

WHAT DOES IT COST YOU TO GROW POTATOES?

Based on yield of 300 - 100# sxs per acre

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS		YOUR COSTS	
	PER ACRE	PER 100#	PER ACRE	PER 100#
Land Preparation--labor & field power				
Disc - 1 x	\$2.00			
Furrow out	1.50			
Irrigate - 1 x	2.00			
Fumigate (contract)	20.50			
Plant cover crop	1.00			
Plow - 1 x	5.00			
Disc - 2 x	3.75			
Harrow and Pack - 1 x	2.50			
TOTAL LAND PREPARATIONS	38.25	.13		
Planting				
Cutting seed - 35¢ per cwt	5.25			
Planting (contract)	10.00			
TOTAL PLANTING	15.25	.05		
Cultural labor & field power				
Cultivate & furrow - 3 to 5 x	5.75			
Irrigate - 20 x	27.00			
Fertilize - 1 x	2.00			
Hoeing - 1 x	4.00			
TOTAL CULTURAL	38.75	.13		
Materials				
Irrigation water - 54"	13.50			
Seed - 1500#	60.00			
Cover crop seed 80# rye	3.20			
Fertilizer 200# N.	30.00			
Manure 5 T	15.00			
Sacks - 300 @ 21½¢	64.50			
TOTAL MATERIALS	186.20	.62		
Harvesting				
Digging	55¢ Sack			
Picking up				
Hauling to shed				
Washing, Grading & Packing				
TOTAL HARVEST	165.00	.55		
Cash overhead costs				
General Expense - 5%	22.12			
Taxes	12.00			
Insurance	2.50			
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD	36.62	.12		
Depreciation	8.50	.03		
Land Rent or Interest	50.00	.16		
TOTAL ALL COSTS	\$538.57	\$1.79		

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

POTATO GROWING

PLANTING: Plant about 15 sacks per acre in rows about 32 inches apart. Most potatoes in the San Bernardino valley are planted about March 15. Fall potatoes can be planted in August, but usually do not yield as well as the spring plantings.

IRRIGATION: Potatoes are shallow rooted and coarse rooted. They respond to frequent, light irrigations, for the soil in the top two feet of ground must be kept damp until the tops start to yellow. Then the water is withheld while the tubers mature. Digging takes place 10 to 14 days later. Potatoes are often irrigated two or three times per week as the weather warms up in late spring.

FERTILIZER: Fertilizer is usually used at a rate that will supply about 200 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre. It is a common practice in San Bernardino county to manure potato ground with about 10 tons of dairy manure per acre at least every other year. Nitrogen in the ammonia form will produce more potatoes per acre than nitrogen in the nitrate form. Thus fertilizers such as ammonium sulfate are better than calcium nitrate or sodium nitrate.

It is important to fertilize potatoes early in the life of the plant. Best results come from applying all of the fertilizer at planting time. Many farmers use a divided application. When this is done, the sooner after planting the second fertilizing is done, the better.

PEST CONTROL: Nematodes and wireworms have been the principal pests of potato. Soil fumigation with 3 to 4 gallons of actual EDB (ethylene dibromide) or 400 pounds of DD per acre will control both pests. EDB is best for wireworms; DD is a better nematode killer. At present, the cheapest solution is 4 gallons of actual EDB per acre.

When leafhoppers become serious, use a 5% DDT and Sulfur dust. Ordinarily not much pest control is required except for wireworms and nematodes.

DISEASES: No serious diseases that can be effectively combatted with sprays or dusts have been prevalent. However, there are many serious seed-borne diseases of the potato. Use of state certified seed is an absolute must. Dipping seed before planting is recommended. See Farm Advisor for details.

The various departments of agriculture in seed-growing states have inspection systems and check on growers' fields. Qualified seed growers are then issued certificates to be attached to seed that is sufficiently disease free. Certain amounts of some diseases are permitted. For details, write the agricultural department in the state you buy seed from. Some states have different grades, too. In California, "purple tag" is the best grade. It is intended for growing seed potatoes. Blue tag is the next best from the disease free standpoint, while red tag is the lower commercial grade.

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UC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION