

Custom Rates for Colorado Farms & Ranches in 2003

Agricultural operators may not own all the machinery, equipment, and land necessary to perform every farm and ranch operation. In some cases, labor is not available, and in others, owning the equipment is simply too costly for relatively small jobs. Therefore, many farms and ranches use custom operators, machinery rental, and/or pasture leases.

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension conducts an annual survey of agricultural producers, land owners and managers, lenders, agricultural consultants, machine operators, and Cooperative Extension agents throughout Colorado. The results of this survey are a report of “custom rates” charged in the previous year for various crop and livestock operations.

2003 survey results suggested that persistent dry conditions in some parts of Colorado reduced farming and grazing practices in 2003. Furthermore, a significant number of custom operators exited the business due to the extreme drought, and consequently, very limited production in 2002. There was no survey conducted for 2002 due to the extreme drought experienced throughout the state.

Reported charges were used to determine a range of custom rate charges. “Most common” refers to the custom rate reported most often. “n/a” indicates that no information was available for that particular activity or the information was reported by a single source.

The rates charged do not necessarily measure the full economic cost of performing the work specified. Some custom operators may charge only for the costs of fuel and labor. Others may charge for all costs including depreciation on equipment and allowance for risk. Field conditions, such as size, terrain, and location, may also account for variations in rates charged.

The rates reported in this report are not recommended rates, but simply indicate rates currently being charged throughout Colorado. They represent a variety of working conditions, machine and equipment sizes, and farm and ranch operations. The reported rates reflect only the survey results and should be used only as a guide.

The authors would like to thank everyone who contributed to the custom rates survey and this report.

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Tillage				
Stalk Shredding				
Range	\$/Acre	5.00 - 10.00	n/a	5.00 - 8.00
Most Common		5.00	n/a	8.00
Plow- Moldboard				
Range	\$/Acre	13.00 - 18.00	15.00 - 30.00	8.00 - 20.00
Most Common		15.00	20.00	16.00
Plow - Deep Chisel (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 15.00	10.00 - 20.00	6.00 - 20.00
Most Common		10.00	15.00	8.00
Plow - Deep Chisel (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	5.00 - 10.00	10.00 - 20.00	6.00 - 10.00
Most Common		6.00	10.00	7.50
Plow - Surface Chisel (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	7.50 - 10.00	8.00 - 15.00	7.00 - 10.00
Most Common		8.00	10.00	7.00
Plow - Surface Chisel (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	4.00 - 8.00	10.00 - 15.00	4.00 - 6.00
Most Common		4.00	10.00	4.00
Plow - One Way				
Range	\$/Acre	4.00 - 8.00	5.00 - 12.00	4.50 - 12.50
Most Common		4.00	8.00	10.00
Plow - Sweep				
Range	\$/Acre	4.00 - 6.00	5.00 - 15.00	5.00 - 8.00
Most Common		4.50	8.00	6.00
Disc (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	5.50 - 8.00	8.00 - 15.00	5.00 - 12.00
Most Common		7.00	10.00	8.00
Disc (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	4.00 - 6.00	6.00 - 15.00	4.00 - 6.00
Most Common		5.50	8.00	6.00
Crust Busting				
Range	\$/Acre	3.50 - 5.00	5.00 - 15.00	3.00 - 5.00
Most Common		4.00	8.00	5.00
Mulching				
Range	\$/Acre	3.50 - 10.00	5.00 - 15.00	7.00 - 10.00
Most Common		7.00	10.00	8.00
Harrow - Spike Tooth				
Range	\$/Acre	3.00 - 7.00	5.00 - 12.00	2.50 - 10.00
Most Common		5.00	10.00	5.50
Cultivating - Field				
Range	\$/Acre	4.50 - 8.00	5.00 - 15.00	6.00 - 8.00
Most Common		5.00	8.00	8.00

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Tillage, continued				
Cultivating - Bedding Range Most Common	\$/Acre	4.00 - 8.00 5.00	5.00 - 12.00 8.00	5.00 - 15.00 8.00
Rod Weeder Range Most Common	\$/Acre	4.00 - 6.00 4.00	5.00 - 12.00 6.00	4.50 - 8.00 8.00
Rotary Hoe Range Most Common	\$/Acre	3.50 - 8.00 6.00	5.00 - 12.00 5.00	4.00 - 8.00 7.00
Land Leveling (Floating) Range Most Common	\$/Acre	7.00 - 8.00 7.00	8.00 - 15.00 8.00	5.00 - 10.00 8.00
Furrowing Range Most Common	\$/Acre	4.00 - 6.00 n/a	5.00 - 10.00 7.00	5.00 - 10.00 6.00

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Chemical & Fertilizer Applications (Excludes Material)				
Dry Fertilizer Range Most Common	\$/Acre	2.00 - 4.00 3.50	4.00 - 6.00 5.00	3.50 - 4.50 4.50
Liquid Fertilizer Range Most Common	\$/Acre	2.50 - 6.50 3.50	4.00 - 10.00 7.00	4.00 - 4.50 4.00
Anhydrous Ammonia Range Most Common	\$/Acre	3.00 - 8.00 6.00	5.00 - 12.00 7.00	5.00 - 12.00 5.00
Anhydrous Ammonia with Sweep Range Most Common	\$/Acre	4.00 - 8.00 7.00	n/a n/a	6.00 - 12.00 6.00
Aerial Spraying Range Most Common	\$/Acre	2.50 - 7.00 4.25	6.00 - 10.00 7.00	3.50 - 5.00 4.00
Boom Sprayer Range Most Common	\$/Acre	3.50 - 5.00 3.50	4.50 - 10.00 7.00	3.00 - 5.00 4.00
Side-Dress Range Most Common	\$/Acre	5.00 - 7.00 5.00	6.00 - 10.00 7.00	1.00 - 10.00 6.00

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Planting (Excludes Seed & Transplants)				
Seed Cleaning (Small Grains)				
Range	\$/Bu	0.25 - 0.45	1.20 - 2.25	0.33 - 0.75
Most Common		0.40	1.20	0.33
Plant - Row Crops				
Range	\$/Acre	5.00 - 15.00	6.00 - 12.00	6.00 - 12.00
Most Common		8.00	10.00	10.00
Plant - Drill				
Range	\$/Acre	4.50 - 10.00	6.00 - 12.00	5.00 - 10.00
Most Common		5.00	8.00	5.00
Plant - Oilseeds				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 10.00	6.00 - 10.00	6.00 - 10.00
Most Common		8.00	8.00	10.00
Plant - Dry Beans				
Range	\$/Acre	5.00 - 10.00	6.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 15.00
Most Common		9.00	8.00	10.00
Plant - Legumes				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 10.00	8.00 - 14.00	10.00 - 15.00
Most Common		10.00	10.00	10.00
Plant - Grass				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 15.00	8.00 - 14.00	10.00 - 15.00
Most Common		10.00	10.00	10.00
Plant - Ridge Till				
Range	\$/Acre	8.00 - 15.00	8.00 - 15.00	8.00 - 16.00
Most Common		8.00	10.00	8.00
Plant - No Till (Row Crops)				
Range	\$/Acre	5.00 - 10.00	8.00 - 15.00	8.00 - 15.00
Most Common		10.00	10.00	10.00
Plant - No Till				
Range	\$/Acre	8.00 - 12.00	8.00 - 20.00	8.00 - 15.00
Most Common		8.00	12.00	8.00

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Grain Harvesting				
Combine - Corn/Sorghum (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	17.50 - 47.00	20.00 - 30.00	25.00 - 35.00
Most Common		22.00	26.00	27.00
Combine - Corn/Sorghum (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	12.00 - 15.00	n/a	13.00 - 17.00
	+	+		+
	\$/Bu (bu>20) ^a	0.12 - 0.15		0.00 - 0.23
Most Common		12.00 + 0.12	n/a	17.00 + 0.13
Combine - Small Grains (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	12.00 - 14.00	20.00 - 30.00	11.00 - 15.00
	+	+		+
	\$/Bu (bu>20) ^a	0.12 - 0.14		0.12 - 0.16
Most Common		12.00 + 0.12	25.00	13.00 + 0.13
Combine - Small Grains (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	10.00 - 14.00	15.00 - 25.00	12.00 - 18.00
	+	+		+
	\$/Bu (bu>20) ^a	0.10 - 0.14		0.08 - 0.18
Most Common		12.00 + 0.12	22.00	13.00 + 0.13
Combine - Dry Beans				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	20.00 - 35.00	5.00 - 20.00
Most Common		n/a	30.00	16.50
Combine - Oilseeds				
Range	\$/Acre	10.00 - 15.00	15.00 - 25.00	13.00 - 16.00
Most Common		15.00	20.00	15.00
Swath - Small Grains				
Range	\$/Acre	5.00 - 14.00	n/a	5.50 - 7.00
Most Common		6.50	n/a	7.00
Haul - Grain				
Range	\$/Bu	0.08 - 0.14	0.10 - 0.25	0.09 - 0.35
Most Common		0.12	0.15	0.12
Haul - Oilseeds				
Range	\$/Cwt	0.12 - 0.50	0.20 - 0.60	0.12 - 0.50
Most Common		0.20	0.40	0.25

^a 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 12:12:12 – \$12 per acre, \$0.12 per bushel for bushels greater than 20, and \$0.12 per bushel for hauling.

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Silage & Hay Making				
Silage Chopping & Hauling				
Range	\$/Acre	3.50 - 9.00	4.00 - 10.00	2.25 - 5.75
Most Common		8.00	6.00	5.00
Hay Mowing				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	8.00 - 18.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	10.00	n/a
Swathing				
Range	\$/Acre	9.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 18.00	7.50 - 14.00
Most Common		9.00	12.00	8.00
Raking				
Range	\$/Acre	4.00 - 6.00	4.00 - 12.00	4.00 - 7.00
Most Common		4.00	6.00	5.00
Baling - Small Square (about 70 lbs)				
Range	\$/Ton	12.00 - 16.50	10.00 - 15.00	8.75 - 12.00
Most Common		14.00	12.00	12.00
Baling - Medium Square (3x3, about 800 lbs)				
Range	\$/Bale	8.00 - 15.00	n/a	14.00 - 20.00
Most Common		10.00	n/a	15.00
Baling - Big Square (4x4, about 1750 lbs)				
Range	\$/Bale	11.00 - 17.00	10.00 - 22.00	15.00 - 20.00
Most Common		14.00	15.00	15.00
Baling - Round (about 1500 lbs)				
Range	\$/Bale	11.00 - 20.00	7.50 - 25.00	6.00 - 14.00
Most Common		11.00	12.00	10.00
Loading/Stacking - Sm Sq Bales				
Range	\$/Bale	0.25 - 0.50	0.25 - 0.50	0.18 - 0.35
Most Common		0.25	0.40	0.32
Haul - Small Square Bales				
Range	\$/Ton	20.00 - 25.00	8.00 - 15.00	10.00 - 15.00
Most Common		10.00	10.00	8.00
Haul - Med & Big Square Bales				
Range	\$/Ton	3.00 - 25.00	8.00 - 20.00	10.00 - 15.00
Most Common		15.00	10.00	11.00
Haul - Big Round Bales				
Range	\$/Ton	3.00 - 25.00	8.00 - 20.00	10.00 - 15.00
Most Common		10.00	10.00	13.00
Stacking Loafed Hay				
Range	\$/Ton	12.00 - 15.00	n/a	10.00 - 20.00
Most Common		14.00	n/a	15.00
Tub Grinding				
Range	\$/Ton	10.00 - 14.00	n/a	11.00 - 14.00
Most Common		10.00	n/a	14.00

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Orchard				
Apples - Picking				
Range	\$/Bu	n/a	0.30 - 1.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	0.50	n/a
Peaches - Picking				
Range	\$/Bu	n/a	0.50 - 1.60	n/a
Most Common		n/a	0.85	n/a
Grapes - Pruning				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	250.00 - 350.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	320.00	n/a
Grapes - Picking				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	100.00 - 150.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	130.00	n/a

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Crop Share Rental Arrangements (Listed crop share arrangements are the most common and do not specify which expenses, if any, are paid by the landowner.)				
Corn & Sorghum (Irrigated)				
Tenant		2/3	2/3	2/3
Land owner		1/3	1/3	1/3
Corn & Sorghum (Dryland)				
Tenant		3/4	2/3	2/3
Land owner		1/4	1/3	1/3
Small Grains (Irrigated)				
Tenant		2/3	2/3	2/3
Land owner		1/3	1/3	1/3
Small Grains (Dryland)				
Tenant		3/4	2/3	3/4
Land owner		1/4	1/3	1/4
Oilseeds & Millet (Dryland)				
Tenant		3/4	2/3	3/4
Land owner		1/4	1/3	1/4
Alfalfa (Irrigated)				
Tenant		1/2	1/2	1/2
Land owner		1/2	1/2	1/2
Dry Beans (Irrigated)				
Tenant		2/3	2/3	2/3
Land owner		1/3	1/3	1/3
Other (Irrigated)				
Tenant		2/3	2/3	70%
Land owner		1/3	1/3	30%
Other (Dryland)				
Tenant		2/3	2/3	2/3
Land owner		1/3	1/3	1/3
Cash Rents (Cash rental arrangements in Colorado, while increasing in use, are relatively rare. Hence, the insignificant number of cash rents listed in the surveys prevent a most common rent from being reported).				
Irrigated Crop Production				
Range	\$/acre	60.00 - 125.00	70.00 - 140.00	47.00 - 195.00
Dryland Crop Production				
Range	\$/acre	n/a	n/a	12.00 - 37.50

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Livestock				
Shearing - Lambs				
Range	\$/Head	0.75 - 4.00	1.00 - 3.00	1.00 - 3.00
Most Common		1.50	1.50	1.50
Shearing - Ewes				
Range	\$/Head	1.70 - 5.00	2.00 - 3.00	1.00 - 3.00
Most Common		1.75	2.50	1.50
Shearing - Rams				
Range	\$/Head	2.00 - 5.00	4.00 - 6.00	3.00 - 4.00
Most Common		2.00	5.00	3.00
Tagging Sheep				
Range	\$/Head	n/a	1.00 - 2.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	1.50	n/a
Fertility Test Rams				
Range	\$/Head	10.00 - 25.00	8.00 - 25.00	3.00 - 30.00
Most Common		15.00	20.00	10.00
Fertility Test Bulls				
Range	\$/Head	25.00 - 40.00	25.00 - 35.00	15.00 - 30.00
Most Common		30.00	25.00	30.00
Pregnancy Test Cows				
Range	\$/Head	2.00 - 5.00	2.50 - 5.00	1.50 - 2.50
Most Common		3.00	3.50	2.50
Ultrasound Diagnosis				
Range	\$/Ewe	n/a	1.00 - 3.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	1.50	n/a
Horse Shoeing (with shoes)				
Range	\$/Head	40.00 - 65.00	35.00 - 55.00	50.00 - 60.00
Most Common		45.00	50.00	40.00
Hoof Trimming (Horse)				
Range	\$/Head	20.00 - 40.00	15.00 - 30.00	20.00 - 35.00
Most Common		30.00	25.00	20.00
Haul Livestock				
Range	\$/Loaded Mile	2.00 - 3.00	2.00 - 2.50	1.15 - 2.00
Most Common		2.50	2.25	1.87
Building Fence (excludes materials)				
Range	\$/Mile	1,200 - 7,500	1,000 - 5,000	3,000 - 7,500
Most Common		3,000	2,000	3,000

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Livestock Grazing				
Native Range - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	13.00 - 20.00	12.00 - 18.00	13.00 - 26.00
Most Common		15.00	15.00	20.00
Native Range - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	8.00 - 12.00	9.00 - 15.00	12.00 - 15.00
Most Common		10.00	12.00	13.50
Native Range - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Lb of Gain	0.32 - 0.40	0.15 - 0.40	n/a
Most Common		0.32	0.30	n/a
Native Range - Sheep				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	2.50 - 3.50	n/a
Most Common		n/a	3.00	n/a
Irrigated Pasture - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	16.00 - 20.00	12.00 - 18.00	n/a
Most Common		20.00	15.00	n/a
Irrigated Pasture - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	9.00 - 15.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	12.00	n/a
Irrigated Pasture - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Lb of Gain	n/a	0.15 - 0.40	n/a
Most Common		n/a	0.30	n/a
Wheat Pasture - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	12.00 - 15.00	10.00 - 18.00	n/a
Most Common		12.50	12.00	n/a
Wheat Pasture - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	5.500 - 15.00	8.00 -15.00	n/a
Most Common		8.00	9.00	n/a
Wheat Pasture - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Lb of Gain	0.25 - 0.35	0.20 - 0.30	n/a
Most Common		0.35	0.25	n/a
Wheat Stubble - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	n/a	n/a
Most Common		n/a	n/a	n/a
Wheat Stubble - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	n/a	n/a
Most Common		n/a	n/a	n/a

2003 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2003 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Livestock Grazing (continued)				
Corn/Milo Stalks - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	12.50 - 18.00	12.00 - 20.00	8.00 - 15.00
Most Common		15.00	15.00	11.00
Corn/Milo Stalks - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	5.50 - 12.50	9.00 - 15.00	6.00 - 11.00
Most Common		11.00	12.00	9.00
Corn/Milo Stalks - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Day	0.20 - 0.45	0.20 - 0.35	n/a
Most Common		0.38	0.30	n/a
Other Aftermath - Cattle				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	8.00 - 16.00	12.00 - 18.00	10.00 - 15.00
Most Common		9.00	15.00	15.00
Other Aftermath - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	7.00 - 9.00	9.00 - 18.00	6.00 - 11.00
Most Common		9.00	12.00	9.00
All Forage - Sheep				
Range	\$/Hd/Day	n/a	0.05 - 0.12	0.03 - 0.07
Most Common		n/a	0.08	0.04