

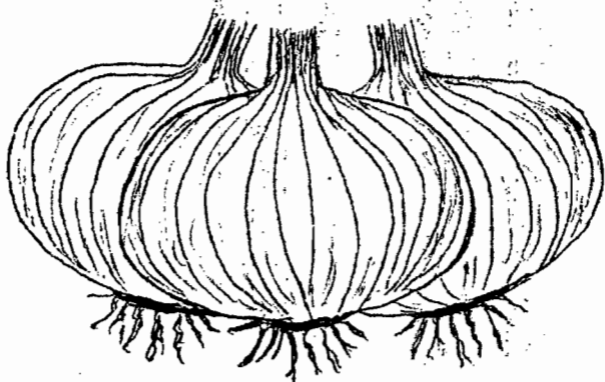
ON-SI-73

market onions

sample costs

and

production



Agricultural Extension Service
University of California
Imperial County
Court House, El Centro

Cost Data Sheet No. 16

UC Cooperative Extension

ONIONS FRESH MARKET--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$3.00 per hour (\$2.40 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

Yield - 600 50# sacks per acre. (15 tons). 150+ days to maturity.

OPERATIONS	Custom Rate	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR		SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
LAND PREPARATION						
Plow or subsoil	\$10.00					\$ 10.00
Disc 2x	3.50					7.00
Border & break border	3.50					3.50
Flood		water .75 ft/A	1.73	1	3.00	4.73
Fertilize	1.75	400# 11-48-0	24.00			25.75
Disc 2x	3.50					7.00
Landplane 2x	4.00					8.00
List	4.00					4.00
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION						\$ 69.98
GROWING PERIOD						
Plant	4.50	seed 2# @ 18.00	36.00			
		+ coating @ 60¢ 1b	1.20			41.70
Herbicide	3.00		14.00			17.00
Cultivate 4x	3.50					14.00
Fertilize-side-dress 2x	3.50	250# N @ 15¢	37.50			44.50
Weed 2x				10	30.00	30.00
Sprinklers		rent	20.00	10	30.00	50.00
Irrigate 12x		water 4 ac ft @ 2.30	9.20	10	30.00	39.20
Pest control 2x	1.80	pesticides	5.00			8.60
GROWING PERIOD						\$ 245.00
GROWING PERIOD & LAND PREP. COSTS						\$ 314.98
Land Rent						90.00
Cash Overhead - 10% of preharvest costs and land rent						40.50
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS						\$ 445.48
HARVEST COSTS						
Dig, top, haul, pack, sacks, selling commission, (@ \$1.40 per 50# sack)						\$ 840.00
TOTAL ALL COSTS						\$1285.48

Cost per sack = \$2.14

YIELDS

Normal yields range 400 to 800 fifty-pound sacks per acre, although top yields have exceeded 900 sacks. The Agricultural Commissioner's reports show seasonal average price per ton during the past five years varied from a low of \$54.90 in 1971 to a high of \$110.00 in 1972. There were 1900 acres grown in 1972.

PLANTING

Most acreage is direct seeded from mid-October to mid-November. Forty two inch beds with 4 to 6 lines are used.

VARIETIES

Because onions are sensitive to day length and temperature, only the early maturing, short day types are grown. The most popular types are yellow Garnex, Texas Early Grano 502, White Granex, Early Premium and Dessex. Seed costs may vary from \$4.00 - \$18.00 per pound or higher depending upon variety and season.

WEED CONTROL

Herbicides are commonly pre-emergence. Consult you Farm Advisor for latest

recommendations. Some postplant applications are made with corresponding additional costs.

SOILS

Medium textured sandy loams are the most desirable. Being shallow rooted, onions need a friable soil in which to easily expand and one which remains moisture about the roots especially after cultivation. Avoid salty, hard, or weed-infested soils.

IRRIGATION

Until two or three weeks before intended harvest, onions should never suffer for lack of water. Weather and soil conditions determine the number of irrigations. Seven to 12 times are normal. Irrigation costs include the use of sprinklers for germination. Also included are costs for shovel work, pipe setting and grading.

FERTILIZERS

Generally, between 200 and 250 lbs of actual nitrogen per acre and 144 — 200 lbs of P_2O_5 are applied. All P_2O_5 and 33 to 50 lbs of nitrogen are usually broadcast before listing followed by two sidedressings of nitrogen.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Mites, thrips, armyworms, leaf-miners, maggots, downy mildew and nematodes may be problems. Pink root is a soil-borne disease affecting onions. Varieties resistant to pink root are available.

HARVESTING

Harvesting takes place from late March through May after 25 percent of the tops have fallen over. Bulbs are dug, hand topped and roots cut, sacked and hauled to sheds for grading, sacking, loading and shipping. During storage adequate ventilation is important.

Prepared by
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California Agricultural Extension.