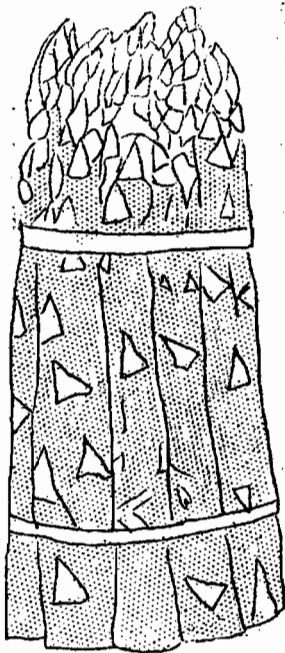


asparagus  
sample costs  
and  
production



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

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Cost Data Sheet No. 11



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

| OPERATION                     | Custom Rate | 1st Year       | 2nd Year | 3rd Year |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------|----------|
| <b>LAND PREPARATION</b>       |             |                |          |          |
| Fertilizer - Manure 20T       |             | \$22.00        |          |          |
| Plow-subsoil                  | \$18.00     | 18.00          |          |          |
| Disc 4x                       | 2.50        | 10.00          |          |          |
| Landplane 3x                  | 2.75        | 8.25           |          |          |
| Border                        | 1.00        | 1.00           |          |          |
| Flood                         |             | 3.98           |          |          |
| Float                         | 2.75        | 2.75           |          |          |
| Fertilize                     | 1.50        | 20.50          |          |          |
| List 2x                       | 3.50        | 7.00           |          |          |
| <b>TOTAL LAND PREPARATION</b> |             | <b>\$93.48</b> |          |          |

**GROWING PERIOD**

|  |      |                 |                 |                 |
|--|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Transplant Crowns - 18,000 @ 13.00/M                           |      | \$284.00        |                 |                 |
| Cover Crowns   |      | 4.00            |                 |                 |
| Irrigate   |      | 4.50            |                 |                 |
| Cultivate 2-3x   | 3.00 | 9.00            |                 |                 |
| Fertilize 2x   | 3.00 | 62.00           |                 |                 |
| Irrigate 1lx   |      | 26.60           |                 |                 |
| Hand Weed Control  |      | 75.00           | 25.00           | 25.00           |
| Pest Control 2x  | 1.75 | 15.00           | 15.00           | 15.00           |
| Chemical Weed Control  |      | 16.00           | 25.00           | 25.00           |
| Chop Fern  |      |                 | 5.00            | 5.00            |
| Lister 2x  |      |                 | 6.00            | 6.00            |
| Rotovate & shape beds  |      |                 | 7.00            | 7.00            |
| Fertilize 3x   |      |                 | 90.00           | 90.00           |
| Iffigate 15x   |      |                 | 30.76           | 30.76           |
| <b>GROWING PERIOD</b>  |      | <b>\$496.10</b> | <b>\$203.76</b> | <b>\$203.76</b> |
| <b>GROWING PERIOD &amp; LAND PREP. COSTS</b>                   |      | <b>\$589.58</b> | <b>\$203.76</b> | <b>\$203.76</b> |
| Rent   |      | 85.00           | 85.00           | 85.00           |
| Amortization <sup>1/</sup>                                     |      | 0.00            | 77.58           | 77.58           |
| Overhead - 15% of preharvest costs and land rent <sup>2/</sup> |      | 101.19          | 43.27           | 43.31           |
| <b>TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS</b>                                  |      | <b>\$775.77</b> | <b>\$409.65</b> | <b>\$409.65</b> |

**HARVEST**

|  |  |                 |                      |                  |
|--|--|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Cut, Haul to shed, pack, cool, sell @ 6.50 |  |                 | 195.00 <sup>3/</sup> | 812.50           |
| <b>TOTAL ALL COSTS</b>                     |  | <b>\$775.77</b> | <b>\$604.65</b>      | <b>\$1222.15</b> |

- <sup>1/</sup> Amortize first year's establishment costs over 10 year period. Begin amortization in second year.
- <sup>2/</sup> Excluding Amortization cost.
- <sup>3/</sup> Light cut second year.

|                         |
|-------------------------|
| Cost per crate = \$9.77 |
|-------------------------|

**YIELDS**

Production is quite variable. Yields from stands three or more years old have averaged from 1.3 to 1.8 tons per acre.

**PLANTING**

Planting of crowns is best done January through April - January preferred. Crowns are planted in the furrow and covered with about 3-4 inches of soil. Crown spacing varies from 8-12 inches. At present 2 rows, about 12 inches apart are planted on 60 inch beds.

## PRICE

Seasonal average price per ton during the past five years varied from a low of \$503.33 in 1968 to a high of \$740.80 in 1971.

## VARIETIES

The main varieties grown are 500W, UC 309, UC 72, 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. Eighteen irrigations per year will not be unusual.

## 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 cut from mid-January through March. 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. Spears are cut at an angle just below the soil surface with an asparagus knife. They are cut every two or three 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, and cooling.

### CUTTING FERN

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

Fertilization and irrigation follow before the cutting period begins.

Prepared by  
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