

cantaloupes (spring
sample costs
and
production



Agricultural Extension
University of California
Imperial County
Court House, El Centro

Cost Data Sheet No. 13



SPRING CANTALOUPE--PROJECTED PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$3.75 per hour (\$3.00 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

Yield - 175 crates per acre (7 tons). 120 days to maturity.

OPERATIONS	Custom Rate	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR*		SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
LAND PREPARATION						
Subsoil	\$ 12.50					\$ 12.50
Disc 2x	4.50					9.00
Border & Break border	4.50					4.50
Flood		Water .75 ac ft	2.63	1	3.75*	6.38
Fertilize	3.00	400# 11-48-0	40.00			43.00
List	10.00					10.00
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION						\$ 85.38

GROWING PERIODS

Plant & shape beds	6.75	Seed 2# @ 5.00	10.00			16.75
Reshape beds	12.00					12.00
Pollination		Hives 1.5 @ 10.00	15.00			15.00
Thin				4	15.00	15.00
Cultivate 2x	3.50					7.00
Fertilize - side - dress 1x	4.50	100# N @ 25¢	25.00			29.50
Weed 1x				7	26.25	26.25
Irrigate 5x		Water 3 3/4 ac ft	13.13	7	26.25*	39.38
Pest Control 3x	3.00	Pesticides, Fungicides	21.00			30.00
TOTAL GROWING PERIOD						\$ 190.38

GROWING PERIOD & LAND PREP. COSTS

\$ 275.76

Land Rent (new lease)						150.00
Cash Overhead - 12% of preharvest costs and land rent						51.09
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS						\$ 476.85

HARVEST

Pick, haul, pack & crate 175 [crates] @ 4.75						\$ 831.25
TOTAL ALL COSTS						\$ 1308.10

Cost per crate = \$7.47

*Includes shovel labor, pipe setting and miscellaneous tractor work.

YEAR	ACRES	YIELD/ACRE (TONS)	VALUE/TON
1970	9900	5.80	\$ 180.92
1971	10500	5.66	180.67
1972	12600	6.00	142.67
1973	9500	6.95	189.45
1974	8300	7.53	221.95

Combined Spring and Fall acreage

PLANTING DATES: Plantings to be capped are seeded from mid-December through January. Open melons are planted from mid-January through mid-March.

VARIETIES: Nearly all of the acreage is planted to Topmark.

SOILS: Well-drained soils are preferred. Sandy or silt loams are sometimes selected for the earliest crop. Heavier soils are preferred for most of the acreage because of their greater water holding capacity which slows the onset of vine collapse.

***IRRIGATION:** After planting, the beds are subbed past the seedline. Following emergence, water is often withheld for several weeks. This is done to maintain soil warmth and promote early production. The last irrigation is scheduled one week prior to harvest. During this time, excessive moisture may increase ground spotting, rotted and soft fruit.

FERTILIZERS

400 pounds of 11-48-0 are often applied before listing. Up to 150 pounds of nitrogen are later sidedressed.

POLLINATION

At least one hive of bees per acre is recommended and 1 1/2 hives are better. The bees should be distributed on at least two sides of a 40 acre field.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Cantaloupes are subject to a number of problems including nematode, cutworms, aphids, mites, loopers, leafhoppers, leaf-miners, ground beetles, crickets, mosaic virus and mildew. Consult your Farm Advisor for pest control recommendations.

HARVESTING

Spring melons are harvested from May to July. The fruit are hand picked at the full slip stage. After hauling to a shed, they are sorted and graded in wood crates holding 23, 27, 36, 45 or 54 melons. Some 2/3 crate cartons are used instead of the standard wooden crate. The melons are then hydrocooled or forced-air cooled prior to shipment.

SPECIAL PRACTICES

Root knot nematodes can cause serious damage to melons if not controlled by soil fumigation. The normal charges for fumigation are \$4.50 for application and \$28.00 for fumigant. Soil samples may be taken to help detect these soil microorganisms.

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