

Partial Budget Analysis for Grazing in Orchards

Research Led by UCCE Livestock Advisor Julie Finzel with collaborators by UCCE and UC Davis

As part of a two year study, UCCE looked at potential costs and returns when integrating sheep grazing. In our analysis, we included a number of assumptions on costs and management based on grower input. Cost savings included less mowing, one less herbicide application, reduced sweep and mow for naval orange worm winter sanitation, and less compost application. No reduced revenue or additional revenue was included in the calculations.

Assumptions

- A labor rate of \$28.60/hour
- Equipment labor at \$31.46/hour
- Mow cost/acre/pass of \$13.77
- Nut sweeper/blower/acre of \$34.19
- Grazing rate of \$60/acre/pass
- Other costs included diesel, gasoline, and equipment time.

Additional costs	
Grazing fee for 2 livestock passes 2 @ \$60/acre	\$ 120.00
Additional time coordinating with grazer 0.5 hours per pass @ \$31.46/hour	\$ 31.46
Reduced Costs	
Reduce 2 mowing operations 2 @ \$13.77/acre	\$ 27.54
Reduce dormant strip spray 1 @ \$11.17/acre application 1 pint Roundup PowerMax @ \$6/pint 4Oz Matriz SG @ \$8.99/Oz	\$ 53.13
Reduce sweep and mow for NOW winter sanitation Sweep @ \$34.19/acre Mow @ \$13.77/acre	\$ 47.96
Reduce compost by 1 ton per acre 1 ton @ \$30/ton	\$ 30.00
Total Additional Costs \$ 151.46	
Total Reduced Costs \$ 158.63	
Total Net Change in Profit (\$acre) \$ 7.17	



Altogether, our budget analysis showed a potential savings of \$7 an acre, indicating that integrating sheep grazing can have a positive impact on the bottom line for almond producers. This is an example of a potential partial cost of production breakdown; economics will vary across different operations. Further research is expanding on this study to evaluate the cost of production and profit variability in regenerative almond orchards in California.

