

# NewsWatch



## Custom Rates available online

ACCORDING to the 2006 Kansas Custom Rates publication, the price of hiring others to perform farm work has increased.

"In 2006, we saw prices change for equipment and fuel, and we saw more use of GPS technology and more no-till farming practices," says Eldon Thiessen, director of Kansas Agricultural Statistics. "These greatly affected the price charged for custom operations."

Farmers and custom operators who want to know what is considered fair compensation for custom work can look at the 2006 Kansas Custom Rates publication, now available online at the Kansas Agricultural Statistics Web site: [www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Kansas/Publications/Custom\\_Rates/custom06.pdf](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Kansas/Publications/Custom_Rates/custom06.pdf).

The 2006 edition of Kansas Custom Rates is based on data collected by Kansas Agricultural Statistics from roughly 1,600 custom operators, co-

### Key Points

- 2006 custom rates guide is available on Kansas Ag Statistics Web site.
- Annual publication surveys nearly 1,600 custom operators, farmers and ranchers.
- Higher fuel prices affect 2006 charges, as do no-till and GPS-related services.

operatives, elevators, farmers and ranchers. Survey participants reported average rates paid for machines, power, fuel and operators, which serve as a guide to help custom operators and farmers reach mutual agreements.

Kansas Agricultural Statistics is a cooperative federal-state program involving the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the USDA. Through Kansas Agricultural Statistics, data about the many segments of Kansas agriculture are collected, analyzed and disseminated.

The annual Kansas Custom Rates is one of the publications prepared by Kansas Agricultural Statistics that is funded entirely by the KDA.

■ For more information about the Kansas Custom Rates publication, call (800) 258-4564.

Crop	Per-acre charge, 2006	Per-acre charge, 2005
Corn	\$21.75	\$21.68
Soybeans	\$21.88	\$21.48
Wheat	\$15.78	\$15.24
Grain Sorghum	\$16.64	\$16.51
Sunflowers	\$19.55	\$20.24

### Custom Rates: a sneak peek

AMONG the most sought-after custom rates in the annual Kansas Custom Rates guide, published by Kansas Agricultural Statistics, is that of custom harvesting. The accompanying table lists the rates paid by farmers in 2005 and 2006. These are average prices paid statewide; the complete Kansas Custom Rates guide, available on the Internet, has the charges broken down by region.

### Crop insurance deadline March 15

ALTERNATIVE visions for the farm bill may lead to some doubts about farm programs. However, one thing is certain. The federally subsidized crop insurance program is still very much here for 2007 crops. March 15 is the deadline for signing up for spring-planted crops.

March 15 is also the deadline for making any changes to existing policies.

Thirteen Kansas spring-planted crops share this deadline: onions, oats, millet, cotton, corn, popping corn (with five policy choices), dry beans,

hybrid seed sorghum, grain sorghum (four choices), sunflowers, soybeans (five choices), potatoes and barley.

Adjusted Gross Revenue Lite (AGR-Lite), a whole-farm revenue insurance policy recently expanded to counties in Kansas, also shares the March 15 deadline.

Not all crops, nor all policy choices, are available in every county. Producers who want to sign up for or make any changes to existing policies should contact a crop insurance agent well before the sign-up deadline, also known as the "sales closing date."

## Kansas Clippings

### Movers and shakers

**Tom Phillips**, professor of entomology at Oklahoma State University, has been hired to head up Kansas State University's Department of Entomology. Phillips has been at OSU since 1996 and was an entomologist with USDA prior to that. He begins his new position July 1. ... **Richard Brown**, Hutchinson, president and chief operating officer of Krause Corp. Inc., has been named to the board of directors of the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.

### Brown County biorefinery hires management firm

Conestoga Energy Partners LLC will manage the soon-to-be-built Northeast Kansas Bioenergy LLC biorefinery, which will be located near Hiawatha. The integrated Northeast Kansas Bioenergy plant will feature a 50 million-gallon-per-year ethanol plant and 40 million-gallon-per-year biodiesel plant. Groundbreaking is planned for this spring, with completion expected in 2008. Conestoga Energy, based in Liberal, has management contracts already with the Bonanza Bioenergy and Arkalon Energy ethanol plants — both of which will start production in 2007 — and Boothill Biofuels in Ford County, which is projected to begin production in 2008.

### K-State Research and Extension names new agents

**Abbie Grossnicklaus** and **Sarah Laib** have joined the Johnson County Research and Extension office as 4-H and youth development specialists. Grossnicklaus is a 2006 graduate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Laib is a 2006 graduate of Kansas State University. ... In Phillips and Rooks counties, **Allie Burns** has accepted the position of family and consumer science agent. She is a 2006 graduate of K-State. ... **Joe Leibbrandt** is the new agriculture and natural resources agent in the Logan County office. A 1996 graduate of K-State, Leibbrandt has been an agent in Thomas County and in the Post Rock Extension District. ... **Amanda Lott** has joined the River Valley Extension office as 4-H and youth

development specialist. She is a native of Clay County. ... **Eily Blasi** is the new agriculture and natural resources agent in Meade County. A K-State graduate, Blasi has worked at the Beef Research Unit at K-State and for Purina/Land O' Lakes Feed.

### Ag mediation service recertified to help with disputes

The Kansas Agricultural Mediation Service has been recertified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to continue offering dispute resolution services to Kansas farmers, ranchers, agricultural lenders and USDA agencies in a confidential and non-adversarial setting outside the traditional legal process. Most services are available for free or at a reduced cost. Anyone in the Kansas agricultural community who is involved in a financial dispute may call toll-free (800) 321-3276. Information about the service is also available online at [www.oznet.ksu.edu/kams](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/kams). The agency also works with Kansas State University Research and Extension to provide agricultural financial counseling and has an agreement with Kansas Legal Services Inc. to provide legal representation to farmers and ranchers on a reduced-fee basis, depending on the producer's income.

### KDWP offers funding for threatened species

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will receive \$500,000 and match \$167,000 to help landowners implement projects in the federal government's Landowner Incentive Program, which helps conserve natural habitat for at-risk species. Kansas landowners are located in the Shortgrass Prairie Conservation Region and the Central Mixed Grass Prairie Conservation Region, as identified in the agency's Wildlife Action Plan. At-risk species in these areas include the lesser prairie chicken, black-tailed prairie dog, ferruginous hawk, northern pintail, American avocet, black tern, Cassin's sparrow, whooping crane, green toad, flathead chub, Arkansas darter and Topeka shiner. For information, call KDWP LIP coordinator Murray Laubhan at (620) 672-5911.

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