

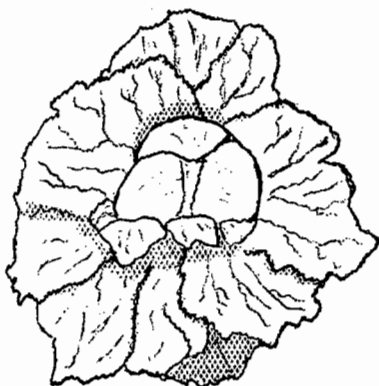
lettuce

LT-SI-72

sample costs

and

production



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

Cost Data Sheet No. 15

UC Cooperative Extension



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LETTUCE--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$2.25 per hour (\$2.10 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

Yield - 500 cartons per acre (11.7 tons).

OPERATION	Custom Rate	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR		SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
LAND PREPARATION						
Plow or subsoil	\$9.00					\$ 9.00
Disc 2x	2.50					5.00
Border & break border	1.00					1.00
Flood		water .75 ac ft	1.73		2.25	3.98
Fertilize	1.50	400# 11-48-0	19.00			20.50
Disc 2x	2.50					5.00
Landplane 2x	2.75					5.50
List	3.50					3.50
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION						\$53.48
GROWING PERIOD						
Incorporate beds	6.50	herbicide	7.00			13.50
Plant	4.00	seed 1/2# @ 16.00	8.00			12.00
Thin				15	33.75	33.75
Cultivate 3x	3.00					9.00
Fertilize-side-dress 3x	3.00	200# N @ 12¢	24.00			33.00
Weed				7.5	16.88	16.88
Irrigate 8x		water 4 ac ft @ 2.30	9.20	14	31.50	40.70
Insect control 10x	1.75	insecticides	35.00			52.50
GROWING PERIOD						\$211.33
GROWING PERIOD AND LAND PREPARATION COSTS						\$264.81
Land Rent						75.00
Cash Overhead - 15% of preharvest costs and land rent						50.97
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS						\$390.78
HARVEST COSTS						
Custom harvest: cut, pack, haul 500 cartons @ 1.35						\$675.00
TOTAL COSTS						\$1065.78

Cost per carton - 500 carton yield = \$2.13

The Agricultural Commissioner's reports show seasonal average price per ton during the past five years varied from a low of \$63.77 in 1967 to a high of \$100.89 in 1971.

YIELDS

The average county yield is about 450-500 cartons per acre. However, some growers have packed over 700 cartons per acre.

PLANTING DATES

Plantings extend continually from early September to mid-November. Early plantings are harvested in late November to early December while October plantings are cut during January and February. Later plantings mature by the end of March.

PLANTING

Both coated and non-coated seed is used. The majority of coated seed is used in October. Several types of coatings are available at costs ranging from \$20-\$25.00 when spaced at 2-3 inches.

VARIETIES

The date of planting affects the variety grown since the season progresses from extreme heat to cool days and freezing nights, then back to moderately high tempera-

tures in early spring. Varieties planted in Early-mid-September: GL 659, Mesa 659, Empire, 118. Mid-late September: Caravan, 366, Merit (3186). Late September: Merit (3186), Caravan, 49'er. Early-mid-October: 49'er, Climax. Mid-late October: Climax, Vanguard, Moranguard, Wesgreen. Late October-Early November: Climax, Vanguard, Golden State D, Moranguard. Other varieties are also available. Early plantings mature in about 90 days while later ones require 120 or more days.

SOILS

Silt loam to sandy soils are preferred. The lighter soils provide better drainage during cold weather and warm up more readily. Lettuce has a moderate degree of salt tolerance. Excess salinity results in poor seed germination and small heads.

THINNING AND WEEDING

Most thinning is done by hand. Mechanical thinning methods have not been entirely successful. Some fields require several hand thinning operations at increased costs.

IRRIGATION

Lettuce is planted on dry soil and irrigated up. ₃ Some growers

use sprinklers until the seedlings emerge to provide better stands with reduced seedling rates. Rental and labor cost for sprinkler use are \$30.00-\$70.00 per acre. Gated pipe is also used especially near harvest. Irrigation labor costs also include shovel work, grader work and pipe setting.

FERTILIZERS

400 lbs. of 11-48-0 are broadcast prior to listing. Nitrogen is sidedressed just after thinning and during later growth. Early, warm season lettuce requires less N than that grown in January and February. About 120-150 pounds N is used early while 180 to over 250 pounds are applied to the cold weather crop.

WEED CONTROL

Herbicides are applied preplant and may be incorporated with a ground or power driven incorporator. Consult the Farm Advisor for latest recommendations.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Watch for crickets, cutworms, salt marsh caterpillars, beet armyworms and cabbage loopers. Loopers can be especially serious after thinning. Aluminum foil barricades usually control salt marsh caterpillars. The most serious diseases are lettuce mosaic, big vein,



seedling diseases, tip burn and sclerotinia. Use mosaic-free seed 0:30000 and keep field weeds down. Consult the Farm Advisors' Office for pest control recommendations.

FUMIGATION

Fumigation may be needed on early fields where nematodes are found. After soil temperatures cool down nematodes are less active. Normal cost is \$22.50.

HARVESTING

Most lettuce is field packed in cartons, trucked to vacuum coolers, and shipped to market in refrigerated trucks and railway cars. Field packing of film-wrapped heads is also done.

Prepared by
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