

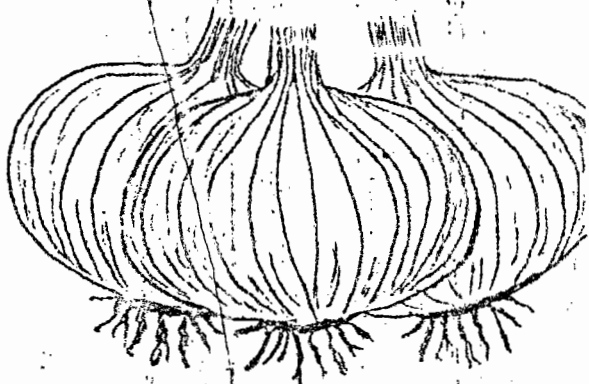
ON-SI-74-1

# market onions

sample costs

and

production



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

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Cost Data Sheet No. 16

UC Cooperative Extension

ONIONS FRESH MARKET--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$3.00 per hour (\$2.53 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	
<b>LAND PREPARATION</b>						
Plow or subsoil	\$12.00					\$ 12.00
Disc 2x	3.50					7.00
Border & break border	4.00					4.00
Flood		Water .75 ft/A	2.00		2.00	4.00
Fertilize	2.50	300# 11-48-0	46.00			48.50
Disc 2x	3.50					7.00
Landplane 2x	4.00					8.00
List	4.50					4.50
<b>TOTAL LAND PREPARATION</b>						<b>\$ 95.00</b>
<b>GROWING PERIOD</b>						
Plant	6.50	Seed 2# @20.00	40.00			
		+ coating	16.00			62.50
Herbicide 2x	2.50		31.00			36.00
Cultivate 4x	4.00					16.00
Fertilize - side-dress 2x	4.00	250# N @ 20¢	50.00			58.00
Weed 2x				17	51.00	51.00
Sprinklers		Rent	30.00	10	30.00	60.00
Irrigate 12x		Water 4 ac ft	10.80	17	51.00	61.80
Pest Control 2x	3.00	Pesticides	6.00			12.00
<b>GROWING PERIOD</b>						<b>\$357.30</b>
<b>GROWING PERIOD &amp; LAND PREP COSTS</b>						<b>\$452.30</b>
Land Rent						\$125.00
Cash Overhead - 10% of preharvest costs and land rent						57.73
<b>TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS</b>						<b>\$635.03</b>
<b>HARVEST COSTS</b>						
Dig, top, haul, pack, sacks, selling commission for 600 sacks at \$1.65 per 50# sack						\$990.00
<b>TOTAL ALL COSTS</b>						<b>\$1625.03</b>

Cost per sack = \$2.71

**YIELDS**

Normal yields range 400 to 800 fifty pound sacks per acre, although top yields have exceeded 900 sacks. The Agricultural Commissioner's reports show seasonal average price per ton during the past five years varied from a low of \$54.90 in 1971 to a high of \$242.46 in 1973. There were 1500 acres grown in 1973.

**PLANTING**

Most acreage is direct seeded from mid-October to mid-November. Forty two inch beds with 4 to 6 lines are used.

**VARIETIES**

Because 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 \$7.00-\$22.00 per pound or higher depending upon variety and season.

## WEED CONTROL

Herbicides are commonly applied pre-emergence. 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. Being shallow rooted, onions need a friable soil which retains moisture about the roots especially after cultivation. Avoid salty, hard, or weed-infested soils.

## IRRIGATION

Until two or three weeks before intended harvest, onions should never suffer for lack of water. Weather and soil conditions determine the number of irrigations. Seven to 12 times are normal. Irrigation costs include the use of sprinklers for germination. Also included are costs for shovel work, pipe setting and grading.

## FERTILIZERS

Generally, between 200 and 250 lbs of actual nitrogen per acre and 144 and 200 lbs of  $P_2O_5$  are

applied. All  $P_2O_5$  and 33 to 50 lbs of nitrogen are usually broadcast before listing followed by two sidedressings of nitrogen.

## PESTS AND DISEASES

Mites, thrips, armyworms, leafminers, maggots, downy mildew and nematodes may be problems. Pink root is a soil-borne disease affecting onions. Varieties resistant to pink root 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 roots cut, sacked and hauled to sheds for grading, sacking, loading and shipping. During storage adequate ventilation is important.

Prepared by  
Imperial County  
Agricultural Extension Staff

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California Agricultural Extension.