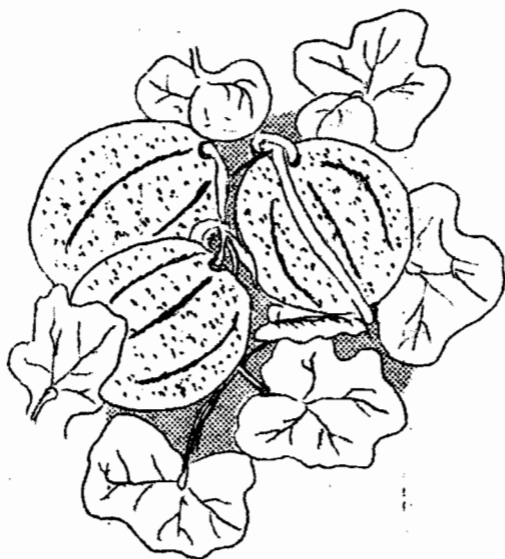


cantaloupes (spring)

sample costs

and

production



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

Cost Data Sheet No. 13

UC Cooperative Extension

SPRING CANTALOUPE--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$3.00 per hour (\$2.53 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

Yield - 175 crates per acre (7 tons). 85-90 days to maturity.

OPERATION	Custom Rate	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR		SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
LAND PREPARATION						
Plow or subsoil	\$12.00					\$ 12.00
Disc 2x	3.50					7.00
Border & break border	4.00					4.00
Flood		Water .75 ac ft	2.00	1	2.00	4.00
Fertilize	2.50	400# 11-48-0	46.00			48.50
List	6.00					6.00
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION						\$ 81.50
GROWING PERIOD						
Plant & shape beds	6.75	Seed 2# @ 5.00	10.00			16.75
Reshape beds	12.00					12.00
Pollination		Hives 1.5 @ 10.00	15.00			15.00
Thin				14	12.00	12.00
Cultivate 2x	3.50					7.00
Fertilize - side-dress 1x	4.50	100# N @ 20¢	20.00			24.50
Weed 1x				10	30.00	30.00
Irrigate 5x		Water 3 ac ft	8.10	10	30.00	38.10
Pest Control 3x	3.00	Pesticides, Fungicides	21.00			30.00
TOTAL GROWING PERIOD						\$185.35
GROWING PERIOD & LAND PREP COSTS						\$266.85
Land Rent						125.00
Cash Overhead - 10% of preharvest costs and land rent						39.19
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS						\$431.04
HARVEST						
Pick, haul, pack, & crate 175 crates @ 4.25						\$743.75
TOTAL ALL COSTS						\$1174.79

Cost per crate = \$6.71

YIELDS

1973 average 6.95 tons/acre (160 crates). Average yields are about 140 - 160 crates. The Agricultural Commissioner's reports show seasonal average prices per ton during the past five years varied from a low of \$121.33 in 1969 to a high of \$189.45 in 1973.

PLANTING DATES

Plantings to be capped are seeded from mid-December through January. Open melons are planted from mid-January through mid-March.

VARIETIES

Nearly all of the acreage is planted to Topmark.

SOILS

Well drained soils are preferred. Sandy or silt loams are sometimes selected for the earliest crop. Heavier soils are preferred for most of the acreage because of their greater water holding capacity which slows the onset of vine collapse in summer.

*IRRIGATION

After planting, the beds are subbed past the seed line. Following emergence, water is often withheld until flowering. This is done to maintain soil warmth and promote early production. When harvesting begins, water is applied by quick, light irrigations. During this time, excessive moisture may increase ground spotting, rotted and soft fruit.

FERTILIZERS

400 pounds of 11-48-0 are often applied before listing. Up to 150 pounds of nitrogen are later sidedressed.

POLLINATION

At least one hive of bees per acre is recommended and 1 1/2 hives are better. The bees should be distributed on at least two sides of a 40 acre field.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Cantaloupes are subject to a number of problems including nematodes, cutworms, aphids, mites, loopers, leafhoppers, leafminers, ground beetles, crickets, mosaic virus and mildew. Consult your Farm Advisor for pest control recommendations.

HARVESTING

Spring melons are harvested from May to July. The fruit are picked at the full slip stage. After hauling to a shed, they are sorted and graded in wood crates holding 23, 27, 36, 45 or 54 melons. Some 2/3 crate cartons are being used instead of the standard wooden crates.

SPECIAL PRACTICES

If fumigated, add \$4.00 application fee and \$26.60 for fumigant.

Prepared by
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Agricultural Extension Staff

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