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Placer and Nevada Counties

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SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

PLUM PRODUCTION, PLACER COUNTY 1976

FRESH PLUMS continue to be a 2200 acre industry for Placer County. Fresh shipments brought \$1,364,000 gross income in 1974. Major varieties in order of ripening: Beauty, Santa Rosa, El Dorado, Wickson, Duarte, Laroda, Emily, President, Kelsey, Late Duarte. Varieties recently planted: Red Roy, Empress, LeDuc, Casselman. Small acreages: Ace, Formosa, Tragedy, Burbank, Sharkey, Giant, Queen Anne. Major rootstocks are Lovell Peach and Nemaguard on well-drained slopes, plum root in low spots.

Growers should consult their Shed Managers on marketability and prices of Placer plums before deciding on varieties to pull out or plant. Some growers are roadside retailing high color fruit on the farm.

Placer County's plums ripen 10 days later than Southern San Joaquin orchards. Fruit is of high sugar and acid content giving exceptional flavor and long shelf life. Eastern brokers and chain stores place F.O.B. orders with Placer County Sheds because they know of this quality from many years experience.

Decline and abandonment of some plum and peach orchards has increased populations of Shothole beetle which fly into good orchards, drilling pin-size holes in bark and spurs, and carrying Cytospora bark canker spores. No spray is economically justified as most broods are in bark cavities. Infested wood must be cut and burned to reduce these two problems. President is the most susceptible plum variety to Cytospora bark canker, spores of which are carried into bark holes by Shothole beetles. Aerial spores are also produced from bark lesions on dead trees.

Double planting of plum blocks 9'x18' is suggested for increasing yield per acre with no increase in costs other than new trees and pruning annually. Certain strip weed sprays may be used to eliminate cross-mowing of rows. {See Cooperative Extension Crop Weed Spray leaflets.}

Fertilization in January or February, applying 60 to 80 pounds nitrogen per acre is standard practice.

Irrigation by sprinklers with 1/8" nozzles, 8 to 12 hour sets, repeated at 12 to 20 day intervals, is most common and depends on soil depth. Tensiometers help growers decide intervals.

All labor {except harvest} in this study is considered to be hired at \$2.85 for unskilled labor and \$3.45 per hour for tractor and truck drivers, including Social Security and Workmen's Compensation Insurance, etc. Rent for on-farm housing should be withheld by employer.

The cost of production of one acre of trees used in this cost study for Placer County's existing orchards represents about 100% of the state-wide figure of developing a new orchard 5 years of age. Also about 20% of the trees are missing or non-bearing replants.

SAMPLE COSTS TO PRODUCE PLUMS IN PLACER COUNTY 1976

Production Data: 40 acres, trees spaced 18'x18'. Yield 5 tons, 350 - 28 lb. crates at \$3 gross after packing, pre-cooling = \$1050 gross income per acre. Thinning labor about \$2.85. Harvest \$3.45 or piecework. Rates incl. fringe benefits.

Operation	Hours Per Acre	Cash and Labor Cost per Acre				Total
		Labor	Fuel & Repairs	Materials Kind & Quantity	Cost	
CULTURAL COSTS:						
Prune	41.5	\$118.30	\$		\$	\$118.30
Brush removal	2.0	6.90	2.60			9.50
Fertilizer	.5	1.75	1.30	60 lbs. N at 30¢	18.00	21.05
Thinning 45 min./tree	94.0	265.10				265.10
Spray 4X	4.0	11.40	18.20		40.00	69.60
Disc 2X, mow 4X	4.0	11.40	12.00			23.40
Irrigate 11X	16.0	45.60		Water: 1/2 min. in./acre	21.00	66.60
Prop wire or tie	6.0	17.10	12.00		2.00	31.10
Misc. labor, materials, etc.		3.00	1.00		2.00	6.00
Interest on operating capital					27.50	27.50
TOTAL CULTURAL COSTS		\$480.55	\$47.10		\$110.50	\$638.15

HARVEST COSTS:						
Pick	100.0	\$285.00	\$		\$	\$285.00
Load and haul	15.0	51.75	31.50			83.25
Supervise	5.0	17.25				17.25
Packing				\$2.50/crate	875.00	875.00
TOTAL HARVEST COSTS		\$354.00	\$31.50		\$875.00	1260.50

CASH OVERHEAD:						
Misc., office, etc.					\$114.00	
Taxes					40.00	
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD						\$154.00
TOTAL CASH COST		\$834.55	\$78.60		\$1139.50	2052.65
Management 5% of 350 crates at \$3						\$ 52.50

INVESTMENT:	Per Acre	Annual Cost		
		Depreciation	Interest 8%	
Land	\$1000	\$	\$ 80.00	
Trees	1000	50.00	40.00	
Irrigation system	460	30.65	18.40	
Buildings, labor house	200	10.00	8.00	
Equipment & tractor	642	64.15	25.65	
TOTAL	\$3302	\$154.80	\$172.05	\$326.85

TOTAL COST PER ACRE					\$2432.00
Cost per ton at 5 tons yield					486.00
28 lb. crate at 350 crates					6.95
Yield in crates per acre	145	215	285	350	
Yield in tons per acre	2	3	4	5	
Total cost per ton	\$ 944	\$ 691	\$ 565	\$ 486	
Total cost per acre	\$1889	\$2074	\$2260	\$2432	
Gross income at \$3/crate	\$ 435	\$ 645	\$ 855	\$1050	