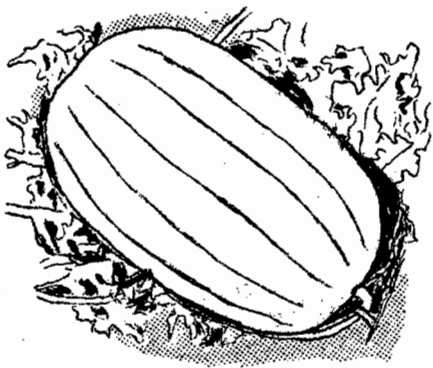


watermelons

sample costs

and

production



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

Fact Sheet No. 19

UC Cooperative Extension

WATERMELONS--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

ITEMS	<u>SAMPLE COSTS</u> Per Acre
LAND PREPARATION	
Plow 1x	\$ 8.00
Disc 2x	3.50
Float 1x	1.50
Border	.75
Irrigate 1x	1.00
Knock down borders	.75
Disc 1x	1.75
Float 1x	1.50
Fertilizer (preplant)	2.00
Bedding	5.00
Ditching	.75
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION	\$ 26.50
CULTURAL LABOR AND POWER	
Mulch beds	4.00
Planting	2.50
Capping	30.00
Thinning & weeding	30.00
Cultivate 3x	10.50
Fertilization 2x	6.00
Vine turning 5x	20.00
Irrigation 10x	10.00
Pest control 6x	12.00
Ditching & knocking down ditches 3x	3.75
Setting irrigation pipes	5.00
TOTAL CULTURE AND POWER	\$ 133.75
MATERIALS	
Water 3'	6.00
Seed - 1 lb.	1.60
Fertilizers (80 N + 120 P ₂ O ₅)	20.00
Insecticides	12.00
Paper caps	21.00
Sticks	2.00
TOTAL MATERIALS	\$ 62.60

ITEMS	<u>SAMPLE COSTS</u> Per Acre
CASH OVERHEAD	
General expense 8% of the above	17.82
LAND RENT	65.00
TOTAL ALL COSTS	\$ 305.67
CLIMATE	LAND PREPARATION
Watermelons need plenty of sunshine, low humidity, and little or no rain. Temperatures above 80°F are necessary for optimum growth.	See table under land preparation.
SOIL	VARIETIES
Melons are usually grown on sandy or sandy loam soils.	Peacock is the most popular variety. It has a very tough rind, which makes it an excellent shipper. It is similar in appearance to Klondike, but not as sweet.
ACREAGE	IRRIGATION
Acreage fluctuates between 4,000 and 7,000 acres. In 1958-59 4,330 acres were planted.	There is some Dark Green Klondike planted, but it is a poor shipper. It is an excellent melon for eating. Yields of 7 tons are average.
PLANTING DATE	After the beds have been formed, the first irrigation is applied. The beds are irrigated until completely subbed.
Planting is usually done the last week of November, and the first three weeks of December. As soon as the melons are planted, each hill is capped for frost protection. The cap remains over the small plant until danger of frost has passed.	When the beds have dried enough to allow mulching, they are then mulched, shaped with a V shaper, and planted. After planting,

the beds are irrigated again to assure sufficient moisture for seed germination. Depending on the weather, the melons are usually not irrigated again until cap removal.

When the plants start to set fruit, they should never suffer for water. For maximum yields it is important that a sufficient supply of moisture be available throughout the growing season.

FERTILIZATION

Watermelons should receive 80 to 120 lbs. of phosphate applied ahead of bed formation. Eighty to 100 lbs. of nitrogen are applied in a split application--half the nitrogen before bed formation and the rest sidedressed after runners are formed.

Ten tons of steer manure per acre should be applied before plowing and disking and ahead of the first irrigation. Manure should be decomposed before planting.

When plants form the first runner, sidedress with 40 to 60 lbs. of nitrogen.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Cutworms, aphids, spider mites, darkling ground beetles, leafhoppers, cabbage loopers, and leafminers are the most serious pests of watermelons.

Watermelon wilt and root rot are the most serious diseases of watermelon. If you know the field has wilt, be sure to plant a resistant variety.

Consult the University of California Vegetable Crop Pest and Disease Control Guide for Imperial County. Copies are available at your Farm Advisors' office.

HARVESTING

Use a sharp knife to cut melons from the vines. Pulling may cause melons to crack open. Melons are picked on the basis of color change, thumping, and rind roughness. Color change is the most reliable.

COST OF PRODUCTION

As you increase the tons per acre, you decrease the cost per ton.

Example

Tons/Acre	6	9	12	15
Cost/Ton	51.49	34.33	25.75	21.60

Prepared by
James R. Breece
Farm Advisor

April 1961

Co-operative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, College of Agriculture, University of California, and United States Department of Agriculture co-operating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, and June 30, 1914. George B. Alcorn, Director, California Agricultural Extension Service.

UC Cooperative Extension