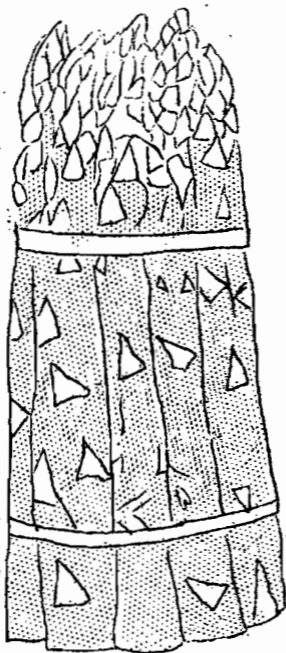


asparagus  
sample costs  
and  
production



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

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Cost Data Sheet No. 11

UC Cooperative Extension



DIRECT SEEDED ASPARAGUS--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$3.00 per hour (\$2.40 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

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

OPERATION	Custom Rate	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year
LAND PREPARATION				
Fertilizer- Manure 20T		\$24.00		
Plow-subsoil	\$20.00	20.00		
Disc 4x	3.50	14.00		
Landplane 3x	4.00	12.00		
Border - Break border	2.00	4.50		
Flood		4.15		
Float	3.50	3.50		
Fertilize	3.50	34.50		
List - Shape Beds	8.00	8.00		
<b>TOTAL LAND PREPARATION</b>		<b>\$124.65</b>		

GROWING PERIOD

Plant (8 lbs @ 5.00)	6.00	46.00		
Irrigate 2x		7.15		
Cultivate 2x	4.50	9.00		
Fertilize 2x	4.50	42.00		
Irrigate 12x		36.90		
Hand Weed Control		125.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00
Pest Control 2x	1.75		16.00	16.00
Chemical Weed Control		7.00	25.00	25.00
Chop Fern			6.00	6.00
Lister 2x			8.00	8.00
Rotovate & shape beds			10.00	10.00
Fertilize 3x			100.00	100.00
Irrigate 15x			40.50	40.50
<b>GROWING PERIOD</b>		<b>\$273.05</b>	<b>\$220.50</b>	<b>\$220.50</b>
<b>GROWING PERIOD &amp; LAND PREP. COSTS</b>		<b>\$397.70</b>	<b>\$220.50</b>	<b>\$220.50</b>
Rent		90.00	90.00	90.00
Amortization <sup>1/</sup>		0.00	53.65	53.65
Overhead - 10% of preharvest costs and land rent <sup>2/</sup>		48.77	31.05	31.05
<b>TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS</b>		<b>\$536.47</b>	<b>\$395.20</b>	<b>\$395.20</b>

HARVEST

Cut, Haul to shed, pack, cool, sell @ 8.00			240.00 <sup>3/</sup>	1000.00
<b>TOTAL ALL COSTS</b>		<b>\$536.47</b>	<b>\$635.20</b>	<b>\$1395.20</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 = \$11.16
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YIELDS

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

PLANTING

Direct seeding is best done January through April. Eight pounds of seed per acre has been satisfactory. Presently four rows are planted on a 30 inch bed top. Beds center to center are 60 inches. Seed depth is from 1 - 1½ inches. Germination irrigation follows. It is desirable to have an in-row plant spacing of at least four inches.

## 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, UC309, UC72, 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. Over 15 irrigations per year will not be unusual. Irrigation interval during the summer is from 10-15 days.

## 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 hand cut from mid-January through mid-April. 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, packing, cooling and packing.

## CUTTING FERN

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

Fertilization and irrigation follow before the cutting period begins.

Prepared by  
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