

THE FUTURE OF TRUCK FARMING IN ARIZONA

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The Wide Range of Temperature Between Our Northern and Southern Valleys Should Afford Early Production and a Continuous Flow of Vegetable Crops



MY GRACIOUS, WHAT WOULDN'T THE SMALL BOYS DO FOR THIS? THIS IS A TYPICAL MARICOPA COUNTY YIELD OF WATERMELONS

SHORTLY after coming to the state of Arizona I found it necessary to make a brief climatic survey and was impressed with the wide range of temperatures between our southern and northern valleys. This at once appeared exceedingly favorable as a factor to the end of the state becoming a commercial truck gardening area. The large markets like nothing better than to find a section that is able to produce a steady flow of commodities the year around. With this wide range of temperature we have ideal climatic conditions for such a practice. Our southern valleys are exceptionally favored by mild winters that allow the growing of truck continually through the winter. Just as the heat breaks for the summer and prohibits further growing of tender crops so does the cold disappear in the northern sections and favorable climatic conditions for

truck farming continue throughout the summer.

Generally speaking the population of the United States has come more and more to feel that a meal is not complete without some sort of vegetable. This has been brought about more or less by the continued advice of the medical fraternity and the dieticians to eat more fruit and vegetables to enjoy good health. The use of vegetables in the every day diet has increased rapidly until, at present, vegetables make up over 10 per cent of our total farm crops. It is also interesting to note that this 10 per cent is produced on only two per cent of our total lands devoted to farm crops. Lettuce, a single truck crop, has jumped from 5,500 acres and a value of one million five hundred thousand dollars in 1909 to 21,500 acres and a value of over eight millions in 1919. Other truck crops

have increased in production accordingly and the end is not in sight. From this it is readily seen that vegetables have a fixed place on our markets and their future as a staple commodity is assured.

Very few of our states are in a position to raise vegetables on a commercial scale due to the limitations of the growing season by the existing climatic conditions. A few weeks in summer and their season is over. Arizona is, therefore greatly favored in this respect.

Let us now consider our local conditions and the feasibility of making truck farming a permanent enterprise among our other more pretentious farm crops. First, it is a profitable venture from the standpoint of farm rotation, economic use of labor and land and financial returns. Truck crops work in well with our other farm operations and can be used to

a good advantage in the regular rotation. In the southern part of the state vegetables are best grown during the winter months with but few exceptions. This gives occupation for men and stock as well as using the soil during a period that is normally slack. Vegetables are also well adapted to be grown as an intercrop in our young orchards and vineyards as they are surface feeders and do not enter into serious competition for food and moisture. As a crop for rich, high priced land that must of necessity return large receipts per acre they are ideally suited. Intensive methods on high priced land, with proper attention to markets will, over a period of years, average more returns per acre than any other group of crops with a like investment. We have all heard of the thousand dollar crops of lettuce per acre and in some cases even larger returns from potatoes. These are not just accidental but due to proper market information coupled with the right sort of cultural care.

It has been proven that many crops are well adapted to our conditions and will produce profitably. We know from past experience that we can grow as good lettuce over a longer period than any other section with a possible exception of the Imperial Valley in California. Cantaloupes and other melons are high producers, of good quality. Sweet potatoes do well and are always in demand, both locally and on the general markets. As for onions we have several sections that are producing the Sweet Spanish type in profitable quantities and of a quality that is competing favorably with the best. Irish potatoes are still in demand and can be made a paying crop for the local markets. Coupled with these crops of known performance we have other vegetables that on a small scale have shown the possibilities of commercial production within our boundaries. Of these I mention as leading possibilities: garden peas, asparagus, all types of beans, squash and tomatoes.

Several factors must be considered in prophesying the future of the of the vegetable industry and we must bear these in mind before entering the field of commercial vegetable production. The first and foremost of these is to get the right crop for the right soil, climate and season. We must then look to obtaining the variety that is most desirable for the market and will also give the highest



AN EXCELLENT CROP OF SPINACH, READY FOR HARVEST, GROWING NEAR TUCSON, ARIZONA

returns per acre under the specialized conditions present. With this settled the question of good seed confronts us. Seed of known performance under Arizona conditions should always be used. A germination test to give its relative viability or ability to start growth is always imperative. Strains also must be developed that are specially adapted, then keep them clean and hold to them to get the maximum results.

Cultural methods will come for their due share of attention and must be worked out for every section according to its peculiar requirements. General information is obtainable from County Agents, Extension Specialists and the Experiment Stations, but it is up to the farmer to couple practical farming knowledge with this information to produce quality produce under our special conditions. He is the one that we must look to to develop such methods as his own section of the state and county requires. The new farmer and

the one that is going into commercial truck production for the first time will be able to profit then by practical and experimental experience and need not rely on the tedious and costly method of evolving methods through experience. Look to the man that is making money in your section and take his advice, for it is usually sound.

The last, and in my mind, the most important phase is that of packing, grading and shipping. The market demands high quality products well packed and is always willing to pay money for them. Grade your products carefully and strictly and make the grades uniform. Do not be afraid to overgrade for it is far better and will pay more profits in the end than under grading. Be careful to the "nth" degree in the handling of the marketable crop for it has cost money to produce, and careless handling will mean dollars lost and in many cases the difference between loss and profit.

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it. The motto of the fruit growers to "handle fruit like eggs" will also find its application in proper handling of the matured crop of vegetables. Wherever possible establish permanent brand or trade names for your different grades. These can be applied to all vegetables, but when once adopted be sure to see that the quality of your produce is maintained. The market will soon associate your brand or trade name with the quality you produce and it will act as good advertising, for they will come back for more. Above all things be sure and see that Arizona is conspicuous on the package, for the sooner we tell the country about ourselves, the sooner will our products attain the market prestige they deserve. This will mean, then, a premium paid for state products providing the standard is kept up to par.

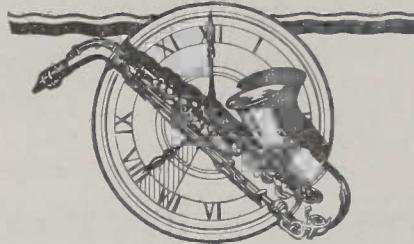
It is always a good plan in any business to know what your competitor is doing and the same holds true in this line. To also know what your customer desires is just as important, so the market reports should be watched carefully from year to year to obtain this information. In storable products we must always look to the supply on hand over the country before we can foretell what crop will probably find a market demand and of course bring the highest prices. Look for the slack places in the market and grow the crop to fill them. By the use of the market reports of the newspapers and the market information put out by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in its monthly and other reports, such as the Market Reporter, we can keep up to the minute on the demand and furnish the supply accordingly.

After all is said and done we can sum up the possibilities of commercial

truck farming in our state in a very few words. Favorable climatic conditions that allow early production and a continuous flow of vegetable crops the year around. Our competitors are handicapped by having to ship as far, pay as much for labor, land and water, and lack the enviable climatic situation we enjoy.

FUMIGATING THE INCUBATOR

An easy way to fumigate your incubator before you put it into use, is to use a small formaldehyde candle, closing all the doors tightly. All board frames inside should be thoroughly scrubbed with a weak solution of carbolic acid. This treatment should be repeated after each hatch to prevent taint.



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