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GROWING BARLEY IN TULARE COUNTY

Barley is one of the major field crops in Tulare County with an average of about 50,000 acres per year being planted to this crop. Most of this acreage is irrigated, although in the northern part of the county and along the foothills where more rainfall occurs some barley is grown dry-farmed.

Soil and Water Requirements - Barley will do well on most kinds of soil. On sandy soil or land depleted of fertility by cropping, fertilization usually proves worthwhile. Soils containing moderate amounts of alkali will frequently produce a fair crop of barley where summer irrigated crops are a failure.

Except in areas where more than 10 inches of rainfall occurs, barley should be irrigated at least once in the spring. A pre-irrigation in the fall is also usually advisable.

Varieties and Uses - Most barley grown in Tulare County is used for livestock feeding. For this purpose, Club (Golden) Mariout, Atlas, and the new Arivat barleys are recommended. Arivat is also the most alkali resistant variety. California (Blue) barley is coming back into favor with development of new processing equipment. It is the earliest maturing and most drought resistant variety. Atlas is the only malting barley grown in this area. Vaughn barley produces the best winter pasture and is also high yielding for grain.

Seeding Rates - 80 lbs. seed per acre on irrigated land and 60 lbs. per acre dry-farmed is usually recommended. Both seeding rates should be increased somewhat for late winter planting or when seed is broadcast and then covered.

Yield - A good average yield of barley is 2400 lbs. per acre although yields of 2½ tons per acre have been observed. Since costs, except for harvesting, are relatively fixed regardless of yield, high production per acre markedly reduces cost per 100 lbs. of growing the crop and permits higher net income.

Except on very fertile soils or under poor moisture conditions, fertilization is frequently effective in increasing yields. On sandy loam soils approximately 30 to 40 lbs. nitrogen per acre is recommended. On heavy clay, red or adobe soils about 30 lbs. nitrogen and 40 lbs. phosphate per acre is recommended. Fertilizer should be applied either prior to or at time of seeding.

Outlook - Price and usage of barley is directly affected by supplies of other feed grains, primarily corn and wheat. Large supplies of both these grains are being carried over into 1950. Although numbers of livestock are also increasing, the supplies of feed grain per animal are quite high. Prices for barley in 1950 are therefore likely to be somewhat lower than during the preceding year.

The Government supported the price of barley for the 1949 crop at \$1.20 per bushel U.S. No. 1 bright, or \$50 per ton. Although barley is not considered a basic crop for price supports, it seems likely that a program will again be in effect for 1950.

WHAT WILL IT COST TO GROW BARLEY AS A WINTER CROP IN ROTATIONS?

The sample below is based on 2 irrigations and a yield of 2400 pounds or 22-110# sacks per acre. Double cropping is assumed so only 40% of taxes and land and pumping plant overhead are charged to barley.

Operation or item with hours or quantity, and prices per acre	Sample Costs Per Acre	My Costs Per Acre
Prepare land-plow, disc, harrow, 2 hr. man @ 85¢ and large tractor @ 2.50	6.70	
Drill, seed, 1 man and small tractor. 33 hr. @ 1.25	.70	
Irrigate - 1 pre-planting and 1 crop, 2.5 hr. labor	2.15	
Combine, contract	5.40	.23
Hauling out grain @ 1.50 Ton contract	1.80	.07
Total labor cost	16.75	.70
Irrigation water 1 acre foot at 2.50	2.50	
Seed 80# @ 4.00 cwt. treated	3.20	
Sacks 22 @ 22¢ and twine	5.00	
Total material cost	10.70	.45
General expense, car, phone, etc. @ 5% of above	1.40	
County taxes 50 value, rate 6.00 = 3.00 x 40%	1.20	
Repairs, insurance, etc.	2.00	
Total cash overhead cost	4.60	.19
TOTAL CASH COSTS	32.05	1.34
Depreciation		
Irrigation system \$80 cost per acre over 20 years x 40% to barley	1.60	
Tillage-eqt., drill, etc. \$20 an acre, 10 yr.	2.00	
Total depreciation	3.60	.15
Interest on investment at 5%		
Irrig. system, tillage equipment, etc. investment chargeable to barley	1.30	
Land \$300 an acre x 40%	6.00	
Total interest on investment	7.30	.30
Total cost of production	42.95	1.79
Less credit for pasture, straw, and stubble	2.00	.08
Net cost of grain produced	40.95	1.71

The above sample costs show a reasonable net cost of production of around \$1.71 a cwt. in sacks field run at the warehouse. These costs could be lowered with larger scale more efficient operations or with better yields. No fertilization is assumed although that might be necessary to maintain such a good yield. If barley were the only crop for the year, charging it with a year's taxes and overhead on land and pumping plant would increase the computed costs.

The above costs should not be taken as more than an illustration. Estimate your own costs and insert them above. Such an estimate will help you decide on whether to grow barley. UC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION