

SUGARCANE PRODUCTION COSTS IN 2025

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Projected costs and returns for the various stages of sugarcane production in Louisiana were estimated for the 2025 crop year. Production and tillage practices along with application rates for fertilizer, herbicides and insecticides were updated. Input suppliers and equipment dealers were surveyed in 2024 for current input prices. Specific operations for which production costs were estimated included field operations on fallow land, seedbed preparation, cutting and planting heat treated seedcane, planting cultured seedcane, field operations on plantcane, first stubble, second stubble, and third stubble, succession planting, as well as the costs of harvesting with wholestalk and combine harvesters. Costs and returns were estimated for tenant-operators, reflecting the predominant land tenure situation, and reflect a mill payment of 39 percent of production and a land rent payment of one-fifth and one-sixth shares of the "after milling crop" proceeds. Total costs of production plus overhead for crop cycles through harvest of second, third and fourth stubble were estimated and breakeven prices to cover direct and total specified production costs were estimated for one-fifth and one-sixth share rental arrangements. Summary breakeven prices to cover production costs through harvest of third stubble for alternative yield levels are shown in Table 1. These values also represent production costs per pound of sugar produced at assumed yield levels. Breakeven raw sugar yield per acre of sugarcane harvested are presented in Table 2 for a selected range of raw sugar prices.

Estimated sugarcane production costs for the 2025 crop year were based on projected input prices obtained in the fall of 2024. Projected prices for major production inputs included diesel fuel at \$2.80 per gallon, and nitrogen, phosphate and potash fertilizer at \$0.52, \$0.79, and \$0.38 per pound of active ingredient, respectively. Estimated variable production costs for specific phases of production were as follows: fallow operations and seedbed preparation - \$160 per acre, cultured seed cane - \$752 per acre, hand planting operations - \$251 per acre, mechanical planting operations - \$217 per acre, plant cane field operations - \$302 per acre, first stubble field operations - \$348 per acre, second and older stubble field operations - \$328 per acre, and harvest operations - \$230 per acre.

Allocated (unrecovered) sugarcane planting cost estimates were estimated for sugarcane planted in 2025. Published estimates for allocation of total planting costs as of January 1, 2026, for sugarcane planted the previous year were as follows: cultured seed cane - \$1,478 per acre, hand planted propagated seed cane - \$965 per acre, hand planted whole stalk plant cane - \$900 per acre, machine planted whole stalk plant cane - \$963 per acre and machine planted billet plant cane - \$1,260 per acre. These estimates serve as a basis for the determination of sugarcane crop value associated with changes in land ownership or tenant arrangements.

Table 1. Projected breakeven selling prices for raw sugar for selected yield levels, Arrangements, harvest through third stubble, tenant-operators, Louisiana, 2025.

Selected Yield Levels	-10%	-5%	Base	5%	10%
Cane yield per harvested acre ^{1/} (tons)	29.0	30.6	32.2	33.8	35.4
Sugar yield per harvested acre ^{2/} (lbs)	6,694	7,066	7,438	7,810	8,182
Sugar yield per rotationalacre ^{3/} (farm)	5,092	5,375	5,658	5,941	6,224
One-fifth Land Share Rent					
Breakeven Price to Recover ^{4/}					
Direct Costs (cents per lb)	20.1	19.4	18.8	18.2	17.6
Total Specified Costs (cents per lb)	31.0	29.7	28.5	27.5	26.5
Total Costs Plus Overhead (cents per lb)	32.2	30.9	29.6	28.5	27.5
One-sixth Land Share Rent					
Breakeven Price to Recover ^{4/}					
Direct Costs (cents per lb)	19.3	18.6	18.0	17.4	16.9
Total Specified Costs (cents per lb)	29.8	28.5	27.4	26.4	25.5
Total Costs Plus Overhead (cents per lb)	30.9	29.6	28.5	27.4	26.4

¹ Average farm yield across harvested acreage of plantcane, 1st stubble, 2nd stubble, and 3rd stubble (base yield of 40 tons plantcane, 37 tons 1st stubble, 31 tons 2nd stubble, 29 tons 3rd stubble).

² Average yield in tons per acre multiplied by a 231 CRS.

³ Assumes standard land rotation of 20.0% each of fallow, plantcane, 1st stubble, 2nd stubble and 3rd stubble.

⁴ Breakeven prices are calculated by dividing grower's share of production into direct costs, total specified costs, and total specified costs plus overhead.

Table 2. Projected breakeven raw sugar yields for selected raw sugar price levels, harvest through third stubble, tenant-operators, Louisiana, 2025.

Selected Raw Sugar Price Levels	-2.0	-1.0	Base	1.0	2.0
Raw Sugar Price (cents per pound)	36.0	37.0	38.0	39.0	40.0
One-fifth Land Share Rent					
Breakeven Yield to Recover					
Direct Costs (lbs of sugar per harvested acre)	3,876	3,771	3,672	3,578	3,489
Total Specified Costs (lbs of sugar per harvested acre)	5,897	5,738	5,512	5,443	5,307
Total Costs Plus Overhead (lbs of sugar per harvested acre)	6,121	5,956	5,722	5,651	5,509
One-sixth Land Share Rent					
Breakeven Yield to Recover					
Direct Costs (lbs of sugar per harvested acre)	3,724	3,623	3,528	3,437	3,351
Total Specified Costs (lbs of sugar per harvested acre)	5,665	5,512	5,367	5,229	5,098
Total Costs Plus Overhead (lbs of sugar per harvested acre)	5,880	5,722	5,571	5,428	5,292