

# PRODUCTION COST ANALYSIS-NAVELS



California Citrus Mutual recently conducted a comprehensive survey of citrus production costs to compare how farming inputs, picking and hauling charges, and packing and marketing charges have escalated over the last 20 years. While individual costs will vary based on cultural practices, the trends are consistent for water, average production, farm size, and various other factors.

## INCREASED INPUT COSTS CREATES CHALLENGES FOR GROWERS & INDUSTRY

The average farming costs have increased by about 170% in the last 20 years. Picking and hauling costs have also increased by 110%. Cost increases for minimum wage, fuel, and fertilizers/pesticides have played the biggest role in this upward trend since 2005.

The Minimum wage increased from \$7.50 in 2005 to \$16.50 in 2025 for all businesses, regardless of how many employees work for the operation. This has played a significant role in the increase in farming costs.

Fuel costs have affected not just the farming side of operations but also the picking, packing and hauling end of the industry. Some within the industry are seeing fuel costs that have nearly doubled since 2020. Fertilizer and pesticide costs have also increased due to a number of factors.

2024/2025 Costs	Per Acre	Per Carton (550/acre)	Per Bin (30/acre)
Farming	\$4,214	\$7.66	\$140.47
Picking & Hauling	\$1,210	\$2.20	\$40.33
Packing & Marketing	\$2,750	\$5.00	\$91.67
Total	\$8,174	\$14.86	\$272.47

Percent Change (+)				
	5 Years	10 years	15 Years	20 Years
Farming	35%	75%	125%	171%
Picking & Hauling	45%	60%	90%	110%
Packing & Marketing	5%	15%	25%	33%

Farming Cost Per Acre		Change Since 2005
2025	\$4,214.67	171%
2020	\$3,300.00	112%
2015	\$2,712.25	75%
2010	\$2,099.25	35%
2005	\$1,555.00	-

## PER ACRE EXPENSES & THE COST TO PRODUCE ONE CARTON OF NAVELS

To grow navels in California, it now costs \$4,215 an acre. The average number of field cartons is about 700 per acre, but with an average of 80% utilization, it comes out to 550 fresh cartons produced per acre. Over 20 years, farming costs have increased by almost \$3,000 an acre. This \$4,215 total equates to a price of \$7.66 a carton. When adding factors like pick and haul or packing and marketing, the cost to produce one carton of navels can be as high as \$14.86.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

With the increase in input costs on the farm, analyzing expenses has never been more important. Having conversations with those who help run your farming operations is critical. We encourage growers to analyze operation costs and find where returns need to be in order to be profitable and sustainable. CCM will continue to be an informational hub and keep the industry as informed as possible about the events that affect your operations.

