

SPRING CANTALOUPE PROJECTED PRODUCTION COSTS 1987-1988

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$5.50 per hour (\$4.30 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

OPERATION	CUSTOM RATE	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR		COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
Field--350 cartons per acre 120 days to maturity Hybrid variety						
<b>LAND PREPARATION</b>						
Stubble disc	11.75					11.75
Disc	9.00					9.00
Fertilize	6.00	450# 11-52-0	53.00			59.00
Mark and list beds	22.00					22.00
Rerun beds	10.00					10.00
<b>TOTAL LAND PREPARATION</b>						<b>111.75</b>
<b>GROWING PERIOD</b>						
Plant and shape beds	16.00	1.5 lbs. hybrid seed @	100.00 / lb.			166.00
Move N-side of bed	10.00					10.00
Thin				6	33.00	33.00
Spike	8.50					8.50
Cultivate 2x	16.00					32.00
Fertilize (side-dress)	11.00	80# N @ .30	24.00			35.00
(water-run)		40# N @ .30	12.00			12.00
Move bed	10.00					10.00
Furrow out	8.50					8.50
Hand weed 1x				6	33.00	33.00
Pollination		1.5 Hives @	18.00 / hive			27.00
Irrigate 5x		Water 3 3/4 ac/ft	33.75	8	44.00	77.75
Insect Control 3x	4.90	Insecticides	35.00			49.70
Disease Control 1x	5.00	Fungicides	10.75			15.75
Disc out bed	9.00					9.00
<b>TOTAL GROWING PERIOD</b>						<b>527.20</b>
<b>GROWING PERIOD &amp; LAND PREPARATION COSTS</b>						<b>638.95</b>
Land Rent (net acres)						175.00
Cash Overhead-----		12% of preharvest costs & land rent				97.67
<b>TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS</b>						<b>911.62</b>
<b>HARVEST (field pack)</b>						
Pick, haul, and pack		350 cartons @		3.00 per carton		1050.00
<b>TOTAL ALL COSTS</b>						<b>1961.62</b>

		PROJECTED INCOME ABOVE COSTS					Breakeven \$/carton
		price/carton					
		4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00	
Cartons	300	-612	-312	-12	288	588	6.04
	350	-562	-212	138	488	838	5.60
per	400	-512	-112	288	688	1088	5.28
acre	450	-462	-12	438	888	1338	5.03
	500	-412	88	588	1088	1588	4.82

SPRING CANTALOUPE CULTURE

1987-1988

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>YIELD/ACRE (CARTONS)</u>	<u>VALUE/ACRE</u>
1986	17324	347	\$1884
1985	16147	262	1382
1984	13605	270	1580
1983	19240*	310*	1990*
1982	12828*	410*	2575*

\*Spring and fall acres combined

PLANTING DATES: Cantaloupes are planted from mid-January through mid-March. Harvesting begins in May and continues through early July.

VARIETIES AND PLANTING: Nearly all of the acreage is planted to "Topmark", hybrid "Topscore" and hybrid "Easyrider". Other hybrid varieties are currently being evaluated. The seed is planted 1/2 inch deep with custom-built slant-bed planters using random flow seeding units. Open pollinated varieties sell for 10x less than most hybrids, however, hybrids are often used due to earliness and higher yield potential.

SOILS: Well-drained soils are preferred. Sandy or silt loams are sometimes selected for the earliest crop. Heavier soils are preferred for most of the acreage because of their greater water holding capacity which slows the onset of vine collapse.

IRRIGATION: After planting, the beds are subbed past the seedline. Following emergence, water is often withheld for several weeks. This is done to maintain soil warmth and promote early production. The last irrigation is scheduled one week prior to harvest. Excessive moisture during harvest may increase ground spotting, rotted and soft fruit.

FERTILIZERS: Four hundred fifty pounds of 11-52-0 are often applied before listing. Up to 150 pounds of nitrogen are later sidedressed. Most growers inject the phosphorus into the listed beds at planting as 10-34-0 or phosphoric acid.

POLLINATION: At least one hive of bees per acre is recommended and 1 1/2 hives are better. The bees should be distributed on at least two sides of a 40 acre field. Recent studies have indicated that yields are increased with heavy bee saturation.

PEST CONTROL: Cantaloupes are subject to a number of problems including nematodes, cutworms, aphids, mites, loopers, leafhoppers, leafminers, ground beetles, crickets, sudden wilt, mosaic virus and powdery mildew. Consult your farm advisor for pest control information.

Weeds are serious problems in spring cantaloupes. Herbicides have not been successful, therefore growers rely on hand weeding and cultivation.

HARVESTING: Spring melons are harvested from May to July. The fruit are hand picked at the full slip stage. Field packing is rapidly being adopted due to better fruit quality and greater yield potential. They are field sorted and graded into cartons holding 9, 12, 18 or 23 melons. Cooling and palletizing are paid by the receiver.