

SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

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PLUM PRODUCTION, PLACER COUNTY 1972

FRESH PLUMS continue to be a 2,100 acre industry for Placer County. Fresh shipments brought \$2,150,000 gross income in 1971. Major varieties in order of ripening: Beauty, Santa Rosa, El Dorado, Wickson, Duarte, Laroda, Emily, President, Kelsey, Late Duarte. Varieties recently planted: Red Roy, Empress, LeDuc, Casselman. Small acreages: Ace, Formosa, Tragedy, Burbank, Sharkey, Giant, Queen Anne. Major rootstocks are Lovell Peach and NemaGuard on well-drained slopes, plum root in low spots.

Growers should consult their Shed Managers on marketability and prices of Placer plums before deciding on varieties to pull out or plant. Some growers are roadside retailing high color fruit on the farm.

Placer County's plums ripen 10 days later than Southern San Joaquin orchards. Fruit is of high sugar and acid content giving exceptional flavor and long shelf life. Eastern brokers and chain stores place F.O.B. orders with Placer County Sheds because they know of this quality from many years experience.

Decline and abandonment of some plum and peach orchards has increased populations of Shothole beetle which fly into good orchards, drilling pin-size holes in bark and spurs, and carrying Cytospora bark canker spores. No spray is economically justified as most broods are in bark cavities. Infested wood must be cut and burned to reduce these two problems. President is the most susceptible plum variety to Cytospora bark canker, spores of which are carried into bark holes by Shothole beetles. Aerial spores are also produced from bark lesions on dead trees.

Double planting of plum blocks 9'x18' is suggested for increasing yield per acre with no increase in costs other than new trees and pruning annually. Certain strip weed sprays may be used to eliminate cross-mowing of rows. (See Agricultural Extension Crop Weed Spray leaflets.)

Fertilization in January or February, applying 60 to 80 pounds nitrogen per acre is standard practice.

Irrigation by sprinklers with 1/8" nozzles, 8 to 12 hour sets, repeated at 12 to 20 day intervals, is most common and depends on soil depth. Tensiometers help growers decide intervals.

All labor (except harvest) in this study is considered to be hired at \$1.85 for unskilled labor and \$2.25 per hour for tractor and truck drivers, including Social Security and Workmen's Compensation Insurance, etc. Rent for on-farm housing should be withheld by employer.

The value of one acre of trees used in this cost study for Placer County's existing orchards represents about 65% of the statewide figure of developing a new orchard 5 years of age. Also about 20% of the trees are missing or non-bearing replants.

SAMPLE COSTS TO PRODUCE PLUMS IN PLACER COUNTY

Orchard: 40 acres, trees spaced 18'x18'

Yield: 5½ tons, 400 - 28 lbs. crates @ \$2.00 gross to grower after packing, pre-cooling and shipping costs = \$800 gross income per acre. Thinning labor about \$1.85/hr. Harvest \$1.85 or piecework.

	Hours Per Acre	Labor	Fuel and Repairs	Cash & Labor Cost per Acre	Materials	Total Costs Per Acre
Cultural						
Prune	41.5	76.78				76.78
Brush removal	2.0	4.50	1.50			6.00
Fertilizer	5	1.13	1.00	60 lbs. N @ 14¢	8.40	10.53
Thinning 45 min/tree	94.0	173.90				173.90
Spray 4Xs	14.0	9.00	12.60		27.24	48.84
Disc 2X, mow 4X	4.0	9.00	6.40			15.40
Irrigate 11X	16.0	29.60		½ min. inch water/acre	27.50	57.10
Prop. wire or tie	6.0	11.10	5.70		1.00	17.80
Total Cultural	168.0	315.01	27.20		64.14	406.35

Harvest						
Pick \$1.85/hr	100.0	185.00				185.00
Load and haul	15.0	33.75	22.50			56.25
Supervise 2.25/hr	5.0	11.25				11.25
Total Harvest	120.0	230.00	22.50			252.50

Cash Overhead						
Misc., office, insurance, interest on operating capital, etc.					39.53	
Taxes*					30.00*	
Total Cash Overhead						69.53

Total Cash Cost 728.38

Investment	Per Acre	Depreciation	Interest	Annual Cost
Land	600.00		36.00	
Trees	600.00	30 yr. = 20.00	18.00	
Tractor & Equip.	412.00	48.60	12.35	
Shed, labor house	167.00	20 yr. = 8.35	5.00 (overhead)	
Irrigation	150.00	10.00	4.50	
Total	1762.00	86.95	75.85	162.80

Cost per ton @ 5½ tons/acre = \$162.03 or \$2.23/28 lb. crate
 Total cost per acre 891.18

John J. Smith - Farm Advisor & Phil Parsons - Extension Economist

*Note: Taxes will be influenced by sales of adjoining parcels for homesites, and orchard yield records.

29.60
 27.50
 37.18