. Vern L. Marble retired September 30th 1991 after 34 years service with the University of California, Davis, as Cooperative Extension Forage Specialist. Vern believes that his greatest fulfillment and personal reward has come from working with the many UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisors with their unique ability to identify and solve problems of great importance to the agricultural community. The Farm Advisors would tell you that much of their ability to do that comes from the teachings of Dr. Marble.

We can think of no one more deserving of this dedication and honor than Vern Marble. He is truly the leader of Alfalfa Production in California. Vern, we salute you and thank you for your tremendous contribution to our field of study. Congratulations.

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with the help of Mary Marble*