

GROWING SUDAN GRASS SEED IN THE WESTERN VALLEYS OF RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Yields of better than 2,000 pounds per acre of Sudan Grass Seed are possible under good management in the Western portion of Riverside County with the high being about 3,000 pounds.

SOILS: Sudan will grow and produce seed on a wide range of soils and is, to some extent, alkali tolerant. Excessive alkali should, however, be avoided.

VARIETIES: Where possible, certified seed of out-of-state adapted varieties should be produced since market conditions for these are usually good. Piper Sudan, a variety for use in Wisconsin, is the latest of these. (See rules below).

PLANTING:

Time: Begin about May 1 for harvest in September 1 to September 15. Plantings later than about May 15 to June 1 are likely to face weather hazard, such as rain or early frost. Poor germination often occurs from seed harvested after frost.

How: After final land preparation, seed is planted in rows spaced 20 inches apart using 15 pounds of seed per acre planted to depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches. Some growers prefer to plant "flat" to pre-irrigated ground. Others furrow out, pre-irrigate and plant on a ridge.

CULTIVATION: About two cultivations usually suffice for weed control and for making furrows.

FERTILIZERS: Unless following a heavily fertilized vegetable crop or alfalfa, nitrogen fertilizer at the rate of 60 pounds per acre of actual nitrogen is recommended for maximum seed yields. This should be applied at or soon after planting.

IRRIGATION: Two to two and a half acre feet of water usually suffice for a crop of Sudan Grass seed. In addition to the pre-irrigation, between three and four irrigations are adequate - the high figure for light soils.

HARVESTING: The seed crop should be harvested when most of the seeds are ripe. When the early seed begins to shatter it is not advisable to wait for ripening of the late maturing seed.

In the Hemet area special cutting and windrowing equipment is available for making a semi-windrow or a slightly reduced swath. Occasionally a rigid (tractor mounted) side-delivery rake is used for windrowing.

Threshing is done from the windrow by means of a grain combine fitted with a pick-up attachment. A thresher inspection is necessary before harvest where certified seed is produced.

RULES FOR CERTIFICATION: Sudan fields for certification must be isolated at least 660 feet from all other sorghums including other sudan, Johnson grass, and milo. Land for certified Sudan seed production must not have been planted to any of these sorghum types for two previous years and the land must be free of volunteer sorghum in the year preceding certification.

Growers planning certification should apply at the Farm Advisor's office; Room #7, Post Office Building, Riverside, California. Applications are due each year by June 15. Important details including thresher inspection requirements are sent to growers following application.

WHAT DOES IT COST TO GROW SUDAN GRASS SEED
IN THE WESTERN VALLEYS OF RIVERSIDE COUNTY?

Based on 2000 pounds per acre clean seed field -

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ITEM	Sample Cost		Your Cost	
	Per Acre	Per Cwt.	Per Acre	Per Cwt.
<u>Land Preparation & Planting</u>				
Plow 1x	\$ 4.00		o o o o	o o o o o
Disc (or Spring tooth) 2x	3.00		o o o o	o o o o o
Float or hand plane	2.00		o o o o	o o o o o
Furrow Out	1.50		o o o o	o o o o o
Pre-Irrigation (Labor)	1.25		o o o o	o o o o o
Plant (on ridge)	1.50		o o o o	o o o o o
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION & PLANTING . .	\$ 13.25	\$.66	o o o o	o o o o o
<u>Cultural Labor & Field Power</u>				
Irrigation Labor 1x @ \$1.25	\$ 5.00		o o o o	o o o o o
Cultivate 2x (and furrow)	3.00		o o o o	o o o o o
Side-Dress Fertilize 1x	1.50		o o o o	o o o o o
TOTAL LABOR & FIELD POWER	\$ 9.50	\$.48	o o o o	o o o o o
<u>Materials</u>				
Irrigation Water 2 acre feet at \$10.50	\$ 21.00		o o o o	o o o o o
Fertilizer (60 pounds Nitrogen)	9.00		o o o o	o o o o o
Sacks @ 21¢	4.20		o o o o	o o o o o
TOTAL MATERIALS	\$ 34.20	\$ 1.71	o o o o	o o o o o
<u>Cash Overhead</u>				
General Expense @ 5% of above	\$ 2.85		o o o o	o o o o o
Taxes	5.60		o o o o	o o o o o
Insurance	1.50		o o o o	o o o o o
Miscellaneous	1.00		o o o o	o o o o o
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD	\$ 10.95	\$.55	o o o o	o o o o o
<u>Harvesting & Processing</u>				
Cut & semi-windrow	\$ 5.00		o o o o	o o o o o
Thresh with pick-up thresher @ 1¢ per pound	20.00		o o o o	o o o o o
Cleaning @ ½¢ per pound	10.00		o o o o	o o o o o
TOTAL HARVESTING & CLEANING	\$ 35.00	\$ 1.75	o o o o	o o o o o
TOTAL COST Except Rent	\$102.90	\$ 5.15	o o o o	o o o o o
RENT (Estimate your own) (50-6.00) . .	\$ 44.00	\$ 2.20	o o o o	o o o o o
TOTAL ALL COSTS	\$146.90	\$ 7.35	o o o o	o o o o o

Note: The above SAMPLE COSTS are based on contract rates and are higher in some cases than efficient owner-operator costs. To calculate YOUR COSTS use columns on the right side of the page.

Data compiled and tabulated by Otis A. Harvey, Farm Advisor; University of California Agricultural Extension Service, Room #7, Post Office Building, Riverside, California.