



Sample Costs
to Produce
Vine Crop Seed
in the Lower
Sacramento Valley
1975

Division of Agricultural Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

LEAFLET
2261

PRINTED MAY 1975

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VINE CROP SEED CULTURAL BRIEFS

Vine seed production is a specialized business. There are a number of commercial companies in the area who contract with growers for their production. Most of these companies have representatives in the area who counsel with growers about the production of their particular crop and variety.

A number of cucurbit vine seed crops are produced in the area. They include cucumbers, melons, (such as cantaloupes, honeydews, casabas and crenshaw), small squash (of the summer type as crookneck, straight neck, buttercup and butternut), large squash (winter type such as hubbard and banana) and large crops such as watermelons and pumpkins.

Soil Requirements: For maximum production fertile, deep, well drained soil is required.

Planting Dates: As soon as soil warms up, usually around April 15.

Preharvest: Pre-harvest operations for these crops are relatively uniform although the number of irrigations varies with the crop. Cucumbers require the most and watermelons the fewest.

Harvest: Harvest is usually in September and October. There is considerable variation in harvest time requirements due to the size of fruit, fruit shape, and whether or not the fruit separates readily from the vine. When harvesting by hand, the small fruit may be picked up in buckets and taken to the seed separator moving through the field. Larger fruit may be picked up and placed on a conveyor belt which moves it to the seed separator. There may also be variation due to the ripeness of the fruit at harvest. Some melons are hard to pull from the vine such as honeydew and casabas.

At present there is still a lot of hand labor at harvest. However, growers and machine shop operators and the University have been experimenting with various types of pickup machines. The problem seems to be that there is a lot of variation between crops as to whether these machines work, i.e., they work good on some but not on others.

From the field the semi-cleaned seed will be hauled to a central washing shed where it will be washed, dried, and sacked. This operation may or may not be done by the grower.

SAMPLE COSTS TO PRODUCE VINE CROP SEED
Lower Sacramento Valley - 1975

Based on 200 acres of vine crop seed on a 1,000 acre ranch. Labor rates including fringe benefits \$3.50 and \$2.60 per hour.

Operation	Hours per acre	Cash and labor cost per acre				Total
		Labor	Fuel & repairs	Materials Kind and quantity	Cost	
dollars						
<u>Cultural Costs</u>						
Chisel & fertilize 2x	.7	2.45	4.90	Nitrogen 80# @ \$.25 Application	20.00 2.00	29.35
Plant	.3	1.05	1.10	Seed 2# @ \$2.00	6.00	8.15
Hoe	11.0	28.60				28.60
Cultivate 4x	.8	2.80	2.85			5.65
Irrigate 4x	4.0	10.40	2.00	Water	4.00	16.40
Spray				Insecticide applied	12.00	12.00
Herbicide	.3	1.05	.90	Material	2.00	3.95
Miscellaneous	2.0	7.00	5.00		4.00	16.00
Crop loan interest					5.60	5.60
TOTAL CULTURAL COSTS		61.55	28.05		55.60	145.20
<u>Harvest Costs</u>						
Windrow fruit		35.00				
Combine					50.00	
Clean seed					50.00	
TOTAL HARVEST COSTS		35.00			100.00	135.00
<u>Cash Overhead</u>						
Misc., office, etc.					12.30	
Taxes					1.50	
Rent					75.00	
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD					87.80	87.80
TOTAL CASH COST		96.55	28.05		243.40	368.00
Management						20.00
		<u>Annual Cost</u>				
<u>Investment</u>	<u>Per Acre</u>	<u>Depreciation</u>		<u>Interest 8%</u>		
Equipment	\$150	\$15.00		\$6.00		
Total						21.00
TOTAL COST PER ACRE						410.00
Cost per pound @ 500# yield						.82

Typical Yield

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Pounds per acre</u>
Cucumber, slicer	475
" pickler	750
Melons	375
Squash, summer	800
" winter	500
Watermelons	450
Pumpkins	650

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. George B. Alcorn, Director, Cooperative Extension, University of California.

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