

AVOCADO PRODUCTION COSTS

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY - 1977

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The costs presented here are based on records from cooperating growers who use practices typical of the South Coastal area of Santa Barbara County. Practices and costs vary between growers. These figures are sample costs that are about median. They are useful for comparison and budgeting purposes, but actual figures are better when substituted into this framework.

Assumptions: Hass variety, 135 trees per acre, planted 16' x 20', 10 years of age, permanent plastic pipe undertree sprinkler system, weed control by herbicides, no frost protection, 20 acre orchard size for equipment needs, management charge \$5.00 per acre per month, hired labor at \$4.00 per hour, or if owner operated allowance at same rates, and average yield 10,000 pounds per acre per year.

Cultural Operations: Nitrogen fertilization ranges from 100-400 pounds of elemental nitrogen per acre per year, depending on variety, soil, and productivity. Leaf analysis is recommended as a guide. Annual broadcasts are made in February or can be split in February and July. Zinc foliage sprays or soil applications are needed in many groves.

Irrigation practices vary greatly depending on soil, tree size, water source, location, and method of application. Most orchards are sprinkler irrigated 5 to 18 times per year; intervals range from 10 to 40 days during the summer. The total water applied ranges from 1 to 3 acre feet per acre, depending on the year with the average water requirement of 1.6 acre feet per acre in addition to rainfall.

No regular pesticide sprays are required due to favorable natural parasites and predators. Ant control is helpful to maintain biological control. Control of rats, ground squirrels, snails, gophers, and deer is necessary.

Weed control is by herbicides - simazine - for annual residual weed control. Weed oils and paraquat are used to control perennial weeds and to spot spray annuals.

Maintenance pruning is to remove low limbs, dead wood, broken limbs and those interfering with irrigation, hauling and other operations. Crowded orchards need to be thinned at 10-12 years of age and again at 18-20 years. The heavy tree removal costs (up to \$700 per acre) have been prorated over a 7 year period.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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Cultural Operations	Dollars per Acre			
	Labor	Material	Equipment	Total
Fertilizer - 200 lbs. N broadcast	\$ 8	\$ 60	\$ 2	\$ 70
Zinc Spray & Leaf Analysis	8	5	7	20
Irrigation - 10 times, 1.6 Ac.Ft./Ac.	40	120	-	160
Pest Control - ants, gophers, rats	12	12	6	30
Weed Control - herbicides	20	15	15	50
Pruning - skirts, dead wood, & disposal	16	2	2	20
Orchard Thinning - prorated over 7 years	76	6	18	100
Miscellaneous - propping, erosion	40	15	15	70
Total cultural costs	\$220	\$235	\$65	\$520

Overhead Costs

General Expenses - office, phone, insurance, accounting	\$ 70
Taxes, Property - in Agricultural Preserve, income valuation	180
Maintenance and Repair - Equipment, irrigation system	60
Management Charge or Allowance - \$5.00 per acre per month	60
Total Overhead Costs	\$370
Total Preharvest Cash Costs	\$890

Investment Costs

Depreciation - see schedule below	540
Total Preharvest Cash and Depreciation Costs	\$1,430
Interest on Investment - 9% - see schedule below	820
Total Preharvest Costs	\$2,250

Harvesting Costs

Picking and Hauling - 10,000 lbs/ac, pick 3.7¢/lb, haul 0.3¢/lb	400
Total All Costs	\$2,650

INVESTMENT SCHEDULE

	Expected Life	Dollars per Acre		
		Investment	Depreciation	Interest
Land, assumed value	-	\$ 4,000	\$ 0	\$360
Trees, 135 per acre	20 yrs.	8,500	425	380
Irrigation System & Sprinklers	20 "	1,000	50	45
Erosion Structures & Haul Roads	20 "	400	20	18
Pick-up Truck	5 "	150	30	7
Weed Sprayer	20 "	100	5	4
Buildings, storage	20 "	100	5	4
Other Equipment & Tools	10 "	50	5	2
Total		\$14,300	\$540	\$820

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, University of California, and County of Santa Barbara cooperating.

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