SOILS

Watermelons are best grown on non-saline, sandy loam or silt loam soils. Soil temperatures of 95°F are optimum for germination.

IRRIGATION

After planting, the first irrigation runs until the beds are completely subbed. Following emergence, water may be withheld until flowering.

FERTILIZERS

400 pounds of 11-48-0 are often applied before listing. Up to 200 pounds of nitrogen are later sidedressed in split applications. Irrigation costs include shoveling, pipe setting and grading.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Cutworms, aphids, spider mites, darkling ground beetles, leafhoppers, cabbage loopers, and leafminers are the most serious pests of watermelons. Bacterial rind rot is the most serious disease of watermelons. For latest recommendations, consult your Farm Advisor.

HARVESTING

Use a sharp knife to cut melons from the vines. Pulling may cause melons to crack open. Melons are picked on the basis of color change, thumping, and rind roughness. Color change is the most reliable. Avoid rubbing of melon fruit with hands during vine turning. Loss of natural protection on the fruit can increase sunburn. Cover exposed fruit during harvest to prevent sunburning.

Prepared by
Imperial County Agricultural Extension Staff
Revised August 1974

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University of California Agricultural Extension Service
Imperial County
Court House, El Centro
Cost Data Sheet No. 5
UC Cooperative Extension
# WATERMELONS--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 - 10 tons per acre, 85 - 90 days to maturity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATIONS</th>
<th>CUSTOM RATE</th>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>HAND LABOR</th>
<th>SAMPLE COSTS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>COST</td>
<td>HOURS</td>
<td>DOLLARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAND PREPARATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow or subsoil</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disc 2x</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border &amp; break border</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flood</td>
<td>Water .75 ac ft</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fertilize</td>
<td>2.50 400# 11-48-0</td>
<td>46.00</td>
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<td>48.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Border disc</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL LAND PREPARATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 81.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>GROWING PERIOD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant &amp; shape beds</td>
<td>6.75 Seed 2# @ $5.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
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<td>16.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pollination</td>
<td>1.5 hives @ 10.00 15.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivate 2x</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilize - side-dress 2x</td>
<td>5.00 200# N @ 20#</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed 1x</td>
<td>Water 3 ac ft</td>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irrigate 6x</td>
<td>3.00 Insecticides</td>
<td>40.00</td>
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<td>55.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pest Control 5x</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn Vines 2x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>GROWING PERIOD &amp; LAND PREP COSTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$250.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Rent</td>
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<td>$332.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash overhead - 10% of preharvest costs and land rent</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45.74</td>
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<td>TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>$503.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>HARVEST</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick, haul, selling commission, load $28.00 ton</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$280.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL ALL COSTS</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>$783.09</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Cost per ton = $78.31**

**YIELDS**

County average yields have been between 8 to 10 tons per acre. The Agricultural Commissioner's reports show seasonal average price per ton during the past five years varied from a low of $52.64 in 1972 to a high of $101.21 in 1973.

**PLANTING DATES**

Plantings to be capped are seeded from mid-December to February. Open melons are planted from February through mid-March.

**VARIETIES**

Improved Peacock is the most popular variety. It has a tough rind, which makes it an excellent shipper.

**HOT CAPS**

Early planted watermelons are not capped. Hot caps are paper tents over a wood frame used to produce miniature "greenhouses". The plants receive increased heat and frost protection. Labor and materials for hot capping costs about $150.00 per acre.
SOILS

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IRRIGATION

After planting, the first irrigation runs until the beds are completely subdued. Following emergence, water may be withheld until flowering.

FERTILIZERS

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PESTS AND DISEASES

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