Artichoke Production

costs and returns to growers studied
in survey conducted at Half Moon Bay

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Producing artichokes in the Half Moon Bay area during the 1956–57 season cost $513.36 per acre—$2.20 per 22-pound box—according to information obtained in a recent survey.

The sample costs in Half Moon Bay are not presented as average for San Mateo County, however, because charges for individual items may vary in different plantings and increased yields would reduce per box costs. A yield of 225 boxes per acre—of 22 pounds each—is considered good but in some seasons yields may be much lower. Under ideal growing conditions a yield of 300 boxes per acre is possible.

To achieve good quality and high yields of artichokes an adequate fertilizer program and an economic control of the plume moth—the most important pest of artichokes—must be maintained consistently.

The cost of developing artichoke plants on the ranches surveyed came to $61.00 per acre which—spread over a five-year producing life—gives an annual cost of $12.20. Development costs include:

- Make plants—man hours
- Planting—man hours
- Truck—man hours
- Replant—man hours
- Stumping, 1st year—man hours
- Plants—man hours

Other costs were obtained from a number of growers during the survey and a sample schedule of work done, materials used, and prices as of 1956–57 was prepared as shown in the large table at the lower left.

Successful growers of artichokes must be skilled in the cultural and management phases of the enterprise because risk of crop failure—due to frost injury, heavy rainfall, and artichoke plume moth damage—is high in the production of artichokes.

Factors influencing net returns to growers are shown in the above single column table. A yield of 225 boxes per acre would require a seasonal average price of slightly more than $2.25 per box for the grower to break even with production costs.

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