

# 1973

## **FRENCH PRUNE**

### Orchard Production Costs in the Southern San Joaquin Valley

#### **Cost Analysis Worksheet Showing Sample Costs**

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**Agricultural Extension      University of California**

**COST ANALYSIS WORKSHEET: French Prune Production Costs for a Mature Orchard, 1973.**

	SAMPLE COSTS		YOUR COSTS	
	Per Acre	Per Dry Ton	Per Acre	Per Dry Ton
<b>PRE-HARVEST CASH COSTS</b>				
Prune: 108 trees @ 60¢	\$ 64.80	\$	\$	\$
Brush disposal: 2 hours labor + 1/2 tractor-hour	5.48			
Fertilizer: 85 pounds nitrogen @ 11¢/pound applied	9.35			
Spray: contract two times @ 1 1/2¢/gallon	15.00			
Spray material	20.00			
Irrigation: 8 times, 4 hours labor	9.20			
Water: power 4 acre-feet @ \$5.50/acre-foot + district tax @ \$6.00	28.00			
Cultivate and check: 4 hours labor + 4 tractor-hours	16.20			
Misc. labor and materials, includes propping and tying	16.00			
County taxes	32.00			
Repairs, except tractor	10.00			
Office and business costs	37.56			
<b>Total Pre-Harvest Cash Costs</b>	<b>\$ 263.59</b>	<b>\$ 65.90</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>HARVEST COSTS</b>				
Land preparation for harvest: 1 hour labor + 1 tractor-hour	\$ 4.05	\$	\$	\$
Shake, pick, load: contract @ \$22/fresh ton	264.00			
Haul to dehydrator and return bins: @ \$2.50/fresh ton	30.00			
Dehydrate: @ \$23/fresh ton	276.00			
<b>Total Harvest Costs</b>	<b>\$ 574.05</b>	<b>\$ 143.51</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Total Cash Costs</b>	<b>\$ 837.64</b>	<b>\$ 209.41</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>				
Irrigation system: \$250 cost, 15-year life	\$ 16.67	\$	\$	\$
Buildings and equipment: \$120 cost, 12-year life	10.00			
Tractor: 6 1/2 hours @ \$1.20/hour	7.80			
Trees: \$1,680 cost, 25-year life	67.20			
<b>Total Depreciation</b>	<b>\$ 101.67</b>	<b>\$ 25.42</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>INTEREST ON INVESTMENT @ 7%</b>				
Irrigation system: 1/2 cost, \$125	\$ 8.75	\$	\$	\$
Buildings and equipment: 1/2 cost, \$60	4.20			
Tractor: 6 1/2 hours @ 70¢/hour	4.55			
Trees: 1/2 cost, \$840	58.80			
Land: @ \$1,000/acre	70.00			
<b>Total Interest on Investment</b>	<b>\$ 146.30</b>	<b>\$ 36.58</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>TOTAL COST OF PRODUCTION</b>	<b>\$1,085.61</b>	<b>\$ 271.40</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>

**SAMPLE COSTS PER DRY TON AT VARYING YIELDS**

Yield (dry tons/acre)	2.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0
Cash costs	\$ 276.32	\$ 231.71	\$ 218.97	\$ 209.41	\$ 201.98	\$ 196.03
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$ 400.31</b>	<b>\$ 314.37</b>	<b>\$ 289.81</b>	<b>\$ 271.40</b>	<b>\$ 257.08</b>	<b>\$ 245.62</b>

Costs are for 108 trees per acre and a yield of 4.0 dry tons per acre with a drying ratio of 3 tons fresh to 1 ton dry. Based on labor @ \$2.30 and \$2.65 per hour; medium-wheel tractor per hour cash costs @ \$1.40; depreciation @ \$1.20; and interest @ \$.70.

## ABOUT THIS SHEET

The cost data presented in this sheet are for use as a guide in determining the costs to produce French prunes in a specific orchard. These figures are based on what are considered to be good management practices; they are not intended to represent industry averages. Each planting varies according to soil type, water availability, yield and fruit quality, and the size of the operation.

**Soil.** In the southern San Joaquin Valley, prunes are usually grown on alluvial soils. The areas of most concentrated production include Visalia, Woodville, Porterville, and the region north of Bakersfield. Although trees tolerate a wide variety of soil types, heavy, shallow, or excessively saline or alkaline soils rarely produce optimum crops.

**Water Availability.** Irrigation is necessary to supply sufficient moisture to produce maximum crops and to ensure adequate tree growth. Do not plant prunes in areas where there is not good quality water or where it is not possible to use well water, since ditch water may not be available in dry years.

**Yield and Fruit Quality.** Adequate production of high-quality fruit is the most important factor influencing profit. Fruit size varies inversely with crop load. Excessively heavy crops—more than 12 green tons per acre—may adversely affect fruit size and net worth and, at the same time, increase the variable costs per acre. In the southern San Joaquin Valley, poor management practices often result in "over crops" and poor fruit sizes.

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