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Oats -  
Cost of  
production

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Bulletin No. 15.

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER  
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY DEPARTMENT

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER  
Agricultural Advisory Department

Summary of the  
Costs of Growing Oats  
in the North West Province  
1942 Crop.

This report presents the results of an enquiry into the cost of growing oats in the North West Province in 1942.

1. Description of Sample.

Costs were obtained from 50 farms 20 of which were in Cheshire and 30 in Lancashire. The Cheshire farms were mostly of the larger type on good land the majority of the farmers had had at least some previous experience of cereal production. Conditions on the Lancashire farms were more varied. The results for three districts, broadly distinguished by differences in the pre war system of farming, in the previous experience of the farmers and in soil and climatic conditions, have been shown separately.

The East Lancashire group is composed of poorish hill farms in a district of high rainfall where conditions are not those best suited to cereal growing. Dairying is the main business and before the war grass was the only crop grown. Only one farmer had previously any considerable experience of arable cropping. Arable cropping is also a comparatively new venture for most of the farmers in the North West Lancashire group but soil and climatic conditions are much more favourable. The farms are good lowland holdings, heavily stocked before the war, and in a high state of fertility. The farmers in the South West Lancashire group have a wide experience of arable farming. Their soil is light and easily worked but demands fairly generous applications of farm-yard manure and other fertilisers.

2. Method of Costing.

Labour. In nearly every case the costs were obtained by the survey method. Manual labour was charged at the actual rates paid to the different classes of workers on the individual farms and standard hourly rates were employed for tractor and horse labour. For tractor labour the rate was 2/9d. per hour and for horse labour 8d. per hour.

Farm-yard Manure. Manure produced on the farm was charged at 10/- per ton exclusive of carting and spreading.

Residual Manurial Values. Except in the cases of lime and farm-yard manure residual values brought forward and carried forward have not been taken into account. No allowance has been made for old turf ploughed in.

Overhead Charges. These have been calculated from Farm Management Survey records which were available for most of the farms and they include depreciation on implements. They do not however include a charge for management or interest on capital.

Contract Work. All the farmers hired a thresher and in most cases baling was included in the hiring charge. With the exception of the S.W.Lancashire group contract work was also responsible for a fairly high proportion of the other operations. In the East Lancashire group 59% of the area costed was ploughed and cultivated by contractors, in N.W.Lancashire 70% and in Cheshire 38%. Contractors, including the W.A.E.C., drilled the seed on 8 farms and cut the crop on 20 farms. A number of other farmers made use of the W.A.E.C. facilities for hiring implements.

3. Results. Table I summarises the information for all farms while Table II gives an itemised cost for each district. The results bear out the broad distinctions made between the districts. The poorish soils of the East Lancashire group are reflected in the low yield and the climatic conditions in the cost of harvesting. The N.W.Lancashire farmers were also unlucky in their harvesting weather and incurred a high cost to secure their crops. On the Cheshire farms the harvest was earlier and most of the crop was gathered in good weather at a lower cost. The S.W.Lancashire group incurred the highest expenditure on manures and had the lowest cultivation costs. It is not intended however that the results should be taken as representative of the districts and if any caution were needed on this point it is provided in the last three tables. Tables III, IV and V show the range in costs per ton and yields per acre. All three items vary widely within each group. Over all the farms the cost per acre varies from £7. 17. 6 to £19. 7. 9, the cost per ton from £7. 2. 0 to £22. 4. 9 and the yield per acre from 10 cwt. to 36 cwt.

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TABLE I

Summary of Costs

Number of Farms	50.
Number of Acres Costed	589½ acres.
Average Cost Per Acre	£11. 19. 3.
Average Yield Per Acre	22.75 cwt.
Average Cost Per Ton	£10. 10. 4.

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TABLE II

Average Costs Per Acre & Per Ton - By Districts.

	East Lancs.	N.W.Lancs.	S.W.Lancs.	Cheshire	Your Farm
Number of Farms	11	9	10	20	
Acres Costed	60	80	144½	305	
<u>Cost Per Acre</u>					
Ploughing	1 0 9	1 1 9	15 6	17 0	
Cultivations	12 1	10 2	7 9	7 10	
Manuring & Seeding	4 4	6 8	8 0	3 9	
Harvesting	2 18 2	3 6 8	1 13 4	1 9 11	
Threshing	2 0 7	1 17 6	1 7 3	1 17 9	
 Total Labour & Power	 6 15 11	 7 2 9	 4 11 10	 4 16 3	
Manures	8 10	11 11	1 8 8	3 5	
Seed	2 3 6	2 8 1	2 2 3	2 13 4	
Sundries	2 8	2 8	5 9	4 5	
Rent	1 10 3	2 5 0	1 14 10	2 2 3	
Overhead Charges	1 5 5	1 18 6	1 9 4	1 8 2	
 Total	 12 6 7	 14 8 11	 11 12 8	 11 7 10	
 Yield Per Acre (cwt.)	 16.05	 19.67	 22.09	 25.18	
 Cost Per Ton	 15 7 3	 14 13 10	 10 10 8	 9 0 11	

TABLE III

Range of Costs Per Acre.

	No. of Farms With Cost Per Acre Between :-							Total
	£7 - 9	£9 - 11	£11 - 13	£13 - 15	£15 - 17	£17 - 19	£19 - 21	
East Lancs.	2	2	3	1	3	-	-	11
N.W.Lancs.	-	-	3	2	2	1	1	9
S.W.Lancs.	1	4	2	2	-	1	-	10
Cheshire	-	5	10	4	1	-	-	20

TABLE IV

Range of Costs Per Ton.

	No. of Farms With Costs Per Ton Between :-						Total
	£7 - £10	£10 - £13	£13 - £16	£16 - £19	£19 - £22	£22 - £25	
East Lancs.	1	1	4	1	2	2	11
N.W.Lancs.	1	2	2	2	2	-	9
S.W.Lancs.	4	4	2	-	-	-	10
Cheshire	12	6	2	-	-	-	20

TABLE V

Range of Yields Per Acre.

	No. of Farms With Yield Per Acre Between :-						Total
	10-15 cwt.	15-20 cwt.	20-25 cwt.	25-30 cwt.	30-35 cwt.	35-40 cwt.	
East Lancs.	5	3	2	1	-	-	11
N.W.Lancs.	1	4	2	2	-	-	9
S.W.Lancs.	3	2	1	2	1	1	10
Cheshire	-	1	9	7	3	-	20



