

Santa Barbara County 1965

Farm Advisor Marvin J. Snyder  
A. Doyle Reed, Extension EconomistPOTATOES

Potatoes are harvested almost the year around in California. As compared to other states, California ranks third in production. Santa Barbara County plays a big part in the marketing of late summer potatoes. This period is usually from late July to the middle of October. In 1963, Santa Barbara County produced 31% of the potatoes marketed during this time. Potatoes, when compared to other vegetable crops in Santa Barbara County, ranked third in value and second in acreage in 1963.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Harvested Acreage</u>	<u>Average Yield (Tons/Ac.)</u>	<u>Total Production (Tons)</u>	<u>Farm Price (Per Ton)</u>	<u>Total Value</u>
1959	2,252	13.40	30,271	\$ 60	\$ 1,810,822
1960	2,460	14.50	35,700	75	2,660,000
1961	2,740	14.15	38,770	47	1,822,000
1962	2,643	16.99	44,897	46	2,076,000
1963	2,170	14.00	30,400	60	1,824,000

CHARACTERISTICS OF POTATO FARMS

There are two main varieties of potatoes grown in this area. The Russet is grown for the fresh market and the Kennebec is grown for the chipping market. The Kennebec acreage has increased steadily the last few years and now comprises approximately one-half of the potato acreage in the county.

Potatoes can be grown in several areas in Santa Barbara County, however, the Santa Maria Valley is the main growing area. Potatoes are grown on types of farms that also produce celery, lettuce, brocolli, peppers, lima beans, and sugar beets.

Soil, Water, Climate. Potatoes are a warm season crop and are grown in Santa Barbara County from March to October. The soils in which potatoes are planted usually are the medium to lighter sandy loams. In the spring, cool, wet soil can delay emergence and contribute to the disease problems. Potatoes are principally furrow irrigated.

MANAGEMENT FACTORS

The majority of the potato acreage is planted in the spring and harvested in the fall months. However, there are some operations that include year around potato production.

Cultural. Cultural operations for producing potatoes include land preparation (operations may include disking, plowing, land planing, chiseling, etc.); planting and fertilizing (fertilizing is part of the planting operation - additional nitrogen may be applied

later in irrigation water); irrigating; cultivating; and spraying for insect control (the usual procedure is to apply the first application by ground rig, followed by air applications, however, in some cases all applications are made by ground rigs).

Planting is usually performed by contractors.

Irrigation. Water is applied on the average of every three days for two and one-half months of the growing season.

Harvest. Harvest operations include the pre-digging work. This involves rolling, beating, spraying the vines with oil, and furrowing-out to cover the beds.

The digging, harvesting, and hauling operations are usually contracted. The typical digging operation may involve the following transient workers; two men on the digger, sixty pickers, one sack boy, two roustabouts, one time-keeper, six loaders, and five truckers.

Labor. The peak demand for labor in harvesting potatoes comes in August and September. However, the harvest period usually extends from July to October. The pickers used in the harvest operation are transients who follow the potato harvest for several months, moving from area to area. Usually no foreign labor is involved.

## OUTLOOK

The acreage in Santa Barbara County is expected to remain quite steady, but may increase some due to Kennebecs, which usually produce a higher yield than the Russet potato. Kennebecs produce good chipping quality in this area. Mechanization should enter the harvest picture quite strongly by the late 60's. When prices are good, there is usually overplanting for a couple of years, which eventually brings about a decline in prices. Lower prices in turn result in reduced planting, which decreases the supply available, with the direct result that prices rise and the cycle begins again. This cycle is quite definite. The Russet acreage is down because of the frozen, flaked, mashed, etc., processing of all seconds and culls in Idaho, where only No. 1's are sold to the fresh market.

KENNEBEC POTATOES - CASH FLOW

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Land Preparation			21.75										21.75
Plant and Fertilize				158.00					21.55				158.00
Cultivate				2.25	2.25								4.50
Irrigate					14.60	14.60	5.80						35.00
Pest Control					20.35	20.35	20.30						61.00
Pre-Dig						20.00	20.00	6.00					6.00
Miscellaneous				2.00	3.75		2.00						7.75
Harvest								385.00					385.00
Misc. Overhead			4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30					25.80
Rent					42.50								42.50
<b>Total</b>													
Cash Cost			26.05	166.55	87.75	39.25	32.40	395.30					747.30
Income													1050.00
Accumulated Cash Cost			26.05	192.60	280.35	319.60	352.00	747.30	-302.70				-302.70

RUSSETT POTATOES CASH FLOW

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Land Preparation			21.75										21.75
Plant & Fertilize				108.00									108.00
Cultivate			2.25	2.25	08.11	08.11							4.50
Irrigate				14.60	14.60	5.80							35.00
Pest Control				20.35	20.35	20.30							61.00
Pre Dig							6.00						6.00
Misc.			2.00	3.75			2.00						7.75
Harvest							275.00						275.00
Misc. Overhead			4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.05					25.05
Rent					42.50								42.50
<b>Total</b>				116.45	87.65	39.15	32.30	285.05					586.55
<b>Income</b>									625.00				625.00
<b>Accumulated Cash Cost</b>			25.95	142.80	230.05	269.20	301.50	586.55	-38.45				-38.45

SAMPLE COSTS TO PRODUCE RUSSET POTATOES

Based on 300 acres. Yield 250 sacks.

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

Operation	Hours Per Acre	Labor	Fuel and Repairs	Materials	and Other	Cash	Total
<b>Cultural</b>							
Land preparation	5.0	\$ 8.25	\$13.50				\$ 21.75
Plant & fertilize	.5	4.25	1.25	Seed 14 cwt @ 5.00		70.00	108.00
				10-10-10 1,000 lb @ 65.00		32.50	4.50
Cultivate 4 times	1.5	2.50	2.00				35.00
Irrigate 12 times	12.0	16.80	5.70	Water 25 @ 5.00		12.50	61.00
Pest control 7 times				Insecticide Application @ 3.00		21.00	6.00
Pre-dig operations	2.0	3.30	2.70				7.75
Miscellaneous	4.0	5.00	2.75				176.00
<b>Total Cultural</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>40.10</b>	<b>27.90</b>			<b>176.00</b>	<b>244.00</b>

Harvest  
Dig, haul, pack, etc. 250 sacks @ \$1.10 275.00

Misc. overhead 25.05

Rent 1/2 year 42.50

Total Cash Cost 586.55

Management 5% of 250 sacks at \$2.50 (\$625) 31.25

Investment	Per Acre	Annual Cost	Depreciation	Interest
Buildings	80.00	4.00	2.40	
Irrigation System	20.00	1.00	.60	
Equipment	240.00	24.00	7.20	
<b>Total</b>	<b>340.00</b>	<b>29.00</b>	<b>10.20</b>	<b>39.20</b>

Total Cost per Acre 657.00

Cost per Sack @ 250 sacks 2.63

SAMPLE COSTS TO PRODUCE KENNEBEC POTATOES

Based on 300 acres. Yield 350 sacks.

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

Operation	Hours Per Acre	Fuel and			Total
		Labor	Repairs	Materials and Other Cash	
<b>Cultural</b>					
Land Preparation	5.0	\$ 8.25	\$13.50		\$ 21.75
Plant & fertilize	.5	4.25	1.25	Seed 25.4 Fertilizer 32.50	120.00 158.00
Cultivate 4 times	1.5	2.50	2.00		4.50
Irrigate 12 times	12.0	16.80	5.70	Water 2.5' @ 5.00	12.50 35.00
Pest control 7 times				Insecticide Application	40.00 21.00 61.00
Pre-dig operations	2.0	3.30	2.70		6.00
Miscellaneous	4.0	5.00	2.25		7.25
<b>Total Cultural</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>40.10</b>	<b>27.40</b>	<b>226.00</b>	<b>293.50</b>
<b>Harvest</b>					
Dig, haul, pack, etc. 350 sacks @ 1.10					385.00
Misc. overhead					25.80
Rent 1/2 year					42.50
<b>Total Cash Cost</b>					<b>746.80</b>
Management -5% of 350 sacks @ 3.00 (1,050)					52.50
				<b>Annual Cost</b>	
<u>Investment</u>	<u>Per Acre</u>	<u>Depreciation</u>	<u>Interest</u>		
Buildings	80.00	4.00	2.40		
Irrigation system	20.00	1.00	.60		
Equipment	240.00	24.00	7.20		
<b>Total</b>	<b>340.00</b>	<b>29.00</b>	<b>10.20</b>		<b>39.20</b>
<b>Total Cost per Acre</b>					<b>838.50</b>
<b>Cost per sack @ 350 sacks</b>					<b>2.40</b>