

Jan/55

WHAT WILL IT COST TO GROW WATERMELONS IN FRESNO COUNTY

For Renter Operators

Based on a yield of 10 tons per acre

Labor at \$ .90 per hr.; heavy tractor at \$2.50; light tractor at \$1.20  
and truck at \$1.50 per hr.

Sample Costs		Liv. Costs	
Per Acre	Per Ton	Per Acre	Per Ton

LABOR COSTS:

Land preparation; plow, disc, float, etc. 2.5 man & heavy tractor hours	\$ 8.50		
Planting; 4 man hours	3.60		
Hoe, weed, thin, replant, turn vines; 11 man hrs.	9.90		
Cultivate, etc.; 5 times - 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ hrs., man & light tractor	7.35		
Irrigate; 1 pre & 8 crop - 10 man hrs.	9.00		
Fertilize; 1 man & light tractor, .7 hr.	1.47		
Dust; 2 times by plane at 4¢/lb.	2.80		
Pick; 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ man hrs. per ton - 25 hrs.	22.50	2.25	
Haul out; 1.5 man & .4 truck hrs. per ton	19.50	1.95	
<b>Total Labor &amp; Field Power Cost</b>	<b>84.62</b>	<b>8.46</b>	

MATERIAL COSTS:

Irrigation water; power for pumping 2 ac. ft.	5.00		
Seed; 2 lbs. @ \$1.50	3.00		
Fertilizer to furnish 60 lbs. nitrogen	9.00		
Dust for pest control; 70 lbs. @ 12¢	8.40		
<b>Total Material Cost</b>	<b>25.40</b>	<b>2.54</b>	

CASH OVERHEAD COSTS:

General expense	5.33		
County taxes on equipment only	.20		
Repairs, insurance & misc. cash costs	2.00		
Rent; cash	60.00		
<b>Total Cash Overhead</b>	<b>67.53</b>	<b>6.75</b>	

TOTAL CASH COSTS

177.55 17.75

DEPRECIATION:

Depreciation on equipment except field power	1.50	.15	
Interest on investment (equipment only)	.38	.04	

TOTAL COST OF PRODUCTION

179.43 17.94

## WATERMELON PRODUCTION IN FRESNO COUNTY

The watermelon is a warm season crop which occupies considerable acreage of the county each year. It is generally grown on a lease basis to provide land which has not grown the crop previously.

Soils and Climate - Well drained sandy soils are preferred for watermelon production. Heavy clays and adobe soils should be avoided. Optimum soil temperature for germination is 75° to 80°. Below 75° germination is slow and poor.

Varieties: A melon weighing 20 to 25 pounds is preferred on the west coast markets. The presence of fusarium wilt makes it extremely important to use resistant varieties wherever watermelons have been planted previously.

Blue Ribbon is a wilt resistant Striped Klondike type. Klondike R7 is the solid green resistant variety. Several strains of non-resistant Klondikes and Striped Klondikes exist.

Cultural Practices: Planting begins March 1 and continues to April 15. One pound of seed will usually plant an acre. Planting is generally done by hand using hills spaced 6 to 9 feet apart in the row and with rows 9 feet from center to center. Roadways may be provided by leaving an extra 6 foot strip about every twelfth row. When plants have reached a two or three leaf stage of growth they can be thinned to two plants per hill.

Sixty pounds per acre of actual nitrogen should satisfy the fertilizer requirements. Good weed control will help to decrease the insect infestation. Permanent irrigation furrows should be formed early in the season to prevent root pruning. Pre-irrigation with wetting to a depth of 6 feet is recommended. Additional irrigations should be provided only as needed to prevent wilting. With very light soils, furrows on both sides of the plants are suggested to improve distribution of water.

Pollination is performed by insects, mainly bees. Pruning to two or three fruits per plant is a common practice. Principal insects are cutworms, wireworms, nematodes, aphids, cucumber beetles and red spider. Insecticides should be used with discretion and caution.

Harvesting and Marketing: Mature melons are identified principally by a change in color, by a solid thump with the finger and development of a slight roughness on the surface. The crop is handled in bulk. Local shippers are the principal market for the crop.

Costs: Suggested costs of production are presented on the reverse side of this sheet.