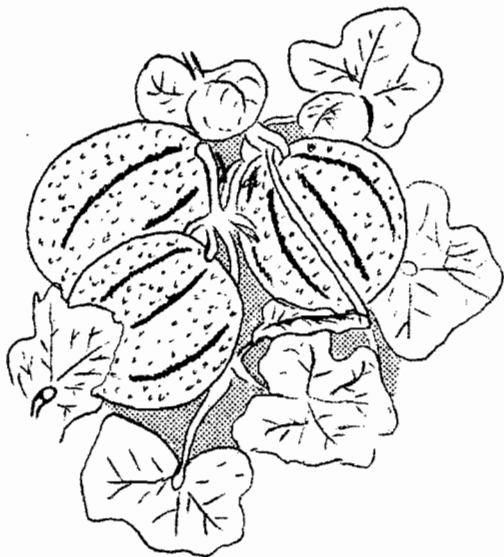


cantaloupes
sample costs
and
production



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

Cost Data Sheet No. 13

SPRING CANTALOUPE--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 - 160 crates per acre (6.4 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
Border disc	5.00					5.00
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION						\$44.48
GROWING PERIOD						
Plant & shape beds	3.50	seed 2# @ 2.25	4.50			8.00
Reshape beds 2x	2.00					4.00
Pollination		hives 1.5 @ 7.50				7.50
Thin				10	22.50	22.50
Cultivate 3x	3.00					9.00
Fertilize-side-dress 2x	2.00	200# N @ 12¢	24.00			28.00
Hoe 2x				15	33.75	33.75
Irrigate 6x		water 3 ac ft @ 2.30	6.90	7	15.75	22.65
Pest Control 6x	2.00	pesticides, fungicides	18.00			30.00
Turn vines 2x				10	22.50	22.50
TOTAL GROWING PERIOD						\$187.90
GROWING PERIOD AND LAND PREPARATION COSTS						\$232.38
Land Rent						70.00
Cash Overhead - 15% of preharvest costs and land rent						45.35
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS						\$347.73
HARVEST						
Pick, haul, pack, & crate 160 crates @ 3.40						544.00
TOTAL ALL COSTS						\$891.73

Cost per crate = \$5.57

The Agricultural Commissioner's reports show seasonal average price per ton during the past five years varied from a low of \$121.33 in 1969 to a high of \$180.92 in 1970.

YIELDS

From 100 to 200 crates per acre are harvested. Average yields are about 140-160 crates.

PLANTING DATES

Plantings to be capped are seeded from mid-December through January. Open melons are planted from mid-January through mid-March. The fall crop is generally planted during the last two weeks of July through the first two weeks in August for harvest in October and early November.

VARIETIES

Nearly all of the acreage is planted to Topmark. Some Campo melons are also used.

SOILS

Well drained soils are preferred. Sandy or silt loams are sometimes selected for the earliest crop. Heavier soils are preferred for most of the acreage because of their greater water holding capacity, slowing the onset of vine collapse in summer.

IRRIGATION

After planting, the beds are subbed past the seed line. Following emergence, water is often withheld until flowering. This is done to maintain soil warmth and promote early production. When harvesting begins, water is applied by quick, light irrigations. During this time, excessive moisture may increase ground spotting, rotted and soft fruit. Fall crops may be sprinkler irrigated.

FERTILIZERS

400 pounds of 11-48-0 are often applied before listing. Up to 150 pounds of nitrogen are later sidedressed in split applications. Fall cantaloupes have been successfully grown

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with as little as 60 pounds of nitrogen and 40 pounds P_2O_5 injected prior to planting, and sidedressed with 200 pounds of 10-10-10 when runners begin to appear.

POLLINATION

One hive per acre is required with an average of 1 1/2 hives being common practice. The bees should be distributed on at least two sides of a 40 acre field.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Cantaloupes are subject to a number of problems including nematodes, cutworms, aphids, mites, loopers, leafhoppers, leafminers, ground beetles, crickets, mosaic virus and mildew. Consult your farm advisor for pest control recommendations.

HARVESTING

Spring melons are harvested from May to July. Fall cantaloupes are harvested in October and November. The fruit are picked at or before the full slip stage. After hauling to a shed, they are sorted and graded in wood crates holding 23, 27, 36, 45 or 54 melons. Some 1/2 and 2/3 crate cartons are being used instead of the standard wooden crate.

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SPECIAL PRACTICES

If fumigated, add \$3.50 application fee and \$19.00 fumigant. If petroleum mulched, add \$3.50 application fee and \$16.00 material cost.

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Imperial County
Agricultural Extension Service
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Revised August 1972

Co-operative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, College of Agriculture, University of California, and United States Department of Agriculture co-operating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, and June 30, 1914. George B. Alcorn, Director, California Agricultural Extension Service.