

STAKED TOMATO PRODUCTION
COACHELLA VALLEY - RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Yields have ranged from 800 to 2000 packed flats per acre. From 828 to 971 acres have been planted during the past 5 years.

SOILS: Sands and sandy loams are the soil types most commonly used for tomato production.

VARIETIES: Early Pak is most commonly grown and occasionally Pennheart.

PLANTING: Spring crop, October 20 to December 1. About 1 to 1½ pounds of seed per acre is planted on the south side of sloping beds running east and west and spaced five to six feet apart.

FERTILIZER: Growers' fertility practices have been applications of 400 to 1000 pounds of actual nitrogen, 300 to 800 pounds of actual phosphoric acid, and 200 to 400 pounds of actual potash per acre during the season.

Organic and inorganic fertilizers are applied alone and in combination both preplant and sidedressed during the growing season.

IRRIGATION: The first irrigation should wet the soil to maximum root depth (four to six feet). Later irrigations should be frequent enough to insure uniform growth.

PRUNING AND THINNING: Pruning the lower young side shoots below the first crown flower is a common practice in the valley. Plants are generally thinned from 10 to 18 inches apart in the row.

BRUSHING: Frost protection shelters of heavy paper or palm fronds, or both, are generally needed in most areas of the valley. Shelters should be put up during the early part of November and left up until March 1 or after. They are constructed on the north side of the bed in order to admit the maximum amount of sunlight during the day and put in at an angle to intercept and reflect radiated heat at night. The shelters also aid in preventing damage from winds and wind-blown soil.

Orchard heaters either alone or in combination with wind machines are used in the cooler locations.

PESTS AND DISEASES: Flea beetles, corn earworm, armyworms, pinworms, and occasionally russet mites can be serious. Fusarium wilt, tobacco mosaic, and other plant viruses are often severe. Root knot nematodes are also a serious problem. Contact the farm advisors' office for the latest information on the control of insects and diseases.

HARVESTING: Picking is done by hand every three to four days, with the grading and packing done in the growers' sheds. Most of the fruit is picked in the breaker stage (when first pink color appears, blossom end) or in early light pink stage. Harvest begins in late April and may continue through June 30. Pre-cooling with ice water and storing in cold rooms (55 to 60 degrees F) is performed by a few growers at this time. Uniformity of fruit size, neatness of pack, uniform fruit color, and attractive labels, all help to bring higher prices on the market.

MARKETING: Most of the crop is consigned to produce houses at terminal markets (generally Los Angeles or San Francisco). The rest of the crop is sold through field buyers of produce houses.

STAKED TOMATOES
IN
COACHELLA VALLEY - RIVERSIDE COUNTY, 1962

SAMPLE COSTS OF PRODUCTION

Based on a yield of 1,200 flats (25 pounds) per acre.

	LABOR & EQUIP- MENT COST/Acre	MATERIALS KIND & COST/Acre	TOTAL COST/Acre
Flow, disc, land plane, list	\$ 20.00		\$ 20.00
Pre-irrigate	3.00	Water \$ 2.25	5.25
Fumigate	2.50	6 gallons 32.00	34.50
Fertilize	15.00	Organic & Commercial 85.00	100.00
Shape beds & plant	3.00	2 lbs seed 15.00	18.00
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION AND PLANTING			\$ 177.75
Put up shelters	54.45	Posts, paper, lath, wire 197.18	251.63
Remove shelters	30.00		30.00
Irrigate-40x	70.00	14 ac. ft. 31.50	101.50
Cultivate (thin & hoe)	110.00		110.00
Fertilize	20.00	Organic & Commercial 120.00	140.00
Tie plants-3x, prune-1x	120.00	String 15.00	135.00
Pest control	14.00	Insecticide 42.00	56.00
Cut vines, pull stakes	35.00		35.00
Misc. (smudge pots)	25.00	Oil 20.00	45.00
TOTAL GROWING PERIOD			\$ 904.13
TOTAL PREHARVEST COST			\$1,081.88
*Harvest, load, haul, unload	500.00		500.00
Wax, sort, pack, lid	300.00	1200 flats 336.00	636.00
TOTAL HARVEST			\$1,136.00
General expense			25.00
Taxes			20.00
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD			\$ 45.00
TOTAL CASH COSTS			\$2,262.88
Interest, depreciation			
Land, buildings, equipment, irrigation-drainage			130.90
TOTAL NON-CASH OVERHEAD			\$ 130.90
TOTAL ALL COSTS			\$2,393.78*
TOTAL COST PER FLAT			\$1.99

*If sold on consignment, add commission and freight charges to get total cost.

PRICES: F O B prices per flat have ranged from an average of \$1.95 to \$4.00 during the past 5 years.