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Statistical Abstract 09

WITHDRAWN

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Early Potatoes 1967

by

J. L. Anderson, B.Sc.

The Edinburgh School of Agriculture,
West Mains Road,
Edinburgh, 9. *Dept. of econ.*

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Early Potatoes - 1967

The results shown in this supplement are based on records of 13 crops of Epicure and 2 of Red Craig Royal, grown on 9 farms in East Lothian and 3 in the Dundee area.

The small size of the sample should be borne in mind when looking at the figures.

General

Planting began in mid-February. Wet conditions hampered work during the following weeks, but most crops were in the ground by the end of March. April and May were cold, wet months with the result that crops were not as well forward as normal for the beginning of June. However, June proved to be dryer and sunnier than usual, so that good growth was made during the month. The better weather continued into July, providing easy lifting conditions on most farms. Irrigation equipment was used on 6 farms - the first time it has been used extensively during the last 3 years.

Returns

Despite a decline in the acreage planted with early varieties, prices were not so well maintained compared with the previous season. (Acreages declined by 760 acres to 16,780 in Scotland and by 7500 acres to 105,240 in Great Britain as a whole.) As a result of the poor conditions in the earlier part of the growing season, the yields from the first crops to be lifted tended to be less than normal. Later crops bulked well, particularly where irrigation was carried out, with the result that the average yields were generally similar to those obtained in 1966. The 4 best crops were sold during the second fortnight of July and the first fortnight in August. Three of the 4 crops were irrigated.

Variable Costs

Seed costs rose somewhat in 1967, but losses in store were less extensive. Casual labour costs fell for the third year in succession, largely as a result of more efficient working in association with the good lifting conditions for most crops. Less contract work was required but sundry costs rose, mainly because of higher expenditure on bags and on haulage of dressed potatoes.

The expenditure on casual labour varied considerably depending on the method of lifting. In the second table the results have been split to show the difference between hand work and lifting by harvester. (The figures also include casual labour for planting and dressing.)

Gross Margins

The average gross margins fell compared with the previous year. (The figures for the best and worst groups are broadly comparable with those given for the best and worst crops in 1965 and 1966. This is due to the selection of the best and worst crops as indicated by the gross margins in 1967, whereas the previous results were selected on the basis of estimated profits.) As in previous years, the figures indicate a wide range in the level of returns (closely associated with yields in 1967), with relatively small variations in the variable costs between the best and worst groups.

Average Results per Acre - 1967

		Average		
		Best 4 ¹	All crops (15)	Worst 4 ²
Total acreage		56	240	72
Average acreage		13.9	16	18.1
<u>Yield</u> -	seed	tons 1.25	tons .67	tons -
	ware	10.8	7.11	5.55
	brock	.09	.30	.10
	total	12.14	8.08	5.65
<u>Output</u> -	seed	£ 31.5	£ 15.6	£ -
	ware	214.5	147.8	114.2
	brock	.2	.3	.1
	total	246.2	163.7	114.3
Variable costs -	seed	25.6	27.0	25.5
	fertiliser	11.4	10.4	10.6
	casual labour	16.4	18.6	19.2
	contract	2.3	1.9	.4
	fuel, excl. tractor	.9	.6	.6
	sundry	17.0 ³	11.3	8.8
	total	73.6	69.8	65.1
Gross margin		172.6	93.9	49.2
Average ware price/ton		£19.9	£20.8	£20.6
Average seed price/ton		£25.2	£23.3	£ -
Average seed rate		22.0 c	21.4 c	21.1 c
Average seed cost/ton		£23.3	£25.2	£24.3
Average fertiliser rate		8.9 c	8.7 c	9.0 c
Units applied - N		143	159	168
P		127	107	113
K		166	134	144

- 1 Includes 2 crops of Red Craig Royal. Three crops were lifted by harvester. Three crops were also irrigated.
- 2 Two crops were lifted by harvester.
- 3 High sundry costs include weed sprays, bags and haulage of dressed potatoes.

Average Results per Acre - 1967

		Average	
		Squad lift	Machine lift
No. of crops		7	8
Total acreage		95.5	144.5
Average acreage		13.6	18.1
<u>Yield</u> -	seed	tons 1.00	tons .38
	ware	6.80	7.39
	brock	.44	.19
	total	8.24	7.96
<u>Output</u> -	seed	£ 24.2	£ 8.1
	ware	132.1	161.6
	brock	.3	.4
	total	156.6	170.1
<u>Variable costs</u> -	seed	27.1	26.9
	fertiliser	10.3	10.5
	casual labour	25.5	12.6
	contract	2.1	1.8
	fuel, excl. tractor	.4	.9
	sundry	8.6	13.7 ¹
	total	74.0	66.4
Gross margin		82.6	103.7
Average ware price/ton		£19.0	£21.9
Average seed price/ton		£24.2	£21.3
Average seed rate		19.5 c	23.0 c
Average seed cost/ton		£27.8	£23.4
Average fertiliser rate		8.4 c	8.9 c
Units applied -	N	143	175
	P	110	104
	K	141	127

1 High sundry costs include bags and haulage of dressed potatoes.

APPROXIMATE TREND OF PRICES PER TON 1963 - 1967
EPICURE - EAST LoTHIAN

