

Economics of Forage and Livestock Systems

Applied Irrigation Return: Forages vs. Cotton in the Texas High Plains

September 18, 2025

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Average Harvested Acres

Crop	Acres
Cotton – Irrigated Harvested *	661,247
Forage Crops:	
Alfalfa Hay – Irrigated Harvested**	11,187
Corn Planted / Silage Harvested **	147,097
Sorghum Planted / Silage Harvested **	45,945
Triticale Silage Harvested **	8,783
TOTAL FORAGE **	213,012

- * Harvested Acres = Irrigated % of 2020-2024 Average Upland cotton planted acres for Dist. 1-N/1-S (NASS Survey data)
- ** Forage Acres = 2022 Census of Agriculture data of forage crop acres harvested in Dist. 1-N/1-S



District 1 - 2025

Return per Acre-Inch of Irrigation Water Applied

Cost to establish Alfalfa depreciated over 7 years post establishment (i.e.- 1/7th of cost added to Irrigated Alfalfa as an additional expense.

Price Assumptions:

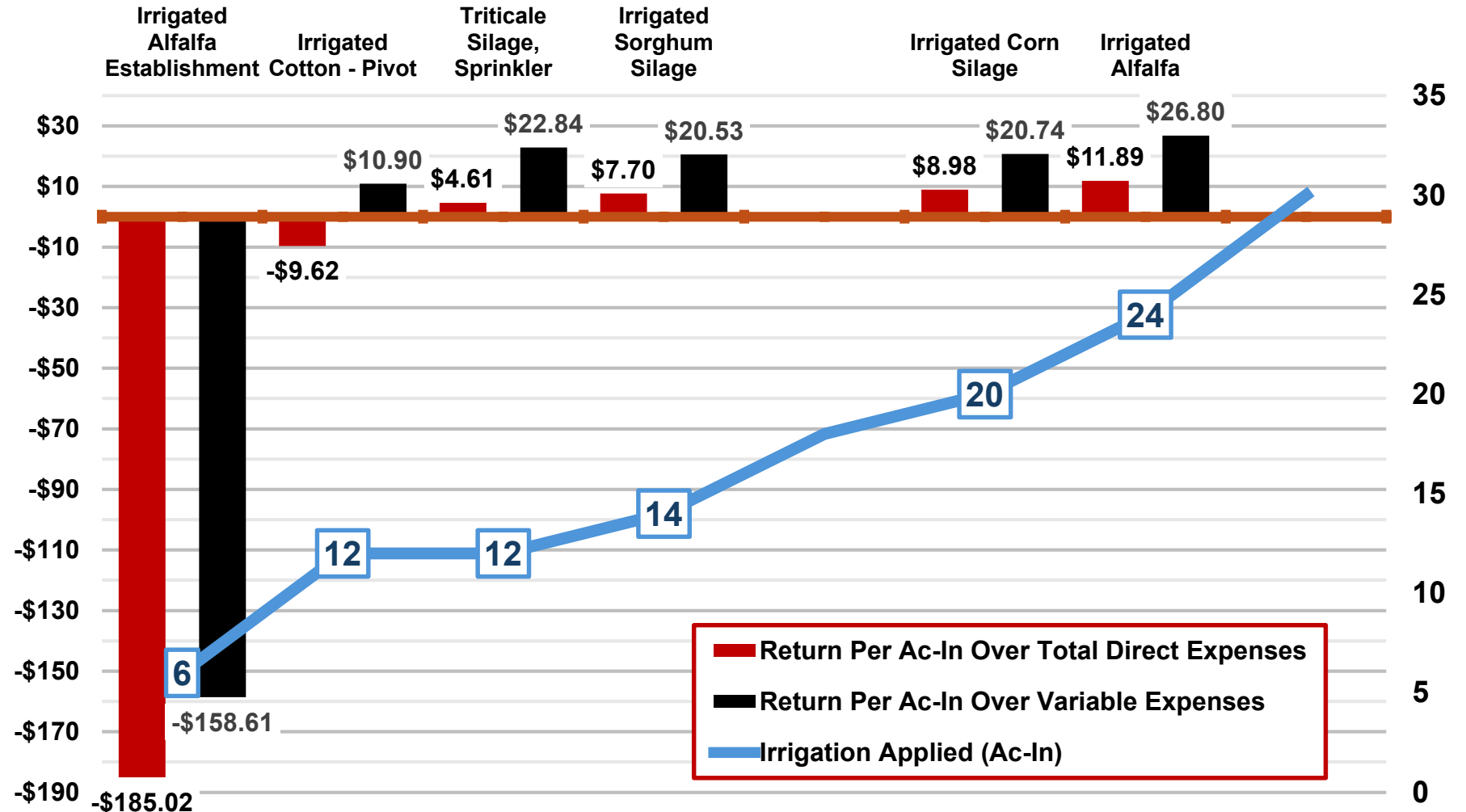
Alfalfa - \$250 / ton

Corn Silage - \$53 / ton

Sorghum Silage - \$46.00 / ton

Triticale Silage - \$46.00 / ton

Cotton - \$0.70 / lb



District 2 - 2025

Return per Acre-Inch of Irrigation Water Applied

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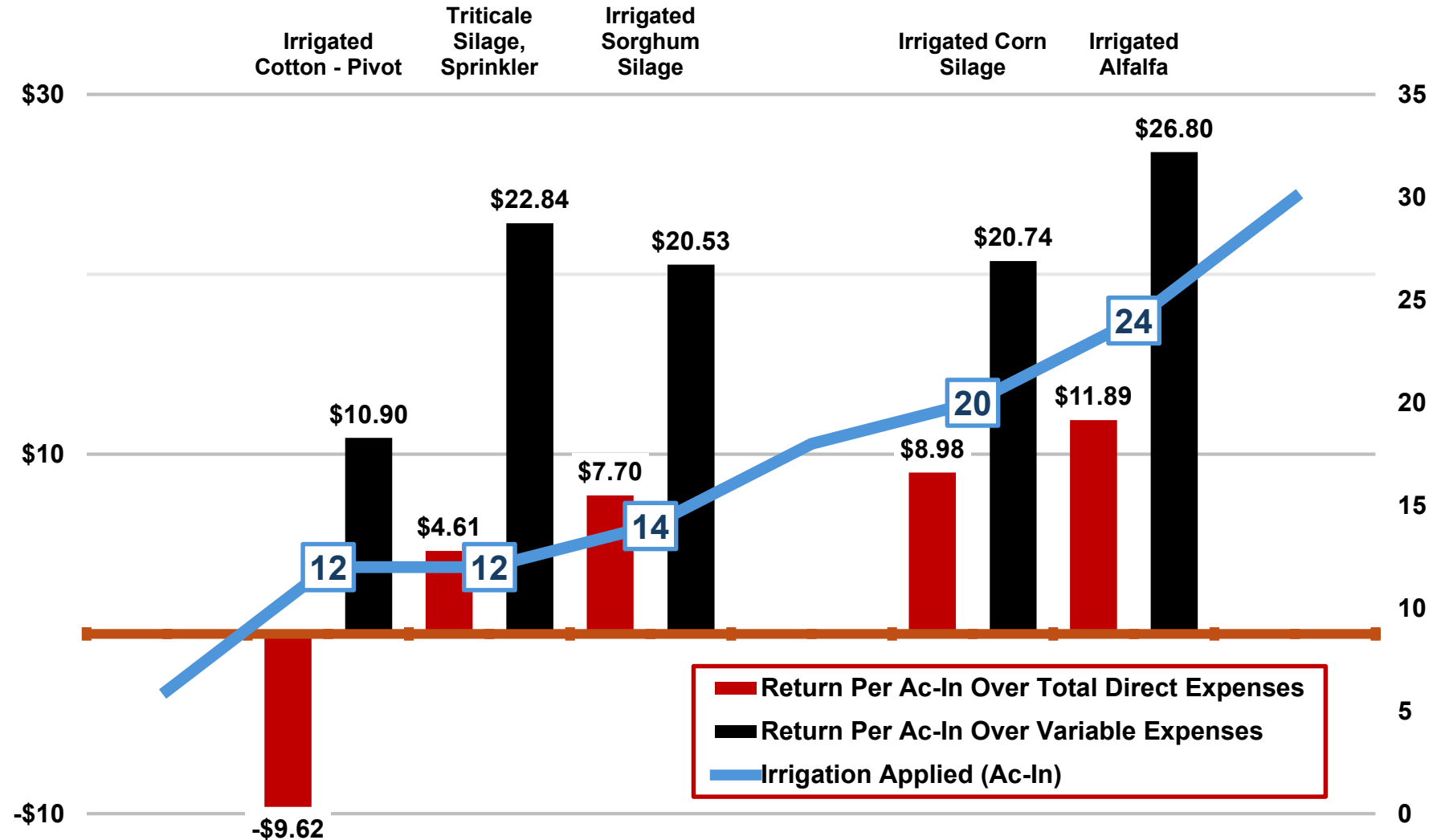
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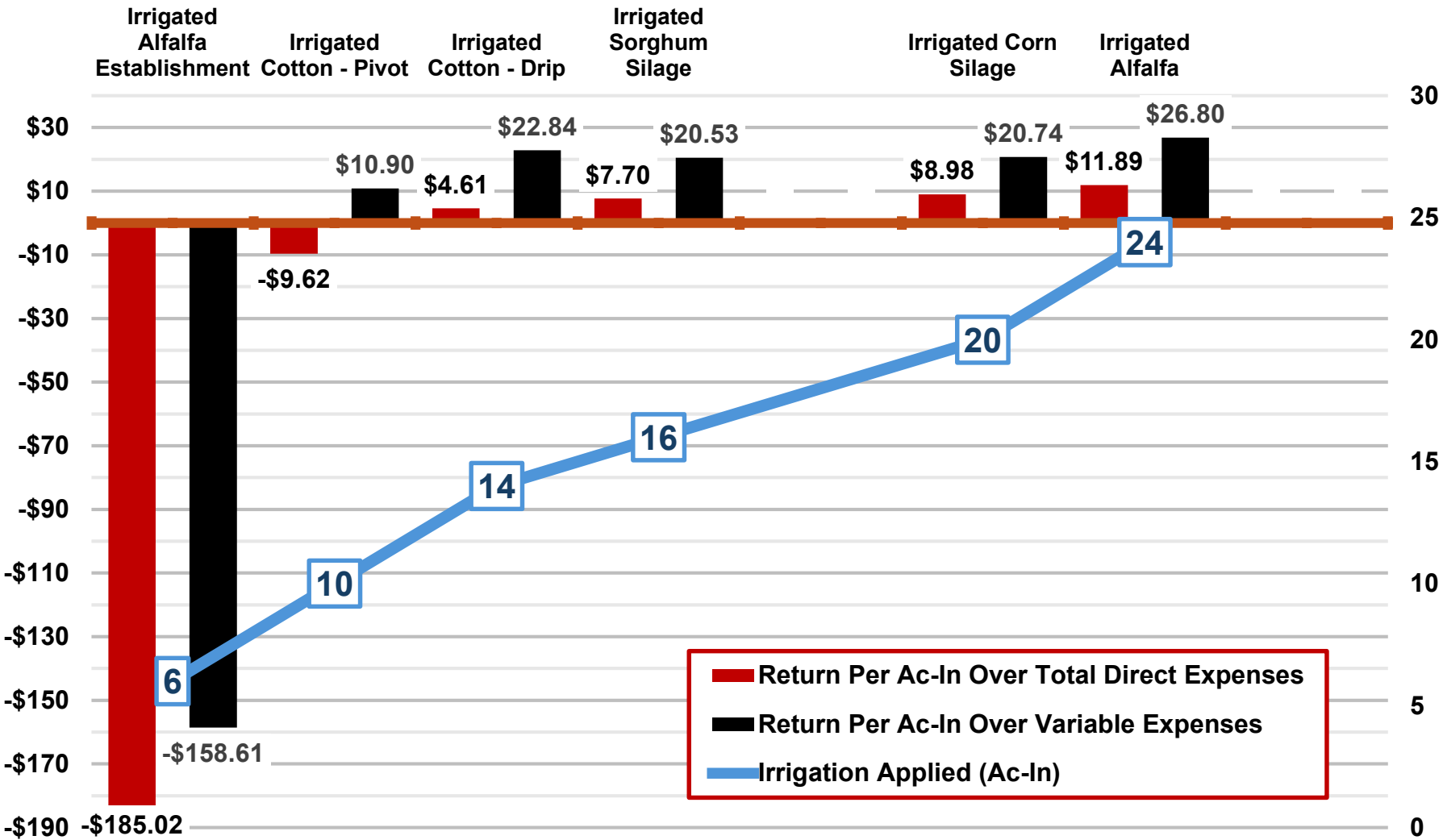
Price Assumptions:

Alfalfa - \$240 / ton

Corn
Silage - \$50 / ton

Sorghum
Silage - \$42.90 / ton

Cotton - \$0.70 / lb



District 2 - 2025

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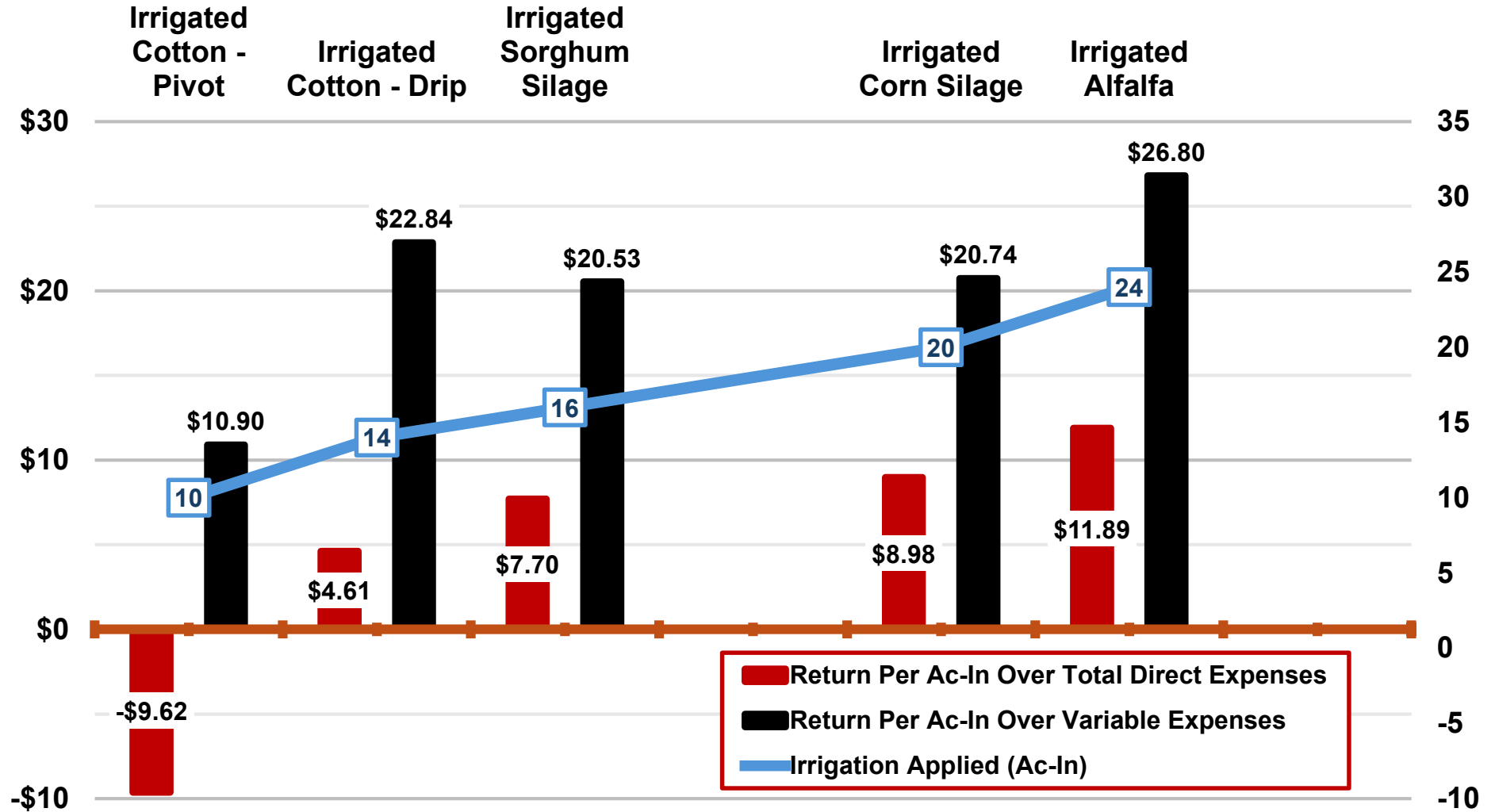
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Considerations

- **Land Commitment (long- versus short-term)**
- **Rotational benefits and costs**
- **Market size and price sensitivity**



Risk Management Opportunities

- **Annual Forage-Rainfall Index Dual Use Insurance**
- **Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage-Rainfall Index**
- **Livestock Gross Margin**
- **Livestock Risk Protection**
- **Dairy Revenue Protection**
- **Weaned Calf Risk Protection**



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Rachel Meyers, Meyers Crop Insurance

PROGRAM INTEGRITY
Jim Bellmon, USDA RMA

Register Today

\$75 - Virtual Registration

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October 17, 2025

9 AM • 3 PM



LOCATION:

**NATIONAL RANCHING
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**3121 4th Street
Lubbock, TX**

Seminar details will be available at:
<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/aaec/icac/>

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Questions?

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