

Cooperative Extension
University Of California
Santa Barbara County

ESTIMATED COST TO PRODUCE FRENCH MARIGOLD SEED
Open Pollinated Varieties
In Lompoc-Buellton Area
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Yield 150-450 pounds per acre clean seed based on 70 acres of Marigolds on an 800 acre farm. Equipment operator-\$4.75 per hour* other labor-\$3.75 per hour*

Operating Costs

	Fuel & Repairs	Deprec.	Interest	Total
CT-Crawler tractor 80 hp.	\$7.55	\$2.60	\$1.98	\$12.13
WT-Wheel Diesel Tractor 60 hp.	4.70	1.60	.80	7.10
SWT-Tractor 40 hp.	3.10	1.45	.72	5.27

Operations	Tractors	**Acres /hour	Hours /acre	Labor \$	Fuel & Repair \$	Materials		Cost/Acre	
						Kind	Amount	Costs \$	Sample Yours
Cultural Costs									
Disc 2 x	CT	4.0	.50	2.37	3.77				6.14
Chisel	CT	2.0	.50	2.37	3.77				6.14
Land Plane	CT	2.0	.50	2.37	3.77				6.14
Disc 1x	CT	4.0	.25	1.16	1.86				3.02
Harrow 2x	CT	10.0	.20	.95	1.51				2.46
List and Fertilize-Custom						30 lb.N; 50 lb. P ₂ O ₅ ; 50lb.K ₂ O + applic.	44.50	44.50	
Weed Control-Custom						Herbicide and applic.	16.00	16.00	
Plant ***	WT	3.3	.30	2.55	.81	4 lb. seed @4.00/lb.	16.00	19.64	
Cultivate 4x	SWT	2.0	2.0	9.50	6.20			15.70	
Rogue			4.5	16.65				16.65	
Hand Weed @3.60/hr.			9.0	32.00				32.00	
			to	to				to	
			55.00	198.00				198.00	
Fertilize-Custom						120 lb N @35.00 + applied 4.00	39.00	39.00	
Irrigate 4x (normally)			6.00	22.50		Water 2A ft. @10.00 + pipe & pump	23.00	45.50	
Total Cultural Costs			23.75	92.80	21.69		138.50	252.99	
			to	to				to	
			59.75	258.40				418.59	
Harvest Costs									
Cut	SWT	2.0	.50	2.37	1.55			3.92	
Tarp			12.00	45.00		Tarps	3.55	48.55	
Hand Labor			30.00	112.50				112.50	

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French Marigolds

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Operations

	Acres/hour	Hours/Acres	Labor	Fuel & Rep.	Material		Cost/Acre	
					Kind & Amount	Costs	Sample	Yours
Scalping (Thrashing Field run)				37.75				
One man @4.75	.20	5.00	23.75					
Two men @3.75		10.00	37.50					
	.20	15.00	61.25	37.75			99.00	
Haul		.30	1.43	.63			2.06	
Cleaning		8.00	38.00	20.90			58.90	
Total Cost Harvest, Clean		65.80	260.85	60.83		3.55	324.93	
Cash Overhead								
Land Rent							200.00	
Supervision @\$5.30 per acre month x 12 months							63.60	
Business and Miscellaneous Costs 6% of Cultural, Harvest, Rent and Supervision							50.49	
							to	
							60.43	
Total Cash Overhead							314.05	
							to	
							324.03	
Depreciation and Interest		Depreciation	Interest					
Tractor		11.35	6.98				18.33	
Other equipment \$250.00-10 years		25.00	10.00				35.00	
Total Depreciation and Interest		36.35	16.98				53.33	
Total Cost per acre							937.45	
							to	
							1112.99	
Total Cost Per Pound Clean Seed							2.08	
							to	
							7.41	

* Social Security, workmans compensation, etc., included.

** The number acres per hour for each time the operation is done.

*** One man on tractor and one man on planter.

The hourly cash costs for tractors and implements consists of fuel, lubricants, repairs, and maintenance. For each operation, maintenance and repair costs for the equipment is added to that of the cash cost for the tractor. These costs are taken from "Farm Machinery Costs", a 1975 U. C. Cooperative Extension publication by A. Doyle Reed, available at Farm Advisors offices. Costs of moving machinery between fields that may be several miles apart are covered under general expenses. Seeds of over 1,500 varieties of flowers are available to amateur gardeners in the United States. Several hundreds of these varieties are produced in the Lompoc-Buellton area of Santa Barbara County. The acreage for flower seed comprises small plantings of many crops. Each species of flower

grown for seed has its own planting time, cultural problems of pollination, and harvesting technique. Thus, each variety is different with respect to quantity of seed produced per plant and price paid for a measured amount of seed. For example, one company lists over 70 different varieties of French marigolds. The open pollinated varieties usually yield between 150 to 450 pounds of clean seed per acre. The price paid to the farmer may be as low as 80 cents per pound and as high as 8 dollars per pound. The cultural operations performed by the farmer varies with the contract. For example the seed company might be responsible for roguing and cleaning the seed. For the purpose of this study I'm assuming that the farmer performs and stands all the costs of the operations reported in the study. Where the farmer performs all the operations and assumes these costs the price per pound of seed probably will be in the range of 3 to 8 dollars per pound.

Cost data in this publication are the authors estimates of labor and equipment required to produce open pollinated French Marigold seed in the Lompoc Valley. The price paid per pound of clean seed was determined by talking to seedsmen who contract annually with farmers to grow the seed. Other sources of information include comparisons of costs to perform similar tasks in other costs production studies of other crops.

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