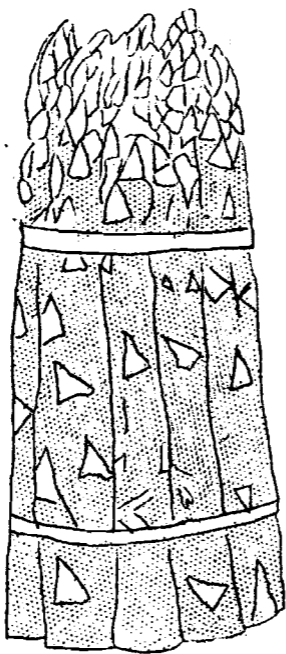


asparagus
sample costs
and
production



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

Cost Data Sheet No. 11

DIRECT SEEDED ASPARAGUS--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$3.00 per hour (\$2.53 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

Yield - 125 crates from an established field. (2 tons).

OPERATION	Custom Rate	1st Year	2d Year	3d Year
LAND PREPARATION				
Fertilizer - Manure 20T		\$ 24.00		
Flow-subsoil	\$24.00	24.00		
Disc 4x	3.50	14.00		
Landplane 3x	4.00	12.00		
Border - Break border	4.00	4.00		
Flood		4.00		
Float	3.50	3.50		
Fertilize	2.50	46.00		
List - Shape Beds	8.00	8.00		
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION		\$139.50		
GROWING PERIOD				
Plant (12 lbs @ 5.00)	6.00	66.00		
Cultivate 2x	3.50	7.00		
Fertilize 2x	5.00	55.00		
Irrigate 10x		40.80		
Hand Weed Control		140.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00
Pest Control 2x	3.00		20.00	20.00
Chemical Weed Control	2.50	25.00	25.00	25.00
Chop Fern			6.00	6.00
Rolling Cultivator 2x			8.00	8.00
Rotovate & Shape Beds			10.00	10.00
Fertilize 3x	4.50		110.00	110.00
Irrigate 15x			62.75	62.75
GROWING PERIOD		\$333.80	\$271.75	\$271.75
GROWING PERIOD & LAND PREP. COSTS		\$473.30	\$271.75	\$271.75
Rent		125.00	125.00	125.00
Amortization ^{1/}		0.00	65.81	65.81
Overhead - 10% of preharvest costs and land rent ^{2/}		59.83	39.68	39.68
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS		\$658.13	\$502.24	\$502.24

HARVEST

Cut, haul to shed, pack, cool, sell @ 9.25			\$370.00 ^{3/}	\$1156.25
TOTAL ALL COSTS		\$658.13	\$872.24	\$1658.49

^{1/} Amortize first year's establishment costs over 10 year period. Begin amortization in second year.

^{2/} Excluding Amortization cost.

^{3/} Light cut second year.

Cost per crate = \$13.27

YIELDS

Yields from stands three or more years old have averaged from 1.3 to 2.0 tons per acre.

PLANTING

Direct seeding is best done January through April. Eight - 12 pounds of seed per acre has been satisfactory. Presently four rows are planted on a 30 inch bed top. Beds center to center are 60 inches, or 2 rows per 42 inch bed center. Seed depth is from 1 - 1 1/2 inches. Germination irrigation follows. It is desirable to have an in-row plant spacing of at least four inches.

PRICE

Seasonal average price per ton during the past five years varied from a low of \$518.68 in 1972 to a high of \$740.80 in 1971.

VARIETIES

The main varieties grown are 500W, UC309, UC72, and Brock selections.

SOILS

Well-drained sandy loams and loams are best for asparagus.

IRRIGATION

Timing and method of application are very important during harvest season. Every other row irrigation will tend to maintain even production by keeping the beds warm. Over 15 irrigations per year will not be unusual. Irrigation interval during the summer is from 10 - 15 days.

FERTILIZERS

From 100-200 pounds of phosphate and 200-600 pounds of nitrogen are used. All of the phosphate and at least half the nitrogen are applied in winter before

the cutting season. The remaining nitrogen is applied after the harvest season.

PESTS & DISEASES

Consult the University of California Vegetable Crop Pest and Disease Control Guide for latest recommendations.

HARVESTING

Spears are hand cut from mid-January through mid-April. Only the most vigorous plants should be cut during the second season for a 2-4 week period. Overcutting often leads to a decline in production and small spears. During the third year of growth, cutting may be continued the full season - about 60 days. Spears are cut at an angle just below the soil surface with an asparagus knife. They are cut every 2 or 3 days early in the season, but during warm weather the field will be cut each day. The harvested spears are hauled to shed for grading, trimming, washing, packing, cooling and packing.

CUTTING FERN

Fern is chopped and either rototilled into the surface soil or burned during December. The burned beds are also rototilled.

Fertilization and irrigation follow before the cutting period begins.

Prepared by
Imperial County
Agricultural Extension Staff
Revised August 1974

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