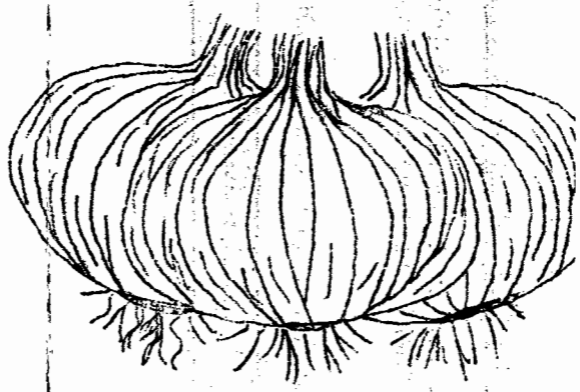


market onions  
sample costs  
and  
production



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

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Cost Data Sheet No. 16

ONIONS FRESH MARKET--PROJECTED PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$3.75 per hour (\$3.00 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

Yield - 600 50# sacks per acre. (15 tons). 150+ days to maturity.

OPERATION	Custom Rate	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR*		SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
<b>LAND PREPARATION</b>						
Subsoil	\$ 12.50					\$ 12.50
Disc 2x	4.50					9.00
Border & break border	4.50					4.50
Flood		Water .75 ft/A	2.63	1	3.75*	6.38
Fertilize	3.00	300# 11-48-0	40.00			43.00
Disc 2x	4.50					9.00
Landplane 2x	5.00					10.00
List	5.00					5.00
<b>TOTAL LAND PREPARATION</b>						<b>\$ 99.38</b>

**GROWING PERIOD**

Plant	6.50	Seed 2# @ 20.00	40.00			
		+ coating	10.00			56.50
Herbicide 2x	3.00		37.00		Dacthal®	43.00
Cultivate 4x	4.00					16.00
Fertilize - side - dress 2x	4.50	250# N @ 25¢	62.50			71.50
Weed 2x				17	63.75	63.75
Sprinklers		Rent	35.00	9	33.75*	68.75
Irrigate 12x		Water 4 1/2 ac ft				
			15.75	15	56.25*	72.00
Pest Control 2x	3.00	Pesticides	10.00			16.00
<b>GROWING PERIOD</b>						<b>\$ 407.50</b>

**GROWING PERIOD & LAND PREP COSTS**

						\$ 507.88
Land Rent (new lease)						\$ 150.00
Cash Overhead - 12% of preharvest costs and land rent						\$ 78.95
<b>TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS</b>						<b>\$ 735.83</b>

**HARVEST COSTS**

Dig, top, haul, pack, sacks, selling commission for 600 sacks at \$2.00 per 50# sack						\$ 1200.00
<b>TOTAL ALL COSTS</b>						<b>\$ 1935.83</b>

Cost per sack = \$3.23

\*Includes shovel work, pipe setting and tractor work.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>YIELD/ACRE (TONS)</u>	<u>VALUE/TON</u>
1970	1800	14.00	\$ 94.44
1971	1950	12.82	59.40
1972	1900	13.68	110.00
1973	1500	17.33	242.46
1974	1700	12.50	105.79

**PLANTING:** Most acreage is direct seeded from mid-October to mid-November. Forty-two inch beds with 4 to 6 lines are used. Some plantings have been made with three lines on narrow beds.

**\*VARIETIES:** Onions are sensitive to day length and temperature. Only the early maturing, short day types are grown. The most popular types are Yellow Granex, Texas Early Grano 502, White Granex, Early Premium and Dessex. Seed costs may vary from \$11.00 - \$30.00 per pound or higher depending upon variety and season.

**WEED CONTROL:** Herbicides are commonly applied pre-emergence. Consult your Farm Advisor for latest recommendations. Some postplant applications are made with corresponding additional costs.

## SOILS

Medium textured sandy loams are the most desirable. Onions are shallow rooted and need a friable soil which retains moisture about the roots especially after cultivation. Avoid salty, hard, or weed-infested soils.

## IRRIGATION

Until two or three weeks before intended harvest, onions should never suffer for lack of water. Weather and soil conditions determine the number of irrigations. Seven to 12 times are normal. Irrigation costs listed, include the use of sprinklers for germination. Also included are costs for shovel work, pipe setting and grading.

## FERTILIZERS

Generally, between 200 and 250 lbs of actual nitrogen per acre and 144 and 200 lbs of  $P_2O_5$  are applied. All  $P_2O_5$  and 33 to 50 lbs of nitrogen are usually broadcast before listing followed by two sidedressings of nitrogen.

## PESTS AND DISEASES

Mites, thrips, armyworms, leaf-miners, maggots, downy mildew and

nematodes may be problems. Pink root is a soil-borne disease affecting onions. Varieties resistant to pink root are available.

## HARVESTING

Harvesting takes place from late March through May after 25% of the tops have fallen over. Bulbs are dug, hand topped and roots trimmed. They are sacked in burlap and hauled to sheds for grading, re-sacking, loading and shipping. During storage adequate ventilation is important.

Prepared by  
Imperial County  
Agricultural Extension Staff

Revised September 1975

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Co-operative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Division of Agricultural Sciences, 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. J.B. Kendrick, Jr., Director, California Agricultural Extension