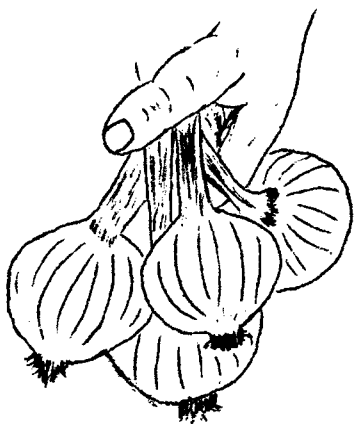


market onions

sample costs

and

production



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

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Cost Data Sheet No. 24

UC Cooperative Extension

MARKET ONIONS---SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Based on custom rates and 600 - 50 lb. sacks/acre

ACREAGE

PLANTING

During 1961-62 approximately 3,100 acres of onions were grown. Of these, 1609 were for the dehydrators, 1,195 for fresh market and about 300 for seed.

Onions need a well prepared seed bed for best stands. Most acreage is direct seeded from October 15 to 25 on beds with 40 inch centers, two rows per bed spaced 11 to 12 inches apart. About 2½ lbs. of seed per acre is planted shallow, ¼ to ½ inch deep.

VARIETIES

Because onions are sensitive to day length and temperatures, only the early maturing, "short day" types are grown. The most popular hybrids are Yellow Granex, White Granex, and Dessex. The open pollinated types are Texas Early Grano 502, L 303 White, and San Joaquin Yellow Globe, which is a later maturing variety.

Locally grown transplants are also direct seeded October 15 to 25, then lifted and transplanted during early to mid February. Transplants are usually hand set 3 inches apart in 40 inch beds where the two rows are 12 inches apart. Rows should run in a north-south direction.

YIELDS

FERTILIZERS

Normal yields range 400 to 800 fifty-pound sacks per acre, although top yields have exceeded 900 sacks.

Generally, between 200 and 250 lbs. of actual nitrogen per acre and 144 to 200 lbs. of phosphate are applied. All phosphate and 33 to 50 lbs. of nitrogen are usually broadcast before listing followed by two side-dressings of nitrogen.

SOIL REQUIREMENTS

Medium-textured sandy loams are the most desirable. Being shallow rooted, onions need a friable soil in which to easily expand and one which retains moisture about the roots especially after cultivation. Avoid salty, hard, and weed-infested soils.

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS	
	Per Acre	Per Sack
<b>LAND PREPARATION</b>		
Plow 1x	8.00	
Disc 1x	2.00	
Landplane 2x	5.00	
Float 2x	3.50	
Border	1.00	
Irrigate 1x	2.00	
Knock down borders	.75	
Disc 2x	4.00	
Broadcast Fertilizer	1.75	
List	2.50	
Ditching	.75	
<b>TOTAL LAND PREPARATION</b>	<b>31.25</b>	<b>.05</b>
<b>CULTURAL LABOR &amp; FIELD POWER</b>		
Mulch Beds	5.00	
Shape beds and Plant	3.00	
Roll beds	1.25	
Cultivate 2-5x	10.00	
Sidedress Fertilizer 2x	4.00	
Weed control 2x	45.00	
Irrigation 7-10x	15.00	
Ditching & Knocking down ditches	2.50	
<b>TOTAL CULTURAL LABOR &amp; POWER</b>	<b>85.75</b>	<b>.14</b>
<b>MATERIALS</b>		
Water 5 acre ft. @ \$4/sec. ft.	10.00	
Seed 2½ lbs. Hybrid @ 7.50/lb.	17.35	
Fertilizer 233 lb. N + 200 lb. P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	45.65	
Insecticide 1x	4.00	
<b>TOTAL MATERIALS</b>	<b>78.00</b>	<b>.13</b>
<b>CASH OVERHEAD</b>		
General expenses (10% of the above)	19.05	.03
<b>LAND RENT</b>	<b>65.00</b>	<b>.11</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL COSTS</b>	<b>\$278.05</b>	<b>.46</b>

## IRRIGATION

Onions are germinated by subbing the beds. Until two or three weeks before intended harvest, they should never suffer for lack of water. Weather and soil conditions determine the number of irrigations. Seven to 10 times are normal.

## WEEDS

Weed control, particularly during cool, wet years, may be the most expensive cultural practice. Some fields in 1961 - 62 cost over \$100 to hoe. Hand weeding and hoeing is yet the common practice.

Research is continuing on chemical weed control. For the latest information, consult your farm advisor.

## PEST AND DISEASES

Thrips may cause damage. Disease problems are presently unimportant. However, pink root (a soil inhabiting fungus) can become serious through importing infected transplants into Imperial County. To date a few fields are known to be infested. For the latest information on insect and disease control along with precautions on the use of insecticides, consult your farm advisor.

## HARVESTING AND MARKETING

Harvesting takes place from late March through early April after approximately 25% of the tops have fallen over. Bulbs are dug, hand topped and rooted, sacked and hauled to sheds for grading, sacking, loading and shipping. During storage adequate ventilation is important.

Prepared by  
FRANCIS C. LE BARON  
Farm Advisor

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