

APRICOT PRODUCTION IN SAN BENITO COUNTY

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Apricots are the leading tree fruit in San Benito County with over 4,000 acres of bearing trees. Most of the crop is used for canning; however, many growers dry a portion of the crop. The principal variety is the Blenheim, which is suitable for either canning or drying.

Requirements:

A medium textured soil having a depth of five to six feet is the most suitable for apricot production. Heavy adobe or soils underlain with clay are not satisfactory. Abundant water of good quality is required for irrigation, since this fruit cannot be produced with profit in this area without irrigation.

Size of Business:

The equipment needed in an orchard will often serve more acres than are operated by a single grower. The smallest orchard that could justify owning all the equipment needed would be at least 40 acres. Investment overhead costs on the reverse side of this sheet are based on this total acreage with 20 acres of apricots. The additional acreage may be in walnuts, prunes, or pears. Outside custom work also offers opportunities to reduce the equipment overhead. Orchardists with smaller acreages would probably arrange to hire some of the work done in preference to having heavy investments in equipment. Older used equipment is often also available.

Yield:

The yield per acre in fresh tons will vary considerably from orchard to orchard and year to year. The county average yield was 5.9 tons per acre in 1959 and 7.6 tons per acre in 1960. The sample costs on the opposite side are based on a 6 ton yield. Costs per acre, except for thinning and harvesting, are about the same regardless of yield. Below are summary costs for other yields with growing and overhead costs the same as shown in the detailed schedule on the opposite side of this sheet.

Sample Costs with Varying Yields

Yield - tons per acre	4	5	6	8	10
Costs per acre except thin & harvest	461.78	461.78	461.78	461.78	461.78
Thin and harvest at \$32.54 per ton*	130.16	162.70	195.24	260.24	325.40
Total cost per acre	591.94	624.48	657.93	722.02	787.28
Total cost per ton	147.98	124.89	110.51	90.25	78.73

*Includes 5% general expense

SAMPLE INPUTS AND COSTS FOR APRICOTS IN SAN BENITO COUNTY

With a Yield of Six Tons per Acre

	Hours per acre			Cost per acre	Cost per ton
	Man labor	30 hp. tractor	2 ton truck		
Pruning 75 trees at \$1.00	60.0			75.00	
Brush disposal	2.0		1.0	4.25	
Spraying 3 times plus borer spray	3.5	2.0	(1.5 spr.)	10.35	
Cultivation and furrowing 3 times	6.0	6.0		17.10	
Irrigation 3 times	18.0			22.50	
Place, fire and remove heaters	6.0		1.5	10.00	
Miscel. fertilize, cover crop, etc.	6.0	1.0	1.0	10.60	
Total cultural labor and field power	101.5	9.0	3.5	149.80	24.96
Thinning	50.0			50.00	8.33
Picking 18¢ per 16 qt. bucket	75.0			100.44	16.74
Supervision	5.0			6.25	1.04
Sorting	15.0			15.00	2.50
Hauling loading, boxes or bins and fruit	5.0	p. 2.0	3.0	14.25	2.38
Total thinning and harvesting	150.0	f. 2.0	3.0	185.94	30.99
Total labor and field power	251.5	t. 9.0	6.5	335.74	55.95
Irrigation water, power to pump 1.5 acre feet, 100 ft. lift				6.45	
Fertilizer, average annual, 30 lb. nitrogen				4.50	
Spray materials, insecticides, fungicides, hormone				26.50	
Orchard heating oil, 100 gal. at 15.5¢				15.50	
Miscellaneous materials, cover crop seed etc.				6.00	
Total material cost				58.95	9.83
Total labor, material and field power costs				394.69	65.78
General expense, office, car, etc. estimated at 5% of above				19.73	
County taxes, land and trees \$450, eqt. \$70 at 4.25% rate				22.10	
Repairs other than covered by equipment rate				5.00	
Insurance, comp. \$9.00 S.S. 1.00 liability .50 fire .50				11.00	
Total cash overhead				57.83	9.64
Total cash costs				452.52	75.42
Investment overhead costs are based on 20 acres of apricots on a 40 acre orchard unit	Original cost 40 A.	Aver. value*	6% int.	Depreciation	
		Dollars per acre			
Trees, cost \$600 A. 40 yr. life	24,000	300.00	18.00	15.00	
Building for equipment	2,000	25.00	1.50	1.70	
Irrigation system	7,000	87.50	5.25	8.75	
Tillage equipment	2,000	25.00	1.50	3.00	
Tractor, truck, pickup, forklift	14,000	175.00	10.50	24.00	
Heating equipment for 20 A. only	3,600	90.00	5.40	15.00	
Drying equipment for 20 A. only	2,600	65.00	3.90	10.00	
Ladders and miscellaneous equip.	2,000	25.00	1.50	5.00	
Sprayer, air carrier	6,000	75.00	4.50	10.00	
Land	40,000	1000.00	60.00	---	
Total investment and deprec.	103,200	1867.50		92.45	92.45 15.41
Total cash costs and depreciation				544.97	90.83
Interest on investment, average values at 6%			112.05	112.05	19.68
Total all costs of production				657.02	110.51

Labor costs above are figured at the following hourly rates: skilled man labor \$1.25, common \$1.00, 30 hp. crawler tractor \$1.60, 2 ton truck \$2.00, fork lift \$1.00, sprayer \$1.50. These equipment rates are for cash costs only of fuel, oil, repairs and license and insurance in case of the truck.

*Average value for items that depreciate is estimated at half of the original cost, since over useful life they decline from cost to zero.