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Cucumbers-Spring Market Production 1951

What does it cost you to grow spring cucumbers?

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Yield-17 $\frac{1}{2}$ tons--or 1750-20# lugs

Items	Sample Costs			Your Costs		
	Per A	per 100#	per lug 20#	Per A	per 100#	per lug 20'
Land Preparation-labor & field power Plow, disc, furrow, chisel, float 6-10X 8-10 hrs. tractor & man	20.20	.06	.01			
Planting & hot caps - 75 M. hrs.	81.00	.23	.05			
Cultural Labor & Field power Cultivating & furrow out - 6X Hoe, thin, train vines - 85 M. hrs. Irrigate & tents 108 " " Fertilize 15 " " Miscellaneous 2.00 Total Cultural	15.00 90.00 92.00 12.00 2.00 211.00	.60	.12			
Harvesting Picking - 35000# @ $\frac{1}{2}\phi$ Hauling 35.00 Packing - $\frac{1}{2}\phi$ Total Harvesting	175.00 35.00 175.00 385.00	1.10	.22			
Materials Irrigation water 20" Plants - 42"x30" - 5000 @ $1\frac{1}{4}\phi$ Fertilizer - Chicken & Com. Pest control - L & M Hot caps - 5000 @ 1.5ϕ Tents - 5000 @ 1.9ϕ Flats - 1750 @ 20ϕ Total Materials - 1439.70	40.00 62.50 100.00 20.00 75.00 95.00 350.00 742.50	2.12	.42			
Cash overhead General expense - 5% above Taxes (equipment) Compensation insurance Repairs, etc. Total Cash overhead	71.94 1.00 18.00 5.00 95.99	.27	.06			
Depreciation	4.00	.01	-			
Rent - land - $\frac{1}{2}$ year	42.00	.12	.02			
Total all costs	1581.69	4.52	.90			

The above sample costs of growing cucumbers for the spring market are based on survey records from 9 growers in San Diego County. This assumes a yield of 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ tons or 1750-20# lugs per acre. Plants are set out in the field and both hot caps and tents are used for frost protection. A large amount of labor is involved in hoeing and training vines. Crates and packing costs are included.

Estimate your own costs by filling in the last three columns.

SPRING MARKET CUCUMBER PRODUCTION

San Diego County is well known for the May and June market cucumber production. Acreage has increased during the past ten years with cultural methods. This early crop is grown in warmer coastal locations. The area ships cucumbers when most other parts of the county are unable to grow them.

Soil and Water Requirement: Most medium depth soils are satisfactory. Lighter sandy loam soils are preferred as they warm up earlier in the spring and allow the plants to grow faster for early production. Fertilizer requirements are fairly high and nitrogen is used from 150 to 200 pounds per acre on most soils. Animal fertilizers applied 5 to 10 yards per acre and worked into the soil several weeks prior to planting or spread between the rows 8 to 10 weeks following planting is also practiced. Complete fertilizer combinations are also used by some growers.

Cucumbers need adequate water for maximum production. The plants are fairly sensitive to saline soils or water, particularly during low rainfall seasons where salts tend to accumulate near the surface. High salinity may cause injury or may render soils unsuitable for cucumber production. Irrigations after each picking tend to reduce salt accumulation and furnish the plants adequate water, where salinity is a problem.

Two varieties are mainly used for this fresh market crop: Marketeer and Colorado. The Marketeer is a little darker green in color and is fairly long fruit at maturity. Colorado, the main variety formerly used in the county, is still preferred by some growers. This variety also has a good colored medium large sized fruit, and tolerates variable spring weather quite well.

Planting and Capping: Cucumbers are started either by planting seed in January and February or by setting out 2 to 3 green house grown plants per hill under caps in early February. When the seed is planted, a fungicidal insecticidal treatment of Arasan or Spergon and Lindane is used. 8 to 15 seeds are planted per hill approximately 1/2 to 1 inch deep. A hot cap is placed over the hill. Where seed is used the caps are uncovered and inspected for plant germination. Plants are thinned to 3 to 5 plants and re-covered with tents. In April as the plants start to push out of the tents the leeward end of the tent is opened and the vines are trained out this side. This allows a gradual plant acclimation. Tents are removed when the vines are well developed.

Pests and Disease: Powdery mildew and mosaic are the major diseases. Powdery mildew can be controlled with complete plant coverage of 15% sulphur and 7% copper combination dust. Clean seed and aphid control are the best preventative methods of this disease.

Aphid and mites are the main plant pests. Black leaf forty dusts or organic phosphate insecticides give good aphid control. Sulphur dusts used for mildew control assist in controlling mites.

Harvest and Packing: Harvest begins in early May when the fruits are 6 to 8 inches long and 1-1/2 to 2 inches in diameter. Harvesting every two to three days is necessary to avoid oversized fruit. The fruit is picked into lugs or hampers and packed in the field sheds. Fruit sizes for flats are 28 to 32 large and 45 or more fruit for Specials. Lugs are packed 3 to 4 dozen for the large sizes and 5 dozen and over for Special sizes.

Fruit waxing is applied after washing, which materially prolongs the keeping quality of the fruit.

Marketing: This crop is grown both for local and eastern shipments. The peak of shipments generally occurs in May and early June.