July 1954

Sample Inputs and Costs in Potato Production
San Benito County, with a Yield of 200 Sacks per Acre

	Man labor	40 h.p. tractor	30 h.p. tractor	1½ ton truck	Cost per acre	Cost per cwt.
	Hours per Acre					
Prepare and plant covercrop ½	1.0	1.0			3.70	
Land preparation	4.0	3.8		.1	14.53	
Pre-irrigation incl. ridge	4.8	.3			5.16	
Cut and treat seed	7.0				6.30	
Plant with fertilizer	2.0		1.0	.5	6.30	
Cultivate and hill, 4 times	3.0		3.0		8.10	
Irrigate 5 times, incl. ditch	12.5	.2			11.77	
Dusting 3 times, contract					6.00	
Miscel. hoe, etc.	5.0	.5	.5	1.0	9.50	
Total cultural labor	39.3	5.8	4.5	1.6	71.36	.36
Rotobeat vines	2.0		2.0		5.40	
Dig with 2 row digger, engine .60	4.0	2.0			10.20	
Picking, including foreman	26.0				23.80	
Load, haul in, and store	12.0			2.0	16.20	
Remove, grade, sack, load	32.0				30.00	
Total harvest and handle	76.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	85.60	.43
Total labor and field power cost	115.3	7.8	6.5		156.96	.79
Irrigation water, power to pump 24 A. inches @ 35¢					8.40	
Seed potatoes, 1250 # @ 4.50 plus store .35 and haul .08					61.63	
Fertilizer, 1250 # commercial to furnish 150# nitrogen					47.00	
Dust - 10% DDT - 40 lb. each of 3 times @ 9½¢					11.40	
Used sacks, 200 @ 7½¢					15.00	
Miscel. disinfectant, electricity, cover crop seed, ½					4.50	
Total material cost					147.93	.74
Total labor and material cost					304.89	1.53
General cash overhead expense, est. at 5% of above					15.24	
County taxes, land equipment and warehouse					10.00	
Repairs to equipment other than truck or tractor					4.00	
Insurance, comp. 2.50 fire 1.00					3.50	
Total cash overhead cost					32.74	.16
Total cash cost					337.63	1.69
Investment overhead is based on a 100 acre farm and 40 A. of potatoes	Orig. cost	Av. value	5% int.	Depreciation		
	Dollars an acre					
Gen'l bldg. and equipment	20.	10.	.50	.50		
Irrig. well, pump, pipeline	86.	43.	2.15	3.43		
Tillage equipment	36.	18.	.90	2.44		
Potato planter and digger	76.	38.	1.90	7.50		
Potato warehouse and grader	200.	100.	5.00	8.30		
Miscel. eqt. and small tools	12.	6.	.30	1.00		
Land	800.	800.	40.00			
Total investment	1230.	1015.				
Total depreciation				23.17	23.17	.12
Total cash and depreciation costs					360.80	1.81
Interest on investment @ 5%			50.75		50.75	.25
Total all costs					411.55	2.06

Labor costs are figured above at the following hourly rates: man labor $0.85, .90, 1.10; 40 hp. track tractor $2.60, 30 hp. wheel tractor $1.60, 1½ ton truck, $2.50. These tractor and truck rates include repairs and overhead as well as actual operating costs.

California Agricultural Extension Service Hollister, July, 1954

POTATO GROWING IN SAN BENITO COUNTY

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Potatoes are a relatively recent commercial crop in San Benito County. Between 1940 and 1950 the potato acreage averaged about 600 acres annually. Since 1950 there have been between 1500 and 2000 planted each year.

Varieties: The Russet or Netted Gem has for many years been the leading variety for the late crop, but because of its susceptibility to soil borne diseases other varieties have been introduced. The Kennebec has become popular for potato chips, and the White Rose for early planting and for the market.

Requirements: For the late potato crop soils of the sandy or silt loam types are preferred. Potatoes grown on heavy soils are often misshapen and frequently bruised in harvesting. Areas where early fall rains are frequent should be avoided because of harvesting difficulties. Mild fall weather such as is prevalent in the Central Coast is ideal for maturing the potato crop.

Irrigation: Potatoes require an abundant and constant supply of soil moisture during the entire growing period. The ground is irrigated prior to planting, and on the silt loam soils the crop requires four additional irrigations.

Pest Control: The most serious insect pest to growing potatoes is the tuber moth. The larvae of these moths form tunnels under the skins of the tubers and do considerable damage. Dustings with DDT at three week intervals, beginning 50 days after planting, have given good control. Wireworms and eelworms are sometimes serious pests, requiring preventative soil treatments for control.

Among the diseases, Verticillium wilt has been the most serious, causing early decline of the vines. Resistant varieties are now being used to combat this disease. Serious storage diseases also frequently cause losses, the main one being leak disease. There is no known control for this disease.

Marketing: Most of the potatoes grown in San Benito County are used in the manufacture of potato chips. The main source of supply between November and March, for both the San Francisco and Los Angeles processors, is the San Benito County crop. Potatoes are dug in the fall and stored in grower's warehouses during the winter in order to provide a constant supply of potatoes for the manufacturers during these months. The price paid by processors varies with the supply and with the price of U.S. No. 1 potatoes, but is usually between 50¢ and $1.00 below the price for market potatoes.

Production Costs: On the opposite side of this sheet are sample production costs based on local observation and inquiry. These are not represented as average costs, but are believed to be fairly typical for 1954. Actual costs may vary widely from year to year and from farm to farm, the most important factor in cost being the yield per acre.