

BARLEY COSTS & GENERAL HINTS ON PRODUCTION

*By Douglas J. Munier, Farm Advisor*

Soil Requirements

Barley may be grown on most Kern County soils. Barley is one of the most tolerant crops available to alkali soils and fits well into reclamation projects. One can expect a reduction in yield when planted on high alkali soils.

Varieties

Each variety has characteristics that should be considered before a choice is made. Check with the Farm Advisor's Office for your individual case. It is best to plant certified seed to ensure purity, high germination and freedom from weed seeds. There are new varieties that are currently being tested which may supersede the present varieties.

Land Preparation and Planting

A good firm seedbed is preferred. If possible pre-irrigate so that ample moisture will be present during the seeding and tillering stages. Broadcast or a grain drill may be used to plant barley. A grain drill offers depth control and therefore greater crop uniformity.

Planting Rate

On irrigated land in November and early December plantings by drill, 70 to 80 pounds per acre are sufficient. Late December and January planting by drill, 90 to 100 pounds per acre should be used. If broadcasting seed, add about 20 percent to the drilled amount.

Planting Time

Optimum planting time is November 15 to December 15. Earlier planting dates are subject to frost and yellow dwarf virus disease. Later plantings beyond January 20 are reduced in yield because of

reduced tillering and hot weather late in the growing season.

Planting Depth

Planting depth will vary depending on soil moisture but generally, one and one half to two inches is best. Delayed and reduced emergence will occur when the planting depth is deeper than two inches.

Fertilization

Most barley crops will need nitrogen fertilizer unless there is a high residual from a previous crop. Fertilization depends upon the soil's capability to produce and the amount of water available. With good soil potential and ample water, 100 to 150 pounds of nitrogen should be used. With less productive soil, reduce the rate accordingly. If water is short also reduce the rate of fertilizer.

Irrigation

For maximum yields barley must be grown without water stress. Depending on the soil, the general weather, and the amount of precipitation, barley may be watered from 2 to 4 times. The most yield will be lost if barley is water stressed while the grain is in the flower and milk stages.

Harvest

Harvest usually begins about the end of May. Prolonged delay of harvesting certain varieties will result in shattering and yield loss, especially if located in a windy location.

1986 SAMPLE COSTS TO PRODUCE BARLEY IN KERN COUNTY

The following costs are based on very competitive custom farming rates. An individual grower's costs may be lower or higher, depending on the cost of his equipment and the degree of utilization. In most cases, a grower could do his own operations in a more timely manner than a custom operator who must satisfy many customers. Manual labor costs are calculated at \$5.50 per hour including all benefits.

	<u>Sample Costs/Acre</u>	<u>My Costs</u>
<u>Preharvest Cash Costs:</u>		
Disk - 1 time stubble (\$17) and 1 time finish (\$8)	\$ 25.00	
Fertilizer - 120 lbs. N @ 20¢/lb., \$3.00 applied	27.00	
Plant - 100 lbs. seed @ \$14/cwt., \$8.00 drilling	22.00	
Irrigate - 3 times @ 4 inc./irr. \$30./acre-ft., 2.0 hrs.	41.00	
Herbicide	10.00	
Miscellaneous office & bookkeeping -3% total cash costs	4.00	
Interest on operating capital - @ 15% for 5 months	8.00	
TOTAL PREHARVEST CASH COSTS	137.00	
<u>Harvest Costs:</u>		
Custom harvest, \$9.00/acre plus 33¢/cwt., 5,000 lbs./acre	26.00	
<u>Land Costs:</u>		
Rent - including taxes	125.00	
<u>Depreciation</u> and <u>Interest</u> (included in above costs).	-	
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TOTAL COST OF PRODUCTION (\$115/ton @ 5,000 lbs./acre)	288.00	