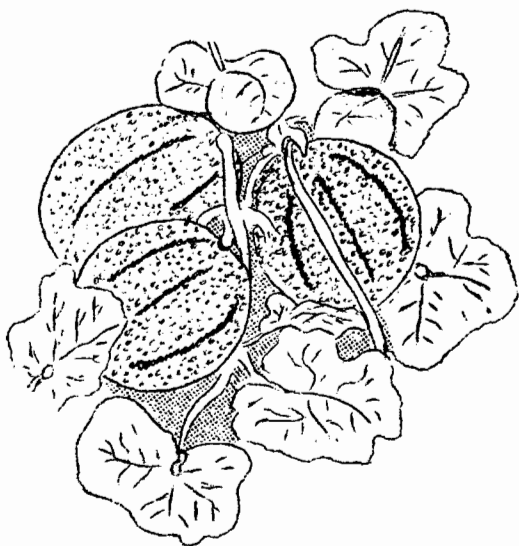


cantaloupes

sample costs

and

production



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

Fact Sheet No. 18

UC Cooperative Extension

CANTALOUPE--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
LAND PREPARATION	
Plow 1x	\$ 8.00
Disc 2x	3.50
Float 1x	1.50
Border	.75
Irrigate 1x	1.00
Knock down borders	.75
Disc 1x	1.75
Float 1x	1.50
Fertilizer (pre-plant)	2.00
Bedding	5.00
Ditching	.75
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION	\$ 26.50

CULTURAL LABOR AND POWER	
Mulch beds	\$ 4.00
Planting	2.50
*Capping 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ x	30.00
Thinning, weeding & replant	30.00
Cultivate 6x	21.00
Fertilizer application 2x	6.00
Vine turning 5x	20.00
Irrigation 10x	10.00
Pest control 6x	12.00
Ditching & knocking down ditches 3x	3.75
Setting irrigation pipes	5.00
TOTAL CULTURAL LABOR & POWER	\$ 144.25

* Labor costs are based on 90¢ per hour.

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
MATERIALS	
Water	\$ 7.00
Seed	4.00
Fertilizers	22.00
Insecticides & fungicides	23.00
*Paper caps	21.00
Stick	2.00
TOTAL MATERIALS	\$ 79.00
CASH OVERHEAD	
General expense 8% of the above	19.98
LAND RENT	65.00
TOTAL ALL COSTS	\$ 334.73

CLIMATE

Cantaloupes require plenty of sunshine, low humidity, and little or no rain. Cantaloupes are susceptible to frost during all stages of growth and need protection during the cooler winter months. Temperatures above 85°F are desirable for good vine growth.

SOIL

In Imperial County cantaloupes are grown on sandy loam, loam, and clay loam soils. Melons planted on the light soils mature fruits earlier than those planted on the heavier types.

ACREAGE

The cantaloupe acreage has been on a decline the last few years due to crown blight, virus diseases, and competition from other areas. The acreage planted in 1961 was 3,733 acres.

PLANTING DATE

Most of the acreage is planted in December and capped for frost protection. A small acreage is open planted in February or March after the danger of frost has passed. The fall crop is planted in August for harvest in late October and November.

LAND PREPARATION

See table under land preparation.

VARIETIES

Varieties planted are S.R. 91, 450, and 45. There is only a small acreage planted to S.R. 91. Yields vary from 90 to 120 crates per acre.

IRRIGATION

After the beds have been formed, the first irrigation is applied. The water runs until the beds are completely subbed.

When the beds have dried enough to allow mulching, they are then mulched, shaped with a V shaper, and planted. After planting, the beds are irrigated again to assure adequate moisture for good germination. The next irrigation is usually delayed until soon after cap removal.

When the plants begin to set fruit, the crop is irrigated approximately every two weeks. When harvesting begins, water is applied by quick, light irrigations at 3 to 5 day intervals.

It is necessary to keep a good supply of moisture in the beds throughout the growing season for maximum yields.

FERTILIZATION

Cantaloupes should receive 80 to 120 lbs. of phosphate applied ahead of bed formation. Eighty to 100 lbs. of nitrogen are applied in split applications. Half the nitrogen should be applied before bed formation, and the rest sidedressed after runners are formed.

Ten tons of steer manure per acre has given good response. Manure should be applied before plowing or disking and ahead of the first irrigation. Manure should have a chance to decompose before planting.

When plants form first runners, sidedress with 40 to 60 lbs. of actual nitrogen.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Cutworms, aphids, spider mites, darkling ground beetles, leafhoppers, cabbage loopers, and leafminers are the most serious pests of cantaloupes.

Crown blight, mosaic, curly top, powdery mildew, nematodes, seedling diseases and root rot are diseases found in Imperial County.

The cause of crown blight is unknown. However, it is felt that if a good supply of moisture and fertilizer in the beds is available throughout the growing season, losses from this disease can be minimized.

Consult the University of California Pest and Disease Control Guide for Imperial County for latest recommendations. Copies are available at your Farm Advisors' office.

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