

Jun 1955

## WHAT WILL IT COST TO GROW CASTOR BEANS IN FRESNO COUNTY

Based on a field of 2,000 lbs. Per Acre  
 Labor @ \$ .90; Medium wheel tractor @ \$1.60 per hr.

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	Sample Costs		My Cost	
	Per Acre	Per Cwt.	Per Acre	Per Cwt.
<b>PRE-HARVEST LABOR AND MATERIAL COSTS:</b>				
Land preparation; man & tractor - $3\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.			\$ 8.75	
Plant; contract			2.25	
Seed; 12 lbs. @ 35¢			4.20	
Fertilize; 2 men & tractor - $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.			1.70	
Fertilizer; 50 lbs. N @ 13¢ lb.			6.50	
Irrigate; 1 pre & 5 crop - 10 man hrs.			9.00	
Water; 3 acre ft. @ \$2.50			7.50	
Hoe; 7 man hours			6.30	
Cultivate; 4 x - man & tractor 2 hrs.			5.00	
Misc. labor & material			3.00	
<b>Total Pre-harvest Labor &amp; Material Costs</b>			<b>54.20</b>	<b>2.71</b>
<b>HARVESTING COSTS:</b>				
Defoliant; spray $1\frac{1}{2}$ pts. Dinitro			2.66	
Defoliate; applied by plane			3.00	
Harvesting - contract @ 1¢ lb.			20.00	
Hulling @ \$5.00 per acre			5.00	
Hauling @ \$8.00 per ton			8.00	
<b>Total Harvesting Cost</b>			<b>38.66</b>	<b>1.93</b>
<b>CASH OVERHEAD COSTS:</b>				
General expense (5% of labor & material)			4.80	
County taxes			4.00	
Repairs (except tractor), insurance, etc.			2.00	
<b>Total Cash Overhead Costs</b>			<b>10.68</b>	<b>.54</b>
<b>TOTAL CASH, LABOR AND FIELD POWER COSTS</b>			<b>103.54</b>	<b>5.18</b>
<b>DEPRECIATION COSTS:</b>				
Irrigation facilities; (original cost \$60)			3.50	
Equipment, except tractor (original cost \$20)			2.00	
<b>Total Depreciation Cost</b>			<b>5.50</b>	<b>.28</b>
<b>INTEREST ON INVESTMENT @ 5%:</b>				
Facilities & equipment on $\frac{1}{2}$ original cost (\$40)			2.00	
Land at \$400 per acre			20.00	
<b>Total Interest on Investment Cost</b>			<b>22.00</b>	<b>1.10</b>
<b>TOTAL COST OF PRODUCTION</b>			<b>131.04</b>	<b>6.56</b>

Production costs will vary somewhat depending on water costs, weeds, size of operation and other factors. Yields higher than a ton per acre will reduce costs per cwt., whereas lower yields will increase costs per cwt.

Cost for hybrid seed is higher than regular seed.

Where harvest is not expected until after the time of a normal killing frost, defoliation costs can be eliminated.

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### CASTOR BEANS

Soils: Castor beans should ordinarily be planted on medium textured soils, preferably a sandy loam or loam. The crop does not do well on heavy clays or sand, nor on very alkaline soils.

Seeding: Rows should be planted 38 inches apart. Ten to 12 pounds of seed per acre, placed 2 to 2½ inches deep is ample. The stand should be thinned to one plant every 12 to 18 inches at chopping time after complete emergence. Castor beans present some seeding problems. The seeds are brittle and become gummy when broken. The following points should be observed:

1. Use a planter with gentle seed-selecting action.
2. Use plates having correct sized cells.
3. Operate planter at 3½ to 4 miles per hour.

Early spring plantings are recommended, preferably April, since this permits harvesting in October. Past experience indicates that at least 150 days of optimum growing weather are necessary for acceptable yields.

Fertilization: Castor beans respond to nitrogen fertilizer. About 50 pounds per acre is the average recommended amount.

Irrigation: Castor beans require about as much irrigation water as a cotton crop. The first crop irrigation should be made sooner after planting than with cotton.

Harvesting: Harvesting can generally be done from mid-August on or whenever plants are at least 3/4 defoliated and the seed capsules are mature and dry. Harvesting is generally done by custom operators in the San Joaquin Valley.

Marketing: No one should plant castor beans without assurance of a market. A suitable contract should be executed with a processor before planting.

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