

SONOMA COUNTY BOYSENBERRY AND YOUNGBERRY
Production and Cost Information

Boysen and Youngberries are the two main varieties of trailing berries now grown in Sonoma County. The plantings are of small acreage for the most part, because they are a side line to orchard holdings. Only a few, however, are interplanted in young orchards. The total acreage listed by the Agricultural Commissioner for 1950 is 432 acres for Boysenberry and 128 acres for Youngberry.

The main berry section is in the Sebastopol area where the soil is of a sandy loam nature and the rainfall averages about 40 inches annually, so the berries are grown without irrigation. The climate of this area favors berry growing, but in some seasons very hot weather near harvest time reduces the yield considerably.

Yields average $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons per acre in the normal plantings with yields of 4 to 5 tons being reported from small blocks occasionally. Most of the berries are frozen rather than sold fresh. They go mostly to the jelly and pie trades. Most growers here belong to the Berry Growers Association, which handles the sales for them.

Pest control has not been a problem in the past, but leaf spot fungus and leaf hopper insects have made some spraying necessary.

Plantings are 8 x 8 but an 8 x 9 planting would be better for machine use. Rows are usually about 230 feet long so as to provide driveways across the plantings. The two-wire trellis is most common for training the vines.

Poultry manure is readily available to most growers so that is recommended for fertilizing, but satisfactory results have been obtained with use of chemical fertilizers. Nitrogen is the most important element needed and should be applied at the rate of 60 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre at least.

The following outline of costs in establishing and maintaining berry fields is not an average figure, but rather one that might be expected under present cost conditions. We assume a good stand and growth the first year so that trellising can be done, but this situation does not always prevail. We base the annual costs on a field that has growth that will produce $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons per acre. There are great variations in the practices carried on, so the outline here sets forth those which seem desirable. In this tabulation the tractor and truck charge is \$1.50 per hour. Most growers have cultivation tools and tractors that they use in addition to berry work so the hourly charge should not be as much as if the work was done by hiring outside equipment.

Hoing and weeding may not be needed the first year. Only the growers with large fields will need to employ a checker and field supervisor. The owner himself may do most of the labor in caring for the patch, but in studying the value of the enterprise the labor should be included. Furthermore, depreciation and interest on the investment should be added for complete cost data. In this tabulation these are calculated on one half the value as an average over a period of years. The returns made to members by the association since 1945 with an estimate for this year's crop on a pound basis are: 16.5¢, 20.0¢, 8.4¢, 7.3¢, 8.5¢, 9.3¢, 14.5¢.

Cost data is on the reverse side of this sheet.

BOYSENBERRY AND YOUNGBERRY PRODUCTION COSTS

	First year Establishment	Mature Field Annual Cost
PER ACRE BASIS - YIELD ESTIMATE: 5,000 POUNDS		
Materials:		
630 vines @ 9¢	\$ 56.70	
Two-wire trellis (386 6' stakes @ 15¢ (182 lbs. #14 wire @ 14¢ (9 lbs. staples @ 20¢	85.18	
Spray materials		\$ 5.00
Crates & Replacements		10.00
Poultry manure - 3 tons or commercial fertilizer	6.00	15.00
SUB TOTAL FOR MATERIAL	\$ 147.88	\$ 30.00
Labor Items:		
Land preparation before planting	\$ 7.50	
Planting (20 hours)	20.00	
Building trellis (25 man hours, 3 truck hours)	29.50	
Cultivation (3 to 5 times)	7.50	\$ 15.00
Hoing and Weeding (very little first year)	4.00	15.00
Staking back new canes		5.00
Pruning out old canes (25 hours)		25.00
Brush Disposal (2 man and truck hours)		3.00
Training to the wires	30.00	70.00
Spraying twice (1 hour each time)		6.00
Applying fertilizer	7.00	7.00
Picking - 5,000 lbs. @ 3½¢		175.00
Checker and Field Supervisor		18.00
Hauling (5 man hours - 3 truck hours)		11.00
SUB TOTAL FOR LABOR ITEMS	\$ 105.50	\$ 350.00
General Expense (5% of labor and material costs)	\$ 12.67	\$ 19.00
County Taxes	10.00	12.00
Compensation Insurance	2.50	4.00
Repairs		3.00
SUB TOTAL FOR OVERHEAD EXPENSES	\$ 25.17	\$ 38.00
Total Cash Costs	\$ 278.55	\$ 418.00
Depreciation of vines, trellis, misc. equipment	3.00	35.00
Interest on half the investment @ 5%	26.25	26.25
TOTAL COST PER ACRE	\$ 307.80	\$ 479.25
Recapitulation:		
Establishing the Planting	\$ 198.88	\$
Maintenance	54.50	\$ 146.00
Harvesting		204.00
Overhead	25.17	38.00
Interest & Depreciation	29.25	61.25
TOTAL COST PER ACRE	\$ 307.80	\$ 449.25
Cost Per Pound of Berries (5,000 lbs. yield)		\$.09