



ASPARAGUS
PRODUCTION
COSTS IN
SAN JOAQUIN
COUNTY

PEAT SOIL

5-FOOT BEDS

University of California
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// **San Joaquin County**
//

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Asparagus

GENERAL REMARKS

This estimate of production costs of asparagus was prepared from information supplied by a group of representative asparagus growers in San Joaquin County. These growers felt the need of preparing a cost estimate as a guide for growers in making management decisions in relation to their asparagus operations.

In the preparation of these figures, equipment was figured on a new cost basis. Harvest equipment was depreciated over the harvest life of the bed. Some growers who purchase used equipment, or who are able to use harvest equipment on successive plantings, will have a lower cost on these items. Also, farm operators usually perform some of the labor items which are charged in these data.

Operations vary widely among asparagus growers. In this study we attempted to include operations that most growers practice. Individual growers should examine these figures and make changes where their individual cost situations differ to make a more accurate estimate of their own operation.

The length of life of an asparagus bed is quite important in a cost analysis such as this and has considerable influence on the total cost of production. In the four studies, the following length of bed life was used: 5-foot row in peat - 8 years; 5-foot row in sedimentary-10 years; 7-foot row in peat - 10 years; 7-foot row in sedimentary-12 years. A tabulation made on the average age of beds (6 to 8-foot rows) at time of plowing out from the 1958 and 1959 Asparagus Surveys showed an average of 12 years in peat soil and 15 years in sedimentary soil. It was the general opinion of the growers, however, that this age of bed was unrealistic in face of present production costs. Production of asparagus beds falls off rapidly with increased age and the life of bed figures used in these studies was felt to be most realistic under present conditions.

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COSTS OF ESTABLISHING ASPARAGUS ON PEAT SOIL - FIRST YEAR

5-FT. BEDS, 6-INCH ROOT SPACING - SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Based on a 300-acre operation
an 8-year life of bed with 6
years of cutting

Operation	CASH AND LABOR COSTS PER ACRE (1)					Total
	Hours	Fuel	Materials			
	per Acre	and Labor	and Repairs			
Ditch cleaning	:	:	:	Contract	3.70	\$ 3.70
Spread lime	:	:	:	Contract 10 tons @	3.00	30.00
Plow	.7	.88	1.89	:	:	2.77
Flood	2.0	2.50	:	:	:	2.50
Disc 3 x	.9	1.13	2.16	Rent of disc	1.50	4.79
Land plane 2 x	1.0	1.25	2.40	Rent of plane	1.00	4.65
Mark and furrow	.4	.50	1.02	:	:	1.52
Fertilize	:	:	:	Contract-mat'l appld.	:	32.00
Plant	:	:	:	Contract (2)	:	183.00
Cover plants	.3	.38	.48	:	:	.86
Pack row	.15	.19	.15	:	:	.34
Weed control	:	:	:	Contract (3)	14.75	14.75
Cultivate & cover weeds 8 x	4.0	5.00	4.80	:	:	9.80
Mow ditch weeds	.2	.25	.25	:	:	.50
Hoe 3 x	:	:	:	Contract	45.00	45.00
Spud ditching	:	:	:	Contract (4)	2.00	2.00
Irrigation 1 x	2.0	2.50	:	:	:	2.50
Chop fern	.5	.63	.75	:	:	1.38
Disc	.3	.38	.81	:	:	1.19
Plow-out charge	:	:	:	Contract (5)	:	2.00
Miscellaneous (6)	:	:	:	:	:	17.26
Cash rent	:	:	:	:	:	50.00
TOTAL CASH AND LABOR COST	:	:	:	:	:	\$ 412.51

Investment (9)	Per Acre	Annual Cost		
		Depreciation	Interest	
Equipment	\$112.91	\$ 11.29	\$ 3.39	\$ 14.68

TOTAL COST PER ACRE : : : **\$ 427.19**

COSTS OF ESTABLISHING ASPARAGUS ON PEAT SOIL - SECOND YEAR

5-FT. BEDS, 6-INCH ROOT SPACING - SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Based on a 300-acre operation,
an 8-year life of bed with 6
years of cutting

Operation*	CASH AND LABOR COSTS PER ACRE (1)						Total
	Hours	Fuel	Materials				
	per Acre	and Labor	and Repairs	Contract			
Winter discing 2 x	.6	.75	1.62			\$ 2.37	
Summer discing 4 x	1.2	1.50	3.24			4.74	
Hoe 2 x				Contract	\$30.00	30.00	
Mow ditch weeds	.2	.25	.25			.50	
Irrigate	1.0	1.25				1.25	
Chop fern	.5	.63	.75			1.38	
Disc	.3	.38	.81			1.19	
Plow-out charge				Contract (5)		2.00	
Miscellaneous (6)						2.17	
Cash rent						50.00	
TOTAL CASH AND LABOR COST						\$ 95.60	

Investment (9)	Per Acre	Annual Cost		
		Depreciation	Interest	
Equipment	\$ 112.91	\$ 11.29	\$ 3.39	\$ 14.68
TOTAL COST PER ACRE				\$ 110.28

*Some growers harvest for a short time during second year. Normally, income from this asparagus is only sufficient to cover costs of harvesting.

TOTAL COST FIRST TWO YEARS : : : **\$ 537.47**

ANNUAL COSTS OF A PRODUCING ASPARAGUS BED

5-FT. BEDS, 6-INCH ROOT SPACING - PEAT SOIL - 3RD TO 8TH YEAR

Operation	CASH AND LABOR COSTS PER ACRE (1)					Total
	Hours:	Fuel	Materials			
	per Acre	and Labor	and Repairs			
CULTURAL						
Ditch cleaning	:	:	:	Contract	1.85	\$ 1.85
Flood	2.0	2.50	:	:	:	2.50
Disc 2 x	.6	.75	1.62	:	:	2.37
Work centers 3 x	.9	1.13	2.43	:	:	3.56
Work ridges 2 x	.6	.75	1.62	:	:	2.37
Split ridges	.6	.75	1.62	:	:	2.37
Work centers 2 x	.3	.38	.81	:	:	1.19
Fertilize (Alt.years)	:	:	:	Contract-app.mat's.	:	7.00
Hoe	:	:	:	Contract	10.00	10.00
Irrigate	1.0	1.25	:	:	:	1.25
Chop fern	.5	.63	.75	:	:	1.38
Disc 2 x	.6	.75	1.62	:	:	2.37
Plow-out charge	:	:	:	Contract (5)	:	2.00
Miscellaneous (6)	:	:	:	:	:	2.01
Cash rent	:	:	:	:	50.00	50.00
TOTAL CULTURAL COSTS	:	:	:	:	:	\$ 92.22
HARVEST (5,000 lb.total yield)						
(90 days 80-man crew) Nationals						
Market (2,000 lbs.)						
Cut, sled, pack, etc.	67.84	:	:	53 crates @ 1.28 (7)	:	67.84
Crates	:	:	:	53 crates @ .50-26.50	:	26.50
Cannery Green (3,000 lbs.)						
Cut and sled	119.00	:	:	3400 @ 3.50 per C lbs	:	119.00
Rack, wash and box	15.30	:	:	3400 @ .45 per C lbs	:	15.30
Field hauling	3	3.75	4.35	:	:	8.10
Sled operation (4 sleds 12	:	:	9.60	:	:	9.60
Housing, (supervision,	:	:	:	:	:	:
transportation,etc.:	:	:	:	:	:	:
of labor (8)	:	:	:	:	38.32	38.32
TOTAL HARVEST COSTS	:	:	:	:	:	\$ 284.66
TOTAL CULTURAL AND HARVEST COSTS	:	:	:	:	:	\$ 376.88
Annual Cost						
<u>Investment (9)</u>	<u>Per Acre</u>	<u>Depreciation</u>	<u>Interest</u>			
Cultural equipment	\$112.91	\$ 11.29	\$ 3.39			
Harvest equipment	52.68	8.80	1.58			
Labor camp	50.00	8.33	1.50			
Packing house	35.33	5.89	1.06			
Cost of 1st 2 yrs.	537.47	89.58	16.12			
Total		123.89	23.65			:\$ 147.54
TOTAL COST PER ACRE	:	:	:	:\$ 524.42		

Cost per lb. @ 5,000 lb. yield 10.49

Cost per lb. @ 4,000 lb. yield - 12.25¢

Cost per lb. @ 6,000 lb. yield - 9.60¢

NOTES

- (1) All labor \$1.25 per hour, 60 HP tracklayer diesel tractor at \$2.40 per hour, 40 HP tracklayer diesel tractor at \$1.60 per hour, 40 HP diesel wheel tractor at \$1.25 per hour (fuel, repairs and other cash costs).
- (2) Planting \$30.00 per acre, 18,000 roots (6-inch spacing in row), \$8.50 per thousand which includes cost of delivery and treatment with fungicide.
- (3) Material 3½ lbs. per acre CMU (\$12.25) application \$2.50 per acre.
- (4) 0.1 mile of spud ditches per acre at \$20.00 per mile.
- (5) Plow-out charge \$20.00 per mile, 1.65 miles per acre of 5-ft. rows or \$32.00 per acre charge. Grower pays 1/2 which is prorated over the 8-yr. life of bed.
- (6) Miscellaneous costs are computed at 5% of the total cash and labor costs not including rent. This includes miscellaneous repairs, office, Social Security and Workmen's Compensation.
- (7) Harvest labor rates taken from 1960 Dept. of Employment Agri. Wage Survey.
- (8) Housing, supervision, transportation, etc., of labor -

Camp supervision \$12.50 per day (90 days) - - - - -	\$ 1,125.00
Subsistence above \$1.75 paid by men 25¢ per day per man	1,840.00
Transportation to field (2 buses at \$25.00 per day) - -	2,250.00
Field supervisors (2 @ \$30.00 per day) - - - - -	2,700.00
Transportation to town (12 times @ \$25.00) - - - - -	300.00
Recruiting and transportation (\$33.00 per man - - - - -	2,640.00
Blankets and mattresses (\$5.00 per man per year) - - -	400.00
Camp light and fuel (\$1.00 per man per month) - - - - -	240.00
Total	\$11,495.00

Per acre charge 38.32

(9) Investment includes -	Price	Per cent charge to asparagus operation
<u>Cultural equipment</u>		
1 65 HP diesel tracklayer tractor	\$ 1,700	10%
1 36-inch disc plow	100	5%
1 40-HP diesel tracklayer tractor	5,625	75%
1 tool bar and attachments	1,600	75%
2 4-HP diesel wheel tractors	15,000	100%
1 roto chopper	850	100%
3 5-foot discs	1,500	100%
1 2-ton truck	3,500	100%
1 mower	500	100%
1 spray rig	1,000	100%
1 pick-up truck	2,500	100%
Total	\$33,875	
<u>Harvest equipment</u>		
Labor camp and furnishings (80 men)	\$15,000	
Packing shed	10,600	
Washer, buttsaw, press	5,000	
Water pump	500	
Butt grinder	900	
50 sleds	2,600	
4 sled tractors	6,800	
Total	\$41,400	

Cultural equipment was given a 10-year life, harvest equipment a 6-year life. (Harvest life of bed). Interest is figured at 6 per cent on 1/2 the original value.