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1/25/55
200 c.

LT-SI-55-1

University of California
Agricultural Extension Service
Imperial County

LETTUCE
1955

WHAT DOES IT COST YOU TO GROW LETTUCE?
(Based on 200 crates/acre)

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS		YOUR COSTS	
	Per Acre	Per Crate	Per Acre	Per Crate
LAND PREPARATION				
Plow 1x	5.00			
Disc 2x	3.00			
Float 1x	1.25			
Border	.75			
Irrigate 1x	1.00			
Knock down borders	.50			
Disc 1x	1.50			
Float 1x	1.25			
Fertilize (preplant)	1.00			
List	2.25			
Ditching	.75			
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION	18.25	.09		
CULTURAL LABOR & FIELD POWER				
Mulch beds	1.75			
Planting	2.25			
Thinning	15.00			
Cultivate 5x	11.25			
Fertilization 2x	4.50			
Weed control	6.00			
Irrigation 6x	5.00			
Pest control 4x	8.00			
Ditching & knocking down ditches 4x	2.50			
Setting irrigation pipes	3.00			
Miscellaneous	10.00			
TOTAL CULTURAL LABOR & POWER	69.25	.35		
MATERIALS				
Water	4.50			
Seed--2 to 3 lbs./acre	6.00			
Fertilizer (100 N + 150 P ₂ O ₅)	30.00			
Insecticide	12.00			
Miscellaneous	3.00			
TOTAL MATERIALS	55.50	.27		
CASH OVERHEAD				
General expense 5% of the above	7.20			
Taxes	2.00			
Insurance	1.00			
Miscellaneous	2.00			
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD	12.20	.06		
LAND RENT (1/2 year)	30.00	.15		
DEPRECIATION	2.00			
TOTAL ALL COSTS	187.20	.93		

The above costs are based on large company operations and contract rates which are higher than owner-operator costs. These costs are based on a normal growing season. Sometimes weather, insects, and plant diseases can raise the above total cost.

Estimate your own costs by filling in the last two columns based on your own expected yields, cost of operations, and material that would be required on your land.

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LETTUCE PRODUCTION

ACREAGE: The lettuce acreage in Imperial Valley generally fluctuates between 25,000 and 35,000 acres. In 1954-55 there were 29,000 acres planted to lettuce.

YIELDS: The average yield runs about 150 crates per acre, but many of the growers are able to cut 200 or more.

VARIETIES: The time of planting usually determines the variety that will be planted. Great Lakes 118, G.L. 59, Premier G.L., Imperial 847, Imperial 44, and Imperial 152 are planted for early harvest. Imperial 615 and Imperial 101 are used for late plantings.

SOILS: Lettuce is usually grown on the heavier soil types in the Imperial Valley. Lettuce has a moderate degree of salt tolerance. When grown on salty ground, head size is usually smaller.

PLANTING DATE: Early lettuce is planted the first part of September for December harvest. Late lettuce is planted in November for February-March harvest.

IRRIGATION: Ground temperatures should be kept below 97° F. during the germination period. Early lettuce is therefore kept extremely wet when temperatures are high in an attempt to keep soil temperatures down. Never allow plants to wilt. Normally, six irrigations are adequate.

FERTILIZERS: Phosphate is usually broadcast ahead of listing of beds. 120 to 160 pounds actual P_2O_5 per acre should be adequate. Nitrogen on early lettuce is used sparingly. After cool weather sets in, up to 120 pounds actual N. per acre may be beneficial. Nitrogen will give a dark green color and is often used within two weeks of harvest to improve color. Potash should not be needed.

PESTS AND DISEASES: Crickets, cutworms, grasshoppers, wooly worms, beet armyworms, and loopers, are insects to watch for early in the season. Loopers can be a serious pest after thinning.

Lettuce mosaic, downy mildew, seedling disease, tip burn, drop, and occasionally big vein are the diseases found in lettuce in the valley. Growers should inspect their fields often for insects and diseases. Consult your Farm Advisor for the latest information on these pests.

HARVESTING: Approximately 95% of the lettuce in 1954-55 is expected to be packed in cartons in the field. Most of it is vacuum cooled. Some lettuce is iced for eastern shipments.

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