

Santa Barbara County - 1965

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California ranks first in the production of chili peppers in the United States. Santa Barbara County's share of the state's total value is approximately twenty percent. Within the county, chili peppers rank fifth in acreage and sixth in value of all vegetable crops.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Harvested Acreage</u>	<u>Average Yield (Ton/Ac.)</u>	<u>Total Production (Tons)</u>	<u>Farm Price (Per ton)</u>	<u>Total Value</u>
1959	847	1.7	1,464	\$412	\$ 602,790
1960	904	1.38	1,251	376	469,900
1961	757	1.57	1,185	378	447,700
1962	900	1.5	1,350	520	702,000
1963	1,330	1.2	1,600	525	840,000

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILI PEPPER FARMS

Since chili peppers are a warm season crop, their production is confined primarily to the valley land east of Santa Maria. Other areas in the county, such as the Santa Ynez and Los Alamos Valleys are possible growing areas. However, the processing plants are located in the Santa Maria area and transportation costs from other areas may be prohibitive.

The chili pepper grower does not usually grow many of the major vegetable crops, except potatoes and green lima beans, however, his rotation will usually include sugar beets. This type of farm is generally larger than the average vegetable farm and may exceed 1,000 acres.

Soil, Water, Climate. The sandy loams are good soils for growing peppers. Chilies are sensitive to cool, wet weather. They are tolerant of high summer temperatures as long as they have sufficient moisture. When plants are small, the soil should be kept moist by light irrigation. Later irrigations may be heavier and less frequent.

MANAGEMENT FACTORS

Land preparation is similar to other crops with the same amount of time used. The major portion of the planting is usually completed in March, but does carry over into April. Irrigation and cultivation are comparable to other crops in the area, with an average of eleven irrigations and six cultivations. Fertilizer application and thinning is usually accomplished by contract arrangements. Generally, only one hoeing is necessary.

Harvesting. Harvesting is accomplished by picking and sacking, or picking into a bucket and dumping on conveyors which carry the peppers to trailers. As a rule, at least two picks are necessary.

Labor. The harvest period may begin in October and continue in to January, but approximately 85 percent of the labor for harvest is used in November and December.

### OUTLOOK

Mechanization seems possible. Growers are building harvesting devices. Almost complete mechanization can be expected, but growers will need determinant varieties (varieties where the fruit matures at one time). Acreage in the area depends on the volume the processors can handle.

SAMPLE COSTS TO PRODUCE CHILI PEPPERS

Based on 1,000 acre farm. Yield 1.5 tons dry.

Tractor driver @ \$1.65. Irrigator @ \$1.40. Other labor @ \$1.25.

Operation	Hours Per Acre	Fuel and Repairs			Material & other cash	Total
		Labor	Fuel	Repairs		
<b>Cultural</b>						
Land preparation	3.0	5.00	8.00		13.00	
Plant	2.0	3.00	3.00	Seed 4' lbs @ 5.00	26.00	
Irrigate 11 times	22.0	31.00	5.00	Water 4' @ 5.00	56.00	
Cultivate 6 times	3.0	5.00	3.60		8.60	
Fertilize 2 times				10-10-10 1,000 lbs @ 64.00	36.00	
				and application	4.00	
Pest control					5.00	
Thin	12.0	15.00			15.00	
Hoe 2 times	10.0	12.50			12.50	
Misc.	4.0	5.00	3.90		8.90	
<b>Total Cultural</b>	<b>56.0</b>	<b>76.50</b>	<b>23.50</b>		<b>81.00</b>	
<b>Harvest</b>						
Pick @ 4¢ lb		120.00			120.00	
Conveyor belt, truck, trailer, etc.					30.00	
<b>Total harvest cost</b>		<b>120.00</b>			<b>150.00</b>	
Misc. overhead					11.60	
Rent					85.00	
<b>Total Cash Cost</b>					<b>427.60</b>	
Management 5% of 1.5 ton @ \$360 - \$540.00					27.00	
			<u>Annual Cost</u>			
<u>Investment</u>	<u>Per acre</u>	<u>Depreciation</u>	<u>Interest</u>			
Equipment	180.00	18.00	5.40		23.40	
<b>Total Cost Per Acre</b>					<b>478.00</b>	
<b>Cost Per Ton @ 1.5 Ton Yield</b>					<b>318.65</b>	

CHILI PEPPERS - CASH FLOW

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Land Preparation		13.00											13.00
Plant			26.00										26.00
Irrigate				5.10	5.10	10.20	15.30	15.30	5.00				56.00
Cultivate				2.85	2.85	1.45	1.45						8.60
Fertilize					18.00	18.00							36.00
Pest Control							00.50						5.00
Thin				15.00									15.00
Hoe													12.50
Miscellaneous			4.50				4.40						8.90
Pick										40.00	40.00	40.00	120.00
Equipment										10.00	10.00	10.00	30.00
Misc. Overhead		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.60	11.60
Rent					42.50							42.50	85.00
<b>Total</b>													
Cash Cost		14.00	31.50	23.95	75.70	36.90	27.15	16.30	6.00	51.00	93.50	51.60	427.60
Income	90.00			270.00									540.00
<b>Net Income</b>	90.00	76.00	44.50	290.55	214.85	177.95	150.30	134.50	128.50	77.50	74.00	112.40	112.40