
Custom Rates for Colorado Farms & Ranches in 2007

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

Survey results are reported according to three general geographic regions within Colorado. “Southeast” is the southeastern quadrant of the state, generally south of I-70 and east of the Continental Divide. “Northeast” is the northeastern quadrant of the state, generally north of I-70 and east of the Rocky Mountains. “Western, NW-Mtn, & SW” includes all of western Colorado. Insufficient data was reported for the San Luis Valley, so no custom rates are listed in this report.

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.

Custom rates in 2007 generally increased over those charged in 2006. The primary reason for the increase was the higher prices operators paid for fuel. In some cases, custom operators and farmers reported that a “fuel charge” was charged in addition to the reported custom rate.

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

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2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Tillage				
Stalk Shredding				
Range	\$/Acre	8.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 12.00	8.00 - 10.00
Most Common		8.00	10.00	8.00
Plow- Moldboard				
Range	\$/Acre	12.00 - 20.00	20.00 - 35.00	13.00 - 14.00
Most Common		15.00	30.00	13.00
Plow - Deep Chisel (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	12.00 - 20.50	20.00 - 22.00	18.50 - 20.00
Most Common		15.00	20.00	18.50
Plow - Deep Chisel (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	12.00 - 20.50	15.00 - 25.00	18.50 - 20.00
Most Common		10.00	20.00	18.50
Plow - Surface Chisel (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	10.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 20.00	9.50 - 12.00
Most Common		10.00	14.00	11.00
Plow - Surface Chisel (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	8.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 20.00	9.50 - 12.00
Most Common		10.00	14.00	11.00
Plow - One Way				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	10.00 - 20.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	14.00	n/a
Plow - Sweep				
Range	\$/Acre	6.50 - 7.50	10.00 - 20.00	6.75 - 7.50
Most Common		6.50	14.00	7.00
Disc (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 20.00	9.00 - 10.25
Most Common		8.00	16.00	9.00
Disc (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 8.00	10.00 - 20.00	9.00 - 10.25
Most Common		7.00	16.00	9.00
Crust Busting				
Range	\$/Acre	6.00 - 10.00	10.00 - 20.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	16.00	n/a
Mulching				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 10.00	10.00 - 20.00	7.00 - 7.75
Most Common		7.00	16.00	7.00
Harrow - Spike Tooth				
Range	\$/Acre	6.00 - 8.00	10.00 - 20.00	6.00 - 6.25
Most Common		6.00	16.00	6.00
Cultivating - Field				
Range	\$/Acre	6.00 - 8.00	10.00 - 20.00	9.25 - 10.00
Most Common		6.00	16.00	10.00

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Tillage, continued				
Cultivating - Bedding				
Range	\$/Acre	8.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 20.00	10.00 - 11.25
Most Common		9.00	16.00	11.00
Rod Weeder				
Range	\$/Acre	4.50 - 8.00	10.00 - 20.00	4.00 - 10.00
Most Common		6.50	16.00	5.00
Rotary Hoe				
Range	\$/Acre	4.50 - 8.00	10.00 - 20.00	5.00 - 6.75
Most Common		7.00	14.00	6.00
Land Leveling (Floating)				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 10.00	10.00 - 20.00	9.00 - 10.50
Most Common		8.00	15.00	10.00
Furrowing				
Range	\$/Acre	8.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 20.00	9.75 - 11.00
Most Common		12.00	14.00	11.00
Strip Till (Tillage Only)				
Range	\$/Acre	11.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 20.00	11.00 - 20.00
Most Common		12.00	16.00	12.00

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Chemical & Fertilizer Applications (Excludes Material)				
Dry Fertilizer				
Range	\$/Acre	5.00 - 6.50	4.00 - 10.00	6.50 - 7.50
Most Common		6.50	6.00	6.50
Liquid Fertilizer				
Range	\$/Acre	4.75 - 5.50	6.00 - 10.00	5.50 - 5.75
Most Common		5.50	6.00	5.50
Anhydrous Ammonia				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 7.50	6.00 - 15.00	6.50 - 7.50
Most Common		7.50	8.50	7.00
Anhydrous Ammonia with Sweep				
Range	\$/Acre	6.50 - 12.00	n/a	7.75 - 8.25
Most Common		8.00	n/a	8.00
Aerial Spraying				
Range	\$/Acre	4.25 - 5.50	10.00 - 15.00	5.50 - 8.00
Most Common		5.50	12.50	5.50
Boom Sprayer				
Range	\$/Acre	4.00 - 6.00	6.00 - 10.00	4.50 - 5.00
Most Common		6.00	6.00	4.50
Side-Dress				
Range	\$/Acre	6.00 - 8.50	10.00 - 15.00	9.00 - 10.00
Most Common		8.50	12.00	9.00

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Planting (Excludes Seed & Transplants)				
Seed Cleaning (Small Grains)				
Range	\$/Bu	0.60 - 0.75	0.60 - 1.25	0.60 - 0.70
Most Common		0.65	0.75	0.65
Plant - Row Crops (22 inch spacing)				
Range	\$/Acre	20.00 - 24.00	n/a	n/a
Most Common		20.00	n/a	n/a
Plant - Row Crops (30 inch spacing)				
Range	\$/Acre	16.00 - 22.00	10.00 - 20.00	12.00 - 16.00
Most Common		16.00	15.00	14.00
Plant - Drill				
Range	\$/Acre	6.00 - 10.00	8.00 - 20.00	6.00 - 7.75
Most Common		6.00	10.00	7.00
Plant - Air Seeder				
Range	\$/Acre	8.00 - 11.00	10.00 - 20.00	9.00 - 9.50
Most Common		9.00	12.00	9.00
Plant - Vegetables				
Range	\$/Acre	25.00 - 100.00	n/a	n/a
Most Common		75.00	n/a	n/a
Plant - Oilseeds				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	10.00 - 20.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	12.00	n/a
Plant - Dry Beans				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	10.00 - 20.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	12.00	n/a
Plant - Legumes				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	10.00 - 20.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	12.00	n/a
Plant - Grass				
Range	\$/Acre	7.50 - 15.00	10.00 - 25.00	7.75 - 9.25
Most Common		15.00	12.00	8.00
Plant - Strip Till				
Range	\$/Acre	18.00 - 22.00	23.00 - 35.00	23.00 - 35.00
Most Common		18.00	26.00	26.00
Plant - Ridge Till				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	10.00 - 20.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	12.00	n/a
Plant - No Till (Row Crops)				
Range	\$/Acre	11.00 - 14.00	12.00 - 20.00	n/a
Most Common		11.00	16.00	n/a
Plant - No Till (Grain Crops)				
Range	\$/Acre	8.00 - 11.00	10.00 - 20.00	n/a
Most Common		11.00	14.00	n/a

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Grain Harvesting				
Combine - Corn/Sorghum (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	16.00 - 20.00	35.00 - 50.00	34.00 - 50.00
	+	+		+
	\$/Bu ^a	0.16 - 0.16		0.16 - 0.16
Most Common		16.00 + 0.16	45.50 + 0.00	45.00 + 0.16
Combine - Corn/Sorghum (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	12.00 - 21.00	n/a	15.00 - 25.00
	+	+		+
	\$/Bu ^a	0.21 - 0.21		0.21 - 0.21
Most Common		12.00 + 0.21	n/a	20.00 + 0.21
Combine - Small Grains (Irrigated)				
Range	\$/Acre	20.00 - 21.50	25.00 - 40.00	23.00 - 35.00
	+	+	+	+
	\$/Bu ^a	0.16 - 0.21	0.15 - 0.25	0.21 - 0.21
Most Common		20.00 + 0.21	35.00 + 0.00	35.00 + 0.21
Combine - Small Grains (Dryland)				
Range	\$/Acre	13.00 - 18.00	18.00 - 30.00	18.00 - 26.00
	+	+	+	+
	\$/Bu (bu>20) ^a	0.13 - 0.18	0.10 - 0.20	0.16 - 0.18
Most Common		18.00 + 0.16	25.00	20.00 + 0.16
Combine - Dry Beans				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	30.00 - 40.00	40.00 - 60.00
Most Common		n/a	35.00	40.00
Combine - Oilseeds				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	25.00 - 40.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	35.00	n/a
Combine - Soybeans				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	n/a	27.00 - 40.00
Most Common		n/a	n/a	40.00
Swath - Small Grains				
Range	\$/Acre	10.00 - 16.00	n/a	10.00 - 15.00
Most Common		10.00	n/a	10.00
Haul - Grain				
Range	\$/Bu	0.10 - 0.20	0.10 - 0.21	0.10 - 0.18
Most Common		0.15	0.16	0.10
Haul - Soybeans				
Range	\$/Bu	n/a	n/a	0.15 - 0.25
Most Common		n/a	n/a	0.15
Haul - Oilseeds				
Range	\$/Cwt	n/a	0.25 - 0.60	n/a
Most Common		n/a	0.45	n/a

^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 16:16:16 – \$16 per acre, \$0.16 per bushel for bushels greater than 20, and \$0.16 per bushel for hauling.

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Silage & Hay Making				
Silage Chopping & Hauling				
Range	\$/Ton	15.00 - 32.00	25.00 - 40.00	30.00 - 40.00
Most Common		27.00	35.00	35.00
Hay Mowing				
Range	\$/Acre	9.00 - 16.00	10.00 - 18.00	10.00 - 12.00
Most Common		10.00	12.00	10.00
Swathing				
Range	\$/Acre	12.00 - 15.00	14.00 - 20.00	7.00 - 10.50
Most Common		12.00	16.00	10.00
Raking				
Range	\$/Acre	7.00 - 8.00	10.00 - 15.00	3.75 - 5.25
Most Common		7.00	12.00	4.00
Baling - Small Square (about 70 lbs)				
Range	\$/Bale	0.50 - 0.80	0.65 - 0.80	0.60 - 0.80
Most Common		0.65	0.70	0.65
Baling - Med. Square (3x3, 800 lbs)				
Range	\$/Bale	10.00 - 18.00	n/a	18.00 - 20.00
Most Common		16.00	n/a	18.00
Baling - Big Square (4x4, 1750 lbs)				
Range	\$/Bale	15.00 - 18.00	15.00 - 20.00	17.00 - 20.00
Most Common		15.00	16.00	17.00
Baling - Round (about 1500 lbs)				
Range	\$/Bale	12.00 - 16.00	14.00 - 20.00	14.00 - 16.00
Most Common		12.00	14.00	15.00
Loading/Stacking - Sm Sq Bales				
Range	\$/Bale	0.35 - 0.45	0.40 - 0.60	0.30 - 0.40
Most Common		0.35	0.55	0.37
Haul - Small Square Bales				
Range	\$/Ton	9.00 - 12.00	10.00 - 20.00	12.00 - 15.00
Most Common		10.00	15.00	13.00
Haul - Med & Big Square Bales				
Range	\$/Ton	14.00 - 16.00	10.00 - 20.00	10.00 - 12.50
Most Common		16.00	15.00	11.00
Haul - Round Bales				
Range	\$/Ton	5.00 - 18.00	10.00 - 20.00	11.00 - 15.00
Most Common		15.00	15.00	12.00
Tub Grinding				
Range	\$/Ton	11.00 - 18.00	15.00 - 20.00	13.00 - 16.00
Most Common		11.00	17.00	15.00

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Orchard				
Apples - Pruning				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	225 - 280	n/a
Most Common		n/a	250.00	n/a
Apples - Thinning				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	300 - 375	n/a
Most Common		n/a	350.00	n/a
Apples - Picking				
Range	\$/Bu	n/a	1.10 - 1.60	n/a
Most Common		n/a	1.50	n/a
Peaches - Picking				
Range	\$/Bu	n/a	1.50 - 1.75	n/a
Most Common		n/a	1.60	n/a
Grapes - Pruning				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	300 - 385	n/a
Most Common		n/a	350.00	n/a
Grapes - Picking				
Range	\$/Acre	n/a	525 - 600	n/a
Most Common		n/a	575.00	n/a

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Labor				
Hired Labors - High Level Positions				
Range	\$/Hour	7.00 - 15.00	n/a	9.00 - 11.50
Most Common		15.00	n/a	10.00
Hired Labor - Low Level Positions				
Range	\$/Hour	7.00 - 12.00	n/a	7.00 - 11.00
Most Common		7.00	n/a	9.00
Tractor Drivers - High Level Positions				
Range	\$/Hour	9.50 - 15.00	n/a	10.00 - 14.00
Most Common		15.00	n/a	10.00
Tractor Drivers - Low Level Positions				
Range	\$/Hour	7.00 - 15.00	n/a	8.00 - 11.75
Most Common		7.00	n/a	8.00
Irrigators - High Level Positions				
Range	\$/Hour	9.00 - 15.00	n/a	10.00 - 15.00
Most Common		15.00	n/a	10.00
Irrigators - Lowest Paid Positions				
Range	\$/Hour	8.00 - 10.00	n/a	8.00 - 10.00
Most Common		8.00	n/a	8.00
Hired Labor - Other				
Range	\$/Hour	n/a	n/a	n/a
Most Common		n/a	n/a	n/a
Year Round Employees				
Range	\$/Month	2,500 - 5,000	n/a	3,000 - 5,000
Most Common		n/a	n/a	3,000
Foreman - Experienced				
Range	\$/Month	2,000 - 4,000	n/a	2,000 - 3,500
Most Common		4,000	n/a	3,500
Foreman - Less Experienced				
Range	\$/Month	1,700 - 3,000	n/a	2,000 - 3,000
Most Common		1,700	n/a	3,000
Manager - Experienced				
Range	\$/Month	4,000 - 5,000	n/a	4,000 - 5,000
Most Common		5,000	n/a	5,000
Manager - Less Experienced				
Range	\$/Month	4,000 - 4,500	n/a	4,000 - 4,500
Most Common		4,000	n/a	4,500

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 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		2/3	2/3	3/4
Land owner		1/3	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	3/4
Land owner		1/3	1/3	1/4

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	110.00 - 145.00	80.00 - 180.00	127.00 - 155.00
Dryland Crop Production				
Range	\$/acre	20.00 - 25.00	n/a	20.00 - 45.00

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Livestock				
Shearing - Lambs				
Range	\$/Head	n/a	2.00 - 5.00	n/a
Most Common		2.50	3.00	n/a
Shearing - Ewes				
Range	\$/Head	n/a	3.00 - 6.00	n/a
Most Common		2.50	3.50	n/a
Shearing - Rams				
Range	\$/Head	n/a	4.00 - 10.00	n/a
Most Common		5.00	6.00	n/a
Tagging - Sheep				
Range	\$/Head	n/a	1.00 - 3.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	1.50	n/a
Fertility Test - Rams				
Range	\$/Head	22.00 - 25.00	20.00 - 35.00	42.00 - 45.00
Most Common		22.00	25.00	45.00
Fertility Test - Bulls				
Range	\$/Head	27.00 - 35.00	15.00 - 45.00	25.00 - 45.00
Most Common		35.00	35.00	25.00
Pregnancy Test - Cows				
Range	\$/Head	2.00 - 2.75	3.00 - 6.00	2.20 - 4.00
Most Common		2.25	4.00	2.20
Ultrasound Diagnosis - Sheep				
Range	\$/Ewe	n/a	40.00 - 60.00	45.00 - 45.00
Most Common		45.00	45.00	45.00
Horse Shoeing (with shoes)				
Range	\$/Head	45.00 - 75.00	55.00 - 100.00	45.00 - 75.00
Most Common		70.00	60.00	75.00
Hoof Trimming (Horse)				
Range	\$/Head	40.00 - 70.00	25.00 - 50.00	30.00 - 35.00
Most Common		55.00	35.00	35.00
Haul Livestock				
Range	\$/Loaded	2.50 - 3.50	2.50 - 4.00	2.50 - 3.50
Most Common	Mile	3.00	3.00	3.00
Building Fence (including materials)				
Range		5,500 - 7,500	5,000 - 7,500	5,500 - 7,500
Most Common	\$/Mile	6,500	6,500	6,500

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Livestock Grazing				
Native Range - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	18.00 - 25.00	12.00 - 30.00	25.00 - 27.00
Most Common		18.00	18.00	25.00
Native Range - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	7.50 - 18.00	9.00 - 21.00	n/a
Most Common		12.00	14.00	n/a
Native Range - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Lb of Gain	n/a	0.30 - 0.60	n/a
Most Common		n/a	0.45	n/a
Native Range - Sheep				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	3.00 - 6.00	n/a
Most Common		1.75	4.00	n/a
Irrigated Pasture - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	25.50 - 28.50	12.00 - 30.00	22.00 - 30.00
Most Common		25.50	20.00	22.00
Irrigated Pasture - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	9.00 - 25.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	15.00	n/a
Irrigated Pasture - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Lb of Gain	n/a	0.30 - 0.60	n/a
Most Common		n/a	0.45	n/a
Wheat Pasture - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	11.00 - 18.00	10.00 - 30.00	18.00 - 22.00
Most Common		13.00	18.00	18.00
Wheat Pasture - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	8.00 - 21.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	14.00	n/a
Wheat Pasture - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Lb of Gain	n/a	0.30 - 0.60	n/a
Most Common		n/a	0.45	n/a
Wheat Stubble - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	10.00 - 18.00	n/a	n/a
Most Common		12.00	n/a	n/a
Wheat Stubble - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	n/a	n/a
Most Common		n/a	n/a	n/a

2007 Custom Rates for Colorado Farms and Ranches

2007 Activity	Basis For Charge	Southeast	Western NW-MTN & SW	Northeast
Livestock Grazing (continued)				
Corn/Milo Stalks - Cows				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	13.50 - 19.50	20.00 - 30.00	7.00 - 10.00
Most Common		13.50	25.00	7.00
Corn/Milo Stalks - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	15.00 - 21.00	12.50 - 18.00
Most Common		n/a	17.00	12.50
Corn/Milo Stalks - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Day	n/a	0.25 - 0.60	n/a
Most Common		n/a	0.50	n/a
Other Aftermath - Cattle				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	15.00 - 30.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	18.00	n/a
Other Aftermath - Yearlings				
Range	\$/Hd/Month	n/a	9.00 - 21.00	n/a
Most Common		n/a	14.00	n/a
All Forage - Sheep				
Range	\$/Hd/Day	0.05 - 0.10	0.10 - 0.20	n/a
Most Common		0.06	0.14	n/a