

Let's Talk About...

Apricot Production

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THE INDUSTRY - In 1961 a reported inventory of over 2,000 acres makes apricots Alameda County's largest deciduous fruit crop. Most of the acres are located in the Fremont area; many on family-size operations of 15 acres or less. The Blenheim is the major variety produced.

Estimates indicate that 60% of the apricots are sold to canneries, 35% are used for drying, and 5% or less are purchased by fresh fruit buyers. Typical yields for irrigated orchards, containing a high proportion of bearing trees, range between 7 and 8 tons per acre; for non-irrigated orchards, between 3 and 4 tons per acre.

THE OUTLOOK - The apricot industry faces serious problems. A fungal disease, Cytosporina, is presently killing large numbers of producing trees. The combination of increasing taxes, labor costs, and water costs, coupled with the small size of many of the operations, gives these enterprises a high cost operating base. Lands in orchards are desirable for subdivision and use by industry. New orchards are not being established and in many plantings the dead or diseased trees are not being replaced.

PRACTICES & PROBLEMS - About 80% of the total apricot acreage is irrigated. Annually these orchards receive approximately 12-acre inches of water. While commercial fertilizers are seldom used, cover crops are common. Operators must regularly consider control measures for fungal diseases, scale insects, moths, mealy bugs, borers, and other pests.

Shown on the reverse side of this sheet are sample inputs and costs. These statistics are for better than average, family-operated, 15 acre, irrigated orchard enterprises, located in the Fremont-Union City area. Further projection of this information gives the following production and marketing costs for varying yields.

Cost Measurement	Unit	Yield - Tons per Acre				
		4	5	6	7	8
Cash Production & Marketing Costs	Acre	\$414.54	461.17	503.48	542.76	573.64
Cash Production & Marketing Costs	Ton	103.64	92.23	83.91	77.54	71.71
Depreciation & Interest on Investment	Ton	52.88	42.31	35.26	30.21	26.44
Total Costs except Management	Ton	\$156.52	134.54	119.17	107.75	98.15

FOR ALAMEDA COUNTY

SAMPLE INPUTS AND COSTS FOR APRICOTS IN ALAMEDA COUNTY - FREMONT-UNION CITY AREA
Yield: Seven tons per acre

	Man Labor	30 H.P. Tractor	1½ Ton Truck	Cost per Acre	Cost per Ton
Pruning	75.0			93.75	
Brush Disposal	2.0	0.5		3.60	
Removal of Dead Trees (contract @ \$1.00 per tree)				3.00	
Spray, 3 times (contract @ 3¢ per gal.)				27.00	
Cleaning around Trees	2.0			2.50	
Cultivate, 6 times	4.0	4.0		12.80	
Irrigate, 2 times	8.0			10.00	
Misc., Cover Crop, New Trees, Fert., etc.	7.0	1.0	1.0	12.85	
TOTAL CULTURAL LABOR AND FIELD POWER	98.0	5.5	1.0	165.50	23.64
Thinning	53.0			66.25	9.46
Propping and Removal	3.0		1.5	6.00	.86
Picking - 700 buckets @ 18¢				126.00	18.00
Supervision, Sorting and Loading	25.0			31.25	4.46
Loading and Hauling to Cannery	6.0		4.0	16.10	2.30
Less Hauling Allowance @ \$3.50 per ton				-24.50	-3.50
TOTAL FRUIT HANDLING AND HARVESTING	87.0	---	5.5	221.10	31.58
Spray Materials - Insecticides and fungicides				26.00	
Irrigation, power to pump 12 acre-in. @ \$13.50 per acre-ft.				13.50	
Misc. Supplies, Cover Crop Seed, New Trees, etc.				7.00	
TOTAL MATERIALS				46.50	6.65
General Expenses (5% of all costs above)				21.66	
County Taxes, Property + Personal Property				70.00	
Repairs other than covered by equipment rates				6.00	
Insurance, Comp., Soc. Sec., Liability, etc.				12.00	
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD				109.66	15.67
TOTAL CASH COSTS				542.76	77.54
INVESTMENT OVERHEAD - Based on 15 acre orchard & annual equipment use on 30 acres					
	Orig. Cost	Dollars per Acre			
	15 A.	Av. * Value	6% Int.	Depreciation	
Land @ \$1500	\$22,500.00	1,500.00	90.00	-----	
Trees, Cost \$800 per A. Life 40 yrs	12,000.00	400.00	24.00	20.00	
Irrig. System incl. sprinklers	6,000.00	200.00	12.00	21.96	
Building for Equipment	1,050.00	17.50	1.05	1.17	
Tractor and Truck	8,400.00	140.00	8.40	18.67	
Tillage Equipment	1,200.00	20.00	1.20	2.67	
Misc., Ladders, Props, Buckets, etc	1,200.00	40.00	2.40	8.00	
TOTAL INVESTMENT VALUES	\$52,350.00	2,317.50	139.05	72.47	
Depreciation				72.47	10.35
TOTAL CASH AND DEPRECIATION COSTS				615.23	87.89
Interest on Investment (6%)				139.05	19.86
TOTAL ALL COSTS, EXCEPT MANAGEMENT				754.28	107.75

Labor costs above are figured at the following hourly rates: tractor and truck driving - \$1.50, other man labor - \$1.25, 30 H.P. crawler tractor - \$1.70, 1½ T. truck - \$1.90. These tractor and truck rates are cash costs only for repairs, fuel, taxes, licenses, and insurance.

* Average value for items that depreciate is estimated at half of the original cost, because these items decline from full value to zero during their period of use.