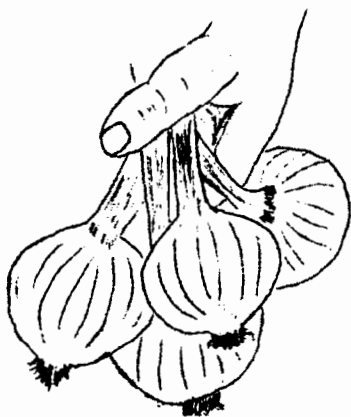


market onions
sample costs
and
production



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

Cost Data Sheet No. 16

UC Cooperative Extension

ONIONS FRESH MARKET--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$2.25 per hour (\$2.10 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits).

Yield - 600 50# sacks per acre (15 tons).

OPERATION	Custom Rate	MATERIALS		HAND LABOR		SAMPLE COSTS Per Acre
		Type	Cost	Hours	Dollars	
LAND PREPARATION						
Plow or subsoil	\$9.00					\$ 9.00
Disc 2x	2.50					5.00
Border & break border	1.00					1.00
Flood		water .75 ac ft	1.73	1	2.25	3.98
Fertilize	1.50	400# 11-48-0	19.00			20.50
Disc 2x	2.50					5.00
Landplane 2x	2.75					5.50
List	3.50					3.50
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION						\$53.48
GROWING PERIOD						
Plant	4.00	seed 2# @ \$18.00 + coating @ 60¢#	36.00 12.00			52.00
Herbicide	3.00		14.00			17.00
Cultivate 4x	3.00					12.00
Fertilize-side-dress 2x	3.00	250# N @ 12¢	30.00			36.00
Hoe 2x				15	33.75	33.75
Sprinklers		rent	25.00	10	22.50	47.50
Irrigate 12x		water 4 ac ft @ 2.30	9.20	10	22.50	31.70
Pest control 2x	1.75	pesticides	4.00			7.50
GROWING PERIOD						\$237.45
GROWING PERIOD AND LAND PREPARATION COSTS						290.93
Land Rent						70.00
Cash Overhead - 15% of preharvest costs and land rent						54.14
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS						\$415.07
HARVEST COSTS						
Dig, top, haul, pack, sacks, selling commission, (@ \$1.40 per 50# sack)						840.00
TOTAL ALL COSTS						\$1255.07

Cost per sack = \$2.09

The Agricultural Commissioner's reports show seasonal average price per ton during the past five years varied from a low of \$60.00 in 1967 to a high of \$98.00 in 1968.

YIELDS

Normal yields range 400 to 800 fifty-pound sacks per acre, although top yields have exceeded 900 sacks.

PLANTING

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

VARIETIES

Because onions are sensitive to day length and temperatures, only the early maturing, short day types are grown. The most popular hybrids are Yellow Granex, White Granex, and Dessex. The open pollinated types are Texas Early Grano 502 and San Joaquin

Yellow Globe, which is a later maturing variety. Seed costs may vary from \$4.00-\$18.00 per lb or higher depending upon variety and season.

WEED CONTROL

Herbicides are commonly applied preemergence. Consult you farm advisor for latest recommendations. Some postplant application are made with corresponding additional costs.

SOILS

Medium textured sandy loams are the the most desirable. Being shallow rooted, onions need a firable soil in which to easily expand and one which retains moisture about the roots especially after cultivation. Avoid salty, hard, and 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 gradering.

FERTILIZER

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 a problem. 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 approximately 25 percent of the tops have fallen over. Bulbs are dug, hand topped and root cut, sacked and hauled to sheds for grading, sacking, loading and shipping. During storage adequate ventilation is important.

Prepared by
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