

CUSTOM SERVICE RATES RELATED TO LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN NEBRASKA

2025



CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL PROFITABILITY
Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources



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2025 Custom Service Rates for Livestock Production in Nebraska

The 2025 Nebraska Custom Rates Survey, focused on livestock-related services, was recently completed by the Center for Agricultural Profitability at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. The survey gathered input from 50 participants who collectively provided 291 responses, offering valuable insights into custom service rates across the state.

The survey results cover 26 different livestock-related custom operations. Rates are included in the final report (see Table 1) only if at least three usable responses were received for a given service. These rates reflect charges that typically include equipment use, fuel, labor, and necessary supplies such as baling twine or wire provided by the custom operator.

Participants were reached through Nebraska Extension newsletters, media outlets, the Center's website, and emails. Surveys were primarily completed online, with a few submitted on paper at Extension meetings or livestock management events. Of the respondents, 68% identified as custom service providers, while 32% were producers who hire custom work.

The survey is organized into eight main categories of livestock-related services:

- Common Custom Livestock Services
- Custom Feed Preparation and Delivery
- Custom Land / Pasture Maintenance
- Fencing and Trenching
- Hauling Livestock
- Haying and Baling
- Equipment Rental
- Manure Hauling and Application

While responses were collected from across Nebraska, the majority came from the state's northern tier. It's important to note that custom rates may vary by region, availability of providers, and specific job requirements.

This report is a widely used reference tool for producers and custom operators. It provides a helpful starting point for determining fair rates when hiring or offering custom services.

Agricultural custom service providers are encouraged to participate in the next statewide survey, which will be available in late fall 2025. Registration to participate is open now at: cap.unl.edu/customrates

Items to note in survey results (Table 1):

The **Number Reporting** is the number of usable responses received for a specific operation. The results from operations with more responses are generally more reliable than those with fewer responses. Results are not reported if fewer than three usable responses were reported for an operation.

The **Average Rate** for a specific operation estimates the prevailing charge for an operation. The reliability of this figure improves as the number of responses increases for an operation. The range size should also be viewed when considering the average, as the range of answers in some cases may be wide.

The **Most Common Rate (Mode)** is the rate reported more often than any other for that practice. The Average Rate and the Mode are usually similar. The results do not include a mode figure when any value fails to be reported more than once or when two or more values are reported the same number of times.

The **Range** shows the minimum and maximum amounts reported. These values may indicate different conditions under which the work was performed. The range may also reflect that some rates include travel to and from the field, while others do not.

This publication has been peer reviewed.

Table 1 2025 STATE SUMMARY OF LIVESTOCK RELATED CUSTOM SERVICE RATES

COMMON CUSTOM LIVESTOCK SERVICES	Average Rate	Most Common	Range	Number Reporting
Cattle - Cows /Breeding Stock				
Artificial Insemination - \$ Rate per head	13.75	10.00	10.00-20.00	4
Yardage rate for calving heifers (without feed charges included) - \$ Rate per head per day	0.58	-	0.40-1.00	4
Yardage rate for calving cows (without feed charges included) - \$ Rate per head per day	0.49	-	0.40-0.65	3
Wintering cows (without charge for calving labor) - \$ Rate per head per day	1.01	1.00	0.50-2.00	11
Care for cow-calf pairs on summer pasture (exclude pasture rent and feed charges) - \$ Rate per head per day	1.56	-	0.83-2.40	4
Calves				
Processing fee (branding, castrating, vaccinations) - \$ Rate per head	2.50	2.00	1.00-5.00	11
Yardage \$ rate for weaning calves (without feed charges included) - \$ Rate per head per day	0.47	0.40	0.35-0.65	13
Cattle - Backgrounding /Stocking				
Processing fee above supply costs for backgrounding cattle - \$ Rate per head	1.96	2.00	0.54-3.00	13
Processing fee above supply costs for backgrounding cattle - \$ Rate per hour	24.00	25.00	22.00-25.00	3
Yardage rate for backgrounding calves (without feed charges included) - \$ Rate per head per day	0.48	0.40	0.35-1.00	14
Cattle Finishing				
Processing fee (not including supply costs for feeder cattle) - \$ Rate per head	2.07	2.00	0.54-3.00	8
Yardage \$ rate - finishing cattle (without feed charges included) - \$ Rate per head per day	0.50	0.65	0.35-.065	7
CUSTOM FEED PREPARATION and DELIVERY	Average Rate	Most Common	Range	Number Reporting
Grinding Hay Only - \$ Rate per ton without delivery charge	14.25	13.50	12.00-18.00	4
CUSTOM LAND / PASTURE MAINTENANCE	Average Rate	Most Common	Range	Number Reporting
Seeding of pasture & grassland areas (drilled, no-till / interseeding) - \$ Rate per acre	23.60	-	15.00-40.00	5
Clearing cedar trees - \$ Rate per acre	19.33	-	13-25	3
FENCING AND TRENCHING	Average Rate	Most Common	Range	Number Reporting
Digging post holes - \$ Labor charge per hole	38.33	50.00	15.00-50.00	3
HAULING LIVESTOCK	Average Rate	Most Common	Range	Number Reporting
Hauling Cattle by 18 wheeler (semi-trailer) - \$ Rate per loaded mile	5.25	-	3.50-7.00	4
-Average pounds per load on semi-trailer (hauling cattle)	46,667	50000.00	40,000-50,000	3
Hauling Cattle by stock trailer - \$ Rate per loaded mile	5.10	-	3.00-10.00	5
-Average pounds per load on stock trailer (hauling cattle)	15,500	-	15,000-16,000	3
HAYING and BALING	Average Rate	Most Common	Range	Number Reporting
Mowing Hay with Disk Mower - \$ Rate per acre	20.00	20.00	15.00-25.00	4
Raking Hay - \$ Rate per acre	7.88	8.00	5.00-10.00	8
Mowing and Raking Hay where one rate is quoted or contracted for these operations. - \$ Rate per Acre	30.75	15.00	16.00-50.00	4
Swathing Hay with crushing or crimping - \$ Rate per acre	18.57	19.00	15.00-22.00	7
Raking Cornstalks - \$ Rate per acre	8.60	10.00	5.00-10.00	5
Baling Hay (small square bale with twine tie) - \$ Rate per bale Avg. 52.50 lbs/bale	4.00	2.00	2.00-7.00	4
Baling Hay (large round bale with net wrap) - \$ Rate per bale Avg. 1,521 lbs/bale	16.44	17.00	12.50-20.00	9
Baling Cornstalks (large round bale with net wrap) - \$ Rate per bale Avg. 1,200 lbs/bale	18.43	18.00	15.00-25.00	7
Loading and Moving Large Round Bales with Tractor - \$ Rate per bale	4.17	-	1.00-8.00	6
Average distance in miles noted for moving large round bales = 3.10 miles				



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