

INCOME ABOVE ALL COSTS PER ACRE

Price Per Sack

Sacks

Per

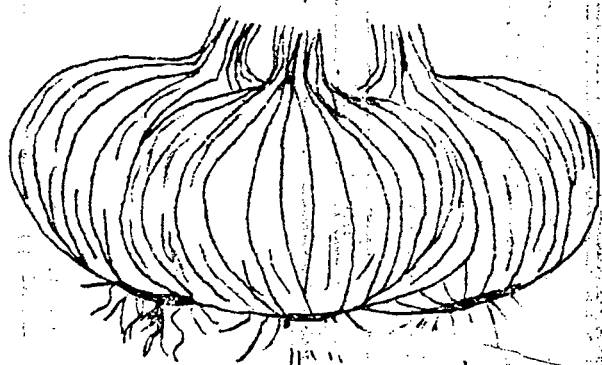
Acres

	3.50	4.00	4.50	5.00	5.50
-689	-389	-89	+211	+511	
-629	-279	+71	+421	+771	
-569	-169	+231	+631	+1031	
-509	-59	+391	+841	+1291	
-449	+51	+551	+1051	+1551	

Prepared By
Keith S. Mayberry
Farm Advisor

Revised May 1982

market onions
sample costs
and
production



To simplify our information, it is sometimes necessary to use trade names of products or equipment. No endorsement of named products is intended nor is criticism implied of similar products which are not mentioned.

The University of California Cooperative Extension in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, national origin, sex, or mental or physical handicap in any of its programs or activities. Inquiries regarding this policy may be directed to: Eugene D. Stevenson, Affirmative Action Officer, 3171 University Hall, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720. (415) 642-9300.

Cooperative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Division of Agricultural Sciences, University of California and United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, and June 30, 1914. Jerome B. Siebert, Director, California Agricultural Extension.

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

Cost Data Sheet No. 16

DRY ONIONS (MARKET)--PROJECTED PRODUCTION COSTS--1982-1983

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$5.50 per hour (\$4.30 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

Yield--600 50# sacks per acre; (15 tons). 150+ days to maturity.

OPERATION	Custom Rate	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR*		SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
LAND PREPARATION						
Subsoil	24.00					\$ 24.00
Disc 2x	8.00					16.00
Border, cross check & break borders	12.00					12.00
Flood		Water $\frac{3}{4}$ ac/ft	5.63	1	5.50	11.13
Fertilize	6.00	400# 11-48-0	52.00			58.00
Disc 2x	8.00					16.00
Triplane 2x	8.50					17.00
List	10.00					10.00
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION						\$ 164.13
GROWING PERIOD						
Precision plant	14.50	Seed 2# @ 16.00	32.00			\$ 46.50
Herbicide 2x	5.50	Dacthal® & acid	57.00			68.00
Sprinkler irrigate						120.00
Cultivate 3x	10.00					30.00
Fertilize & furrow out 2x	10.00	200# N @ 34¢	68.00			88.00
Weed 1x				9	49.50	49.50
Irrigate 12x		Water $\frac{1}{2}$ ac/ft	33.75	13*	71.50	105.25
Pest control 5x	4.50	Pesticides	34.50			57.00
Disc 1x	8.00					8.00
GROWING PERIOD						\$ 572.25
GROWING PERIOD & LAND PREPARATION COSTS						\$ 736.38
Land Rent (net acres)						200.00
Cash Overhead--12% of preharvest costs & land rent						112.36
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS						\$1048.74
HARVEST COSTS						
Dig, top, haul, grade, sack & sell 600 sacks @ 2.90 per 50-lb. sack.						\$1740.00
TOTAL ALL COSTS						\$2788.74

Cost per sack = \$4.65 @ 600 sacks/ac
Cost per sack = \$4.20 @ 800 sacks/ac

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

YEAR	ACRES	YIELD/ACRE (TONS)	VALUE/TON
1977	1860	13.3	\$ 189
1978	1950	10.4	137
1979	2289	10.9	174
1980	907	20.5	230
1981	1860	17.1	432

PLANTING: Most acreage is direct seeded from mid-October to mid-November. Forty-two inch beds with 4 to 6 lines are used. Some plantings have been made with three lines on narrow beds, some have 12 lines on 80-inch wide beds.

VARIETIES: Onions are sensitive to day length and temperature. Only the early maturing, short day types are grown. The most popular types are Yellow Granex, Texas Early Grano 502, White Granex, Early Premium and Dessex. Seed costs may vary from \$22.00-\$70.00 per pound (or higher) depending upon variety and season. Texas Grano and other ringer types are produced for the fried onion ring market. Texas is the major competing state.

WEED CONTROL: Herbicides are commonly applied preemergence. Consult your farm advisor for latest recommendations. Some postplant applications are made with corresponding additional costs.

SOILS

Medium-textured sandy loams are the most desirable. Onions are shallow rooted and need a friable soil which retains moisture especially after cultivation. Onions should never be stressed for water once the bulbs start to enlarge or splitting may result. Avoid salty, hard, or weed-infested soils.

IRRIGATION

Until two or three weeks before intended harvest, onions should never suffer for lack of water. Stressing onions for water before maturity may cause splitting. Weather and soil conditions determine the number of irrigations (usually 7-12x). Irrigation costs include shovel work, pipe setting and motor grading.

FERTILIZER

Generally, between 200 and 250 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre and 144 and 200 lbs. of P_2O_5 are applied. All P_2O_5

and $1/3$ of the nitrogen are usually broadcast before listing followed by two side-dressings of nitrogen.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Mites, thrips, armyworms, leaf-miners, maggots, downy mildew and nematodes may be problems. Pink root is a soil-borne disease affecting onions; resistant varieties are available.

HARVESTING

Harvesting takes place from late March through May after 25% of the tops have fallen over. Bulbs are dug, hand topped and sacked in burlap for 3-5 days to cure. The sacks are then dumped into bulk trucks and hauled to sheds for grading, re-sacking, loading and shipping. Some growers partially cure onions on ventilated docks prior to shipment. Some growers have started using mechanical harvesting to reduce production costs. The equipment is similar to that used in dehydrator onions with a topper, digger and sorter. The major difference is that the sorter contains high speed whirling blades that trim roots and excess tops prior to sacking. Field packing is also being practiced. Burlap sacks of cured onions are sorted, sized and packed on field harvest machines making a packing shed unnecessary.