

Custom Rates for Colorado Farms & Ranches in 2017

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Colorado State University Extension annually conducts a survey of custom rates charged for various crop and livestock operations and lease arrangements in Colorado. Data were collected from agricultural producers, landowners and managers, lenders, agricultural consultants, machine operators, and Extension agents.

The survey results are reported by region:

- Northern – generally, those counties north of I-70 and east of the Rocky Mountains),
- Southern – generally, the area south of I-70 and includes the San Luis Valley, and
- Western – generally, those counties west of the mountains.

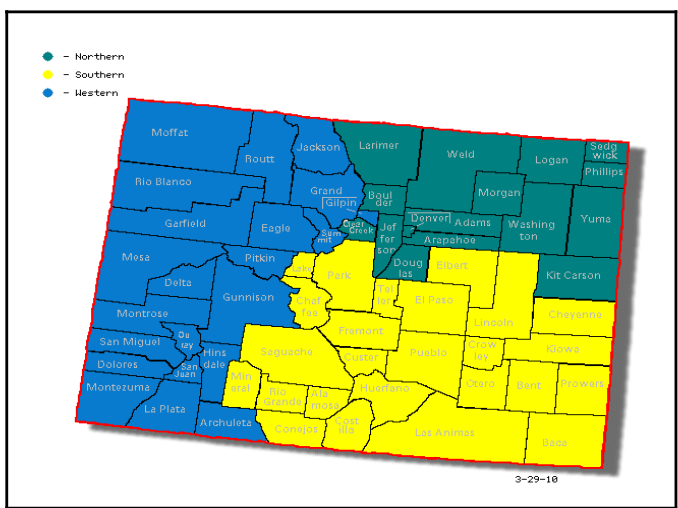
charged. The reported rates do not necessarily measure the full economic cost of performing the specified work.

A possible additional charge (not reflected in this publication) associated with a custom operation is a “mileage fee”. A custom operator, veterinarian, or other provider may have a per mileage rate for transporting equipment between fields or traveling to/from a work site.

The rates reported herein are not recommended rates. They simply reflect the range of rates as reported by those individuals surveyed. Some reported rates may seem unusually low or high which is due to very few respondents and/or the operation is not widely performed. The information in this report should be used only as a guide.

The farming related rates reported for 2017 did not change significantly from 2016. However, reported pasture rental rates declined slightly. These changes were most likely due to no or small changes in the prices of fuel, chemicals, and other inputs.

The authors would like to thank everyone who contributed to the 2017 custom rates survey. It is hoped that this “custom rates” report is beneficial to making informed decision.



Reported rates represent a variety of working conditions, machine and equipment sizes, and farm and ranch operations. Field conditions, field size, terrain, and location also account for some variations in rates

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This report, decision tools, and other information pertaining to myriad farm and ranch management issues are available at the ABM web site: www.wr.colostate.edu/ABM/.

2017 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

Activity	Basis For Charge	Northern Region	Southern Region	Western Region
Tillage				
Stalk Shredding	\$/acre	8.00 – 10.00	10.00 – 14.00	12.00 – 14.00
Plow – Moldboard	\$/acre	14.00 – 16.00	22.00 – 27.00	18.00 – 30.00
Plow – Deep Chisel (irrigated)	\$/acre	12.00 – 16.00	18.00 – 29.00	25.00 – 30.00
Plow – Deep Chisel (dryland)	\$/acre	12.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 12.00	12.00 – 30.00
Plow – Surface Chisel (irrigated)	\$/acre	12.00 – 16.00	18.00 – 20.00	15.00 – 25.00
Plow – Surface Chisel (dryland)	\$/acre	11.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 10.00	15.00 – 20.00
Plow – Sweep	\$/acre	11.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 12.00	15.00 – 20.00
Disk (irrigated)	\$/acre	10.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 12.00	18.00 – 20.00
Disk (dryland)	\$/acre	10.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 12.00	15.00 – 20.00
Mulching	\$/acre	14.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 10.00	15.00 – 20.00
Harrow	\$/acre	14.00 – 16.00	10.00 – 12.00	15.00 – 20.00
Cultivating – Field	\$/acre	11.00 – 16.00	10.00 – 12.00	15.00 – 20.00
Cultivating – Bedding	\$/acre	12.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 12.00	15.00 – 20.00
Rod Weeder	\$/acre	7.00 – 10.00	8.00 – 12.00	n/a
Rotary Tillage	\$/acre	8.00 – 12.00	12.00 – 15.00	n/a
Land Leveling/Floating	\$/acre	9.00 – 12.00	15.00 – 18.00	12.00 – 14.00
Furrowing	\$/acre	10.00 – 15.00	12.00 – 15.00	10.00 – 12.00
Strip Till (tillage only)	\$/acre	10.00 – 18.00	12.00 – 18.00	15.00 – 20.00

Activity	Basis For Charge	Northern Region	Southern Region	Western Region
Planting (does not include seeds and transplants)				
Seed Cleaning	\$/bushel	0.75 – 1.00	0.75 – 1.00	0.80 – 1.00
Plant – Drill	\$/acre	12.00 – 16.00	10.00 – 12.00	12.00 – 15.00
Plant – Drill (30-inch spacing)	\$/acre	14.00 – 18.00	12.00 – 22.00	10.00 – 15.00
Plant – Air Seeder	\$/acre	11.00 – 15.00	12.00 – 16.00	15.00 – 18.00
Plant – Strip Till (single operation)	\$/acre	12.00 – 30.00	12.00 – 16.00	15.00 – 20.00
Plant – No Till	\$/acre	11.00 – 18.00	15.00 – 16.00	15.00 – 20.00

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Activity	Basis For Charge	Northern Region	Southern Region	Western Region
Chemical and Fertilizer Application (does not include material)				
Dry Fertilizer	\$/acre	5.00 – 7.00	5.00 – 7.00	2.50 – 5.00
Liquid Fertilizer	\$/acre	4.00 – 6.00	4.00 – 7.00	2.50 – 5.00
Anhydrous Ammonia	\$/acre	7.00 – 10.00	7.00 – 12.00	5.00 – 10.00
Anhydrous Ammonia with Sweep	\$/acre	8.00 – 12.00	8.00 – 15.00	8.00 – 15.00
Aerial Spraying	\$/acre	6.00 – 7.50	6.00 – 8.00	7.00 – 11.00
Boom Sprayer	\$/acre	5.00 – 7.00	6.00 – 8.00	5.00 – 8.00
Side-Dress	\$/acre	5.00 – 7.00	8.00 – 12.00	10.00 – 12.00

Activity	Basis For Charge	Northern Region	Southern Region	Western Region
Hay and Silage Harvesting				
Silage – Chopping and Hauling	\$/acre	40.00 – 55.00	45.00 – 60.00	50.00 – 65.00
Hay – Mowing	\$/acre	10.00 – 12.00	15.00 – 20.00	15.00 – 18.00
Hay – Swathing	\$/acre	12.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 14.00	15.00 – 20.00
Hay – Raking	\$/acre	4.00 – 5.00	8.00 – 12.00	6.00 – 8.00
Baling – Small Square Bales	\$/bale	0.60 – 1.20	0.50 – 1.50	0.50 – 1.50
Baling – 3x3x8 Bales	\$/bale	10.00 – 12.00	8.00 – 10.00	8.00 – 9.00
Baling – 4x4x8 Bales	\$/bale	16.00 – 18.00	16.00 – 18.00	12.00 – 16.00
Baling – Round Bales	\$/bale	10.00 – 12.00	8.00 – 10.00	8.00 – 9.00
Loading/Stacking – Sm Sq Bales	\$/bale	0.40 – 0.80	0.60 – 1.00	0.50 – 0.70
Hauling – Large Square Bales	\$/loaded mile	3.50 – 4.25	3.50 – 4.00	3.75 – 5.00
Hauling – Round Bales	\$/loaded mile	3.50 – 4.25	2.50 – 3.50	3.00 – 5.00
Tub Grinding	\$/ton	12.00 – 15.00	12.00 – 15.00	12.00 – 15.00

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Grain Harvesting In some locales there is both a fixed rate per acre and a variable rate per bushel charged for combining. For example, the costs for harvesting dryland wheat may be known as "23-23-23" or "3 23s" -- \$23 per acre plus \$0.23 for each bushel harvested in excess of 20 bushels per acre plus \$0.23 per bushel for hauling.				
Combine – Corn/Sorghum (irrigated)	\$/acre + \$/bushel	25.00 – 35.00 0.25 – 0.35	20.00 – 25.00 0.20 – 0.25	25.00 – 45.00 0.20 – 0.25
Combine – Corn/Sorghum (dryland)	\$/acre + \$/bushel	20.00 – 30.00 0.20 – 0.30	18.00 – 22.00 0.20 – 0.25	20.00 – 40.00 0.20 – 0.25
Combine – Small Grains (irrigated)	\$/acre + \$/bushel	20.00 – 24.00 0.20 – 0.24	18.00 – 20.00 0.18 – 0.20	20.00 – 30.00 0.20 – 0.25
Combine – Small Grains (dryland)	\$/acre + \$/bushel	20.00 – 24.00 0.20 – 0.24	18.00 – 20.00 0.18 – 0.20	20.00 – 30.00 0.20 – 0.25
Combine – Oil Seeds, Soybeans, Dry Beans	\$/acre	40.00 – 55.00	n/a	40.00 – 60.00
Swath – Small Grains	\$/acre	12.00 – 15.00	n/a	n/a
Hauling - Grains	\$/bushel	0.20 – 0.30	0.20 – 0.30	0.25 – 0.25

Activity	Basis For Charge	Northern Region	Southern Region	Western Region
Labor				
General Labor	\$/hour	10.00 – 14.00	10.00 – 20.00	8.00 – 15.00
Tractor Drivers	\$/hour	12.00 – 15.00	10.00 – 15.00	8.00 – 15.00
Irrigators	\$/hour	8.00 – 16.00	10.00 – 15.00	9.00 – 18.00
Full Time (year round) Employees	\$/month	2,500 – 5,200	3,000 – 5,200	3,500 – 5,000
Foreman	\$/month	2,500 – 3,500	2,000 – 3,000	3,000 – 5,000
Managers	\$/month	3,700 – 4,500	4,000 – 5,000	3,000 – 7,000

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Livestock Handling				
Sheep - Shearing	\$/head	3.50 – 5.00	4.00 – 5.00	2.00 – 10.00
Sheep – Fertility Testing Rams	\$/head	25.00 – 40.00	20.00 – 30.00	20.00 – 30.00
Sheep – Ultrasound Diagnosis	\$/head	3.00 – 5.00	3.00 – 5.00	5.00 – 6.50
Beef – Fertility Testing Bulls	\$/head	30.00 – 45.00	35.00 – 40.00	30.00 – 45.00
Beef – Pregnancy Testing Cows	\$/head	3.00 – 4.00 + mileage	3.00 – 4.00 + mileage	3.00 – 5.50 + mileage
Horses – Shoeing (with shoes)	\$/head	80.00 – 100.00	85.00 – 100.00	85.00 – 100.00
Horses – Hoof Trimming	\$/head	40.00 – 75.00	45.00 – 75.00	50.00 – 75.00
Livestock Hauling	\$/Loaded mile	3.80 – 5.00	3.00 – 5.00	3.75 – 5.00
Fence Building (4 wires)	\$/mile	6,000 – 10,000	5,000 – 10,000	8,000 – 12,000

Activity	Basis For Charge	Northern Region	Southern Region	Western Region
Livestock Land Rental Arrangements				
Sheep – Grazing All Pasture Types	\$/head/day	n/a	n/a	0.15 – 0.30
Beef Cows – Grazing				
Native Range	\$/head/month	11.00 – 22.00	15.00 – 25.00	30.00 – 40.00
Irrigated Pasture	\$/head/month	18.00 – 22.00	18.00 – 20.00	20.00 – 25.00
Wheat Pasture	\$/head/month	15.00 – 22.00	18.00 – 20.00	n/a
Corn/Milo Stalks	\$/head/month	15.00 – 30.00	18.00 – 25.00	35.00 – 50.00
Yearling Cattle – Grazing				
All Pasture Types	\$/head/month	10.00 – 15.00	12.00 – 20.00	20.00 – 30.00
All Pasture Types	\$/head/day	0.25 – 0.90	0.40 – 0.90	0.60 – 0.90

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Crop Land Cash Rents				
Irrigated Land				
Corn/Sorghum	\$/acre	180 – 250	250 – 300	120 – 250
Small Grains	\$/acre	180 – 250	n/a	120 – 250
Alfalfa	\$/acre	160 – 200	170 – 250	120 – 250
Sugar Beets	\$/acre	250 – 375	n/a	n/a
Grass Hay	\$/acre	n/a	n/a	22 – 60
Non-Irrigated Land (Dryland)				
Corn/Sorghum	\$/acre	40 – 50	45 – 55	20 – 50
Small Grains	\$/acre	40 – 50	45 – 55	20 – 50
Oil Seed and Millet	\$/acre	40 – 50	45 – 55	20 – 50
Alfalfa	\$/acre	n/a	n/a	120 – 190

Activity	Basis For Charge	Northern Region	Southern Region	Western Region
Crop Land Share Rents The first number represents the tenant's share and the second number represents the landowner's share of production and expenses.				
Irrigated Land				
Corn/Sorghum		67% - 33%	67% - 33%	67% - 33%
Small Grains		75% - 25%	75% - 25%	67% - 33%
Alfalfa		50% - 50%	50% - 50%	n/a
Sugar Beets		75% - 25%	n/a	n/a
Non-Irrigated Land (Dryland)				
Corn/Sorghum		67% - 33%	67% - 33%	n/a
Small Grains		67% - 33%	75% - 25%	67% - 33%
Oil Seed and Millet		67% - 33%	75% - 25%	n/a
Alfalfa		n/a	n/a	60% - 40%