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AVOCADO PRODUCTION COSTS

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY - 1975

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The costs presented here are based on records from cooperating growers who use practices typical of the South Coastal area of Santa Barbara County. Practices and costs vary between growers. These figures are sample costs that are about median. They are useful for comparison and budgeting purposes, but actual figures are better when substituted into this framework.

Assumptions: Hass variety, 135 trees per acre, planted 16' x 20', 10 years of age, permanent plastic pipe undertree sprinkler system, weed control by herbicides, no frost protection, 20 acre orchard size for equipment needs, management charge \$5.00 per acre per month, hired labor at \$3.50 per hour, or if owner operated allowance at same rates, and average yield 10,000 pounds per acre per year.

Cultural Operations: Nitrogen fertilization ranges from 100-400 pounds of elemental nitrogen per acre per year, depending on variety, soil, and productivity. Leaf analysis is recommended as a guide. Annual broadcasts are made in February or can be split in February and July. Zinc foliage sprays or soil applications are needed in many groves.

Irrigation practices vary greatly depending on soil, tree size, water source, location, and method of application. Most orchards are sprinkler irrigated 5 to 18 times per year; intervals range from 10 to 40 days during the summer. The total water applied ranges from 1 to 3 acre feet per acre, depending on the year with the average water requirement of 1.6 acre feet per acre in addition to rainfall.

No regular pesticide sprays are required due to favorable natural parasites and predators. Ant control is helpful to maintain biological control. Control of rats, ground squirrels, snails, gophers, and deer is necessary.

Weed control is by herbicides - simazine, diuron - for annual residual weed control. Weed oils and paraquat are used to control perennial weeds and to spot spray annuals.

Maintenance pruning is to remove low limbs, dead wood, broken limbs and those interfering with irrigation, hauling and other operations. Crowded orchards need to be thinned at 10-12 years of age and again at 18-20 years. The heavy tree removal costs (up to \$500 per acre) have been prorated over a 7 year period.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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GEG:nw
May, 1975: 1,000c.

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<u>Cultural Operations</u>	Dollars per Acre			
	<u>Labor</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fertilizer - 200 lbs. N broadcast	\$ 8	\$ 60	\$ 2	\$ 70
Zinc Spray & Leaf Analysis	8	4	3	15
Irrigation - 10 times, 1.6 Ac.Ft./Ac.	35	105	-	140
Pest Control - ants, gophers, rats	10	10	5	25
Weed Control - herbicides	20	15	15	50
Pruning - skirts, dead wood, & disposal	8	1	1	10
Orchard Thinning - prorated over 7 years	50	5	15	70
Miscellaneous - propping, erosion	36	10	14	60
Total cultural costs	\$175	\$210	\$55	\$440

Overhead Costs

General Expenses - office, phone, insurance, accounting	\$ 50
Taxes, Property - in Agricultural Preserve, income valuation	160
Maintenance and Repair - Equipment, irrigation system	40
Management Charge or Allowance - \$5.00 per acre per month	60
Total Overhead Costs	\$310
Total Preharvest Cash Costs	\$750

Investment Costs

Depreciation - see schedule below	440
Total Preharvest Cash and Depreciation Costs	\$1,190
Interest on Investment - 8% - see schedule below	615
Total Preharvest Costs	\$1,805

Harvesting Costs

Picking and Hauling - 250 bxs/ac, pick \$1/bx, haul 10¢/bx	275
Total All Costs	\$2,080

INVESTMENT SCHEDULE

	Expected Life	Dollars per Acre		
		Investment	Depreciation	Interest
Land, assumed value	20 -	\$ 3,500	\$ 0	\$280
Trees, 135 per acre	20 yrs.	6,830	340	271
Irrigation System & Sprinklers	20 "	1,000	50	40
Erosion Structures & Haul Roads	20 "	300	15	12
Pick-up Truck	5 "	125	25	5
Weed Sprayer	20 "	75	3	3
Buildings, storage	20 "	50	2	2
Other Equipment & Tools	10 "	50	5	2
Total		\$11,930	\$440	\$615

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture, University of California, and County of Santa Barbara cooperating.

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