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Production Inputs for Successful Trellis Tomato Growing

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I. Variable Costs and Receipts, Based on 30 Tons Marketable Fruit/Acre Yield, FOR 1/2 ACRE PROJECT.

Plant Costs - 5000 x .02¢ for locally-grown greenhouse plants = $100.00
(vs. $80 for plant bed expenses)

Field Expenses-

Fertilizer - 1,000 lb. 5-20-10 (low fertility levels from soil test	= $ 70.00
300 lb. 15.5-0-0 calcium nitrate	= $ 21.00
Dolomitic Lime - 1-1/2 tons prorated over 3 yrs. (Pulverized dolomitic lime is scarce in the area, shipped in, bagged.)	= $ 20.00
Trellising Materials - 4 balls twine	= $ 40.00
5 lb. staples	= $ 1.50
150 lb. 12 gauge wire (posts and stakes on hand)	= $ 60.00
Spray Materials - 10 lb. Thiodan, 30 lb. Bravo	= $ 110.00
Herbicides (Treflan or Dymid, or Enide, or Vegaben)	= $ 12.00
*Annual cost of sprayer, 5 yr. life	= $ 60.00

Operating Expenses-

Sprayer - 35 hours at .25¢ per hour	= $ 8.75
Tractor - 18 hours at 1.08 per hour	= $ 19.44
Truck - 25 hours at 4.00 per hour	= $ 100.00
Total Variable Costs	= $ 522.69
Interest - at 10% on variable costs	= $ 52.27
Total Costs	= $ 574.96
Receipts - 30,000 lbs. tomatoes at 10¢/lb. (after brokerage and marketing costs)	= $3000.00
Less variable costs	= $ 574.96
Net Income - to family labor (1/2 acre tomatoes)	= $2425.04

*Hand sprayers not recommended for quality commercial tomato production.

II. Labor Needs, By Month, Per 1/2 Acre Trellised Tomato Project

April	-	10 hours	August	-	150 hours
May	-	30 hours	September	-	155 hours
June	-	70 hours	October	-	70 hours
July	-	75 hours	November	-	12 hours

Total Hours Labor Per 1/2 Acre Project = 572

III. Other Consideration -

Newer varieties and strains with improved disease resistance offer high incomes for future tomato growers, and are under test in Virginia for vine-ripe use. These varieties offer resistance to both wilt diseases (Fusarium and Verticillium) and are outyielding standard varieties in tests for the past 3 years at Virginia Tech. You are invited to see these, on the trellis, at your convenience at the Virginia Tech Hort. Research Farm, plus new, labor savings, trellising systems, and at the Paul Repass Farm near Nickelsville.

A three-year rotation of tomatoes with grass and grain crops is suggested to aid in disease control and to improve or maintain soil tilth. Also, the use of locally grown, disease free, transplants is recommended. You should consider using transplants grown in greenhouses in the local area. Transplants from outside sources often are diseased. Viable disease spores are always present in the air in warmer climates. Therefore, transplants brought in may be infected even though symptoms are not visible. Field grown transplants arriving from other areas should be inspected by plant pathologists in Virginia whenever possible.

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