7. Conditions

Excessive rainfall:

Excessive rainfall which occurred during the growing season resultedin the complete loss of three plantings. All three were closeto harvest with already high levels of moisture present in thesoil. the three were planted at very different points in the seasonand were in fields located a significant distance from each other.After at least two inches of rain, the plantings turned yellowafter three to five days and became unmarketable. One favorableaspect of the excess moisture was the opportunity to see if downymildew developed. Downy mildew has been a persistent problem forspring mix growers in California. We saw absolutely none.

8. Economics

Our cost of production averaged $.55/lb while California andArizona average $.32/lb according to western growers.

9. Assessment

Four areas of concern which stand out as a result of our trialare weeds, flea beetle damage, post harvest care of the product,and cost of production. Foremost of these is that additional methodsneed to be explored to control weeds. Overall, there was no differencein results between varieties, aside from the ability of the shapeof the leaf to slightly obscure flea beetle damage.

Cost of production could potentially be improved by using a mechanicalharvester, but under the current situation the quality would beunacceptable. Uniform, consistent quality across the field isessential before a mechanical harvester would be cost effective.The quality of our product was only acceptable because we wereable to be very selective in what was harvested by hand. Ourassessment at this point is that compared to onions, spring mixhas a significantly higher risk factor and a significantly higherinitial investment in equipment for a profit margin that is approximatelythe same or less than onions.

10. Adoption

Reactions to this trial were cautious and mixed. One farmerhas decided to discontinue this practice due to the large start-upcosts necessary combined with a very high risk factor. The otherfarmer is considering continuing to explore options for weed andflea beetle control.

11. Outreach

An article is scheduled to be published in the February/March"Muck and Mineral" publication which is receivedby over 120 growers and industry members.