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BANANA SQUASH PRODUCTION COSTS IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

Banana squash acreage in San Bernardino County has fluctuated considerably from year to year but seldom exceeds 100 acres. Annual yields vary from two to eight tons per acre. Under good management, 10 to 15 tons of high quality squash per acre are possible.

**SOILS:** Banana squash can be grown on a wide variety of soil textures. Fine textured soils are usually easier to manage for squash production. The soil should be well drained and free of harmful salts and alkali.

**VARIETIES:** There are numerous selections of both the pink and blue type banana squash. The pink is the most commonly grown and is preferred by the market in this area.

**PLANTING:** Banana squash should be planted after the danger of frost is over. In the basin area, this is after April 1st. Plantings sometimes continue until the 1st of July. Late plantings allow for a fall harvest. Banana squash harvested in the fall can be stored for a short period to stretch out the marketing time.

**METHODS:** Seeding either by the hill method or with a Planet Jr. seeder is common here. The seed is planted  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches deep in moisture in rows spaced eight to nine feet apart. Spacing between plants varies with the growers. In the hill method of planting, usually two plants are left in hills which were planted nine feet apart. Single plants seldom are closer than four feet.

**FERTILIZERS:** Eighty to 100 pounds of actual nitrogen can be used on banana squash. One-half to two-thirds should be applied before planting, and the remainder applied before the plants begin to form runners. If phosphate is needed, apply at least 50 to 60 pounds at planting time. Banana squash usually responds favorably to applications of manure - especially in weak, sandy spots in the field. Care should be taken that the organic fertilizers used are not infested with weed seed.

**IRRIGATION:** On the finer textured soils, banana squash fields are usually furrowed up and irrigated for the first time before the vines begin to "run." Depending on soil type, it will require from four to eight irrigations during the season. Under most conditions, three acre feet of water per season will be sufficient.

**PEST CONTROL:** Aphids, leafhoppers, squash bugs and cucumber beetles are common insect pests. There are distinct viruses which attack this plant. Cucumber mosaic virus causes severe stunting of the plant. This virus and the watermelon and squash mosaic viruses cause blue mottling or stripes on the fruit. Root knot nematode is indigenous to most of our soils. Before planting, a grower should row treat with a good nematocide.

**HARVESTING:** The squash are ready to harvest about 110 days after seeding, depending upon growing conditions. A mature squash should have a tough skin that will not bruise or scratch easily when handled. This can be determined by the feel of the squash. Overproduction often occurs with this crop and a grower should have some market outlet before planting his fields to banana squash.

BANANA SQUASH PRODUCTION COSTS PER ACRE  
IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

Labor - \$1.25 per hour  
Interest - 6 per cent

Yield - 12 tons per acre

Operation	Total Hrs. Annual	Labor	Equipment	Material	Costs	Combined Costs	Total Cost
<u>Land Preparation</u>							
Plow	1.0	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.85		\$	\$ 3.10	\$
Disc	2x 1.0	1.25	1.00			2.25	
Harrow	0.2	.25	.30			.55	
Float and Land Plane	2.0	2.50	2.70			<u>5.20</u>	11.10
<u>Cultural</u>							
Plant and Fertilize - (one operation)	1.0	1.25	1.50	Seed - 1½ lbs. 40 lbs. N* 40 lbs. P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	2.65) 5.60) 4.00)	15.00	
Thin	8.0	10.00				10.00	
Hand Hoe	4.5	5.65				5.65	
Cultivate	3x 2.1	2.60	1.95			4.55	
Side dress once with fertilizer			.20	20 lbs. N	3.20	3.40	
Irrigate	8x 48.0	11.25		Water - 3.0 acre ft. @ \$7.00	21.00	32.25	
Pest Control	4x 1.6	2.00	1.00	Insecticide	14.00	<u>17.00</u>	87.85
<u>Harvest</u>							
Pick and Roadside	16.0	20.00	10.40			30.40	
Haul to Shed	3.0	<u>3.75</u>	<u>4.05</u>			<u>7.80</u>	<u>38.20</u>
TOTAL CULTURAL AND HARVEST COSTS		\$61.75	\$24.95		\$50.45		\$137.15
<u>Cash Overhead</u>							
General Expense (Insurance, accounting, transportation, office, phone, etc.)						7.25	
Rent						<u>30.00</u>	<u>37.25</u>
TOTAL CASH COSTS							\$174.40
<u>Non-Cash Overhead</u>							
	<u>Investment</u>	<u>Depreciation</u>	<u>Interest</u>				
Building	\$ 36.00	\$ 1.20	\$1.10				
Equipment	120.00	11.30	.35				
Irrigation System	<u>65.00</u>	<u>2.15</u>	<u>1.95</u>				
	\$221.00	\$14.65	\$3.40				
TOTAL ALL COSTS							<u>18.05</u>
							\$192.45
							16.04

April, 1962

(\* See Narrative for recommended increase)

TOTAL ALL COSTS  
Per Ton