

2025 Indiana Farm Custom Rates

By Michael Langemeier

The rates reported in this publication were compiled from questionnaires received from farmers, farm owners, farm custom operators, and professional farm managers in Indiana. Purdue Extension educators and specialists developed the questionnaire. Purdue Educators distributed the questionnaires at meetings and events statewide during the last month of 2024 and the first three months of 2025. Respondents were asked to report custom rates they had either paid or received during the past year. We are grateful to the 97 survey respondents who provided information for this publication.

Unless otherwise stated, the rates reported include payments made for fuel, operator labor, and machinery ownership costs. For each operation, the average of the responses received is reported. The variation of rates around the average is reported when the number of respondents for a question was at least 30. The variation is the average rate plus and minus one standard deviation. Approximately two-thirds of the responses would be expected to fall between the high and low numbers used to summarize the extent of the variation. Larger standard deviations in relation to reported averages indicate greater variability in the reported custom rates. For several of the operations, the custom rates reported varied widely. In general, operations for which fewer than five responses were received are not reported here. A small number of responses signals report users to be extra cautious when using the survey results.

Farm custom rates may differ significantly from one area in the state to another based on availability of custom operators and demand for their services. Therefore, the statewide averages reported here might be quite different from the going rate in any given area. Custom rates in a given area may vary significantly according to timeliness, operator skill, field size and shape, crop conditions, the performance characteristics of the machine being used, the relationship between the custom operator and the person needing custom work done, competitive pressures, and economic circumstances of the custom operator. The variation of reported rates was large for many of the operations and thus should only be used as a starting point for establishing a rate in any given situation.

In Indiana, custom work is often done by neighbors that also farm after they complete their own work. In these situations, the custom operator may charge a custom rate that is well below the full cost of owning and operating their farm machinery either to build goodwill or to more fully utilize their machinery capacity. For that reason, readers of this publication should not interpret the average rates reported here as indicative of the total cost of completing these operations. Custom operators who extensively engage in custom work should estimate the full ownership and operating costs of their services before agreeing to work for the “going rate” in their area.

<i>Land Preparation Operations</i>					
<i>OPERATION</i>	<i>UNIT</i>	<i>RESPONSES</i>	<i>AVERAGE</i>	<i>VARIATION</i>	
Rotary Hoeing	\$/acre	5	9.40		
Chisel Plowing	\$/acre	20	19.13		
Vertical Tillage	\$/acre	26	17.12		
Disking with Tandem Disk	\$/acre	18	15.19		
Field Cultivating	\$/acre	25	16.59		
V-Ripping or Sub-Soiling	\$/acre	17	22.00		
<i>Fertilizer & Chemical Application Operations</i>					
<i>FERTILIZER APPLICATION - GROUND</i>	<i>UNIT</i>	<i>RESPONSES</i>	<i>AVERAGE</i>	<i>VARIATION</i>	
Broadcasting Bulk Dry Fertilizer	\$/acre	27	7.74		
Spraying Liquid Fertilizer	\$/acre	17	8.56		
Knifing-In Liquid Fertilizer	\$/acre	17	14.58		
Anhydrous Application Pre-Plant	\$/acre	12	15.21		
Side-Dress Anhydrous Application	\$/acre	17	15.35		
Spreading Manure	\$/acre	9	15.39		
<i>CHEMICAL APPLICATION</i>	<i>UNIT</i>	<i>RESPONSES</i>	<i>AVERAGE</i>	<i>VARIATION</i>	
Tractor and Sprayer	\$/acre	10	8.40		
Self-Propelled Sprayer	\$/acre	40	8.39	6.7	10.0
Aerial Sprayer	\$/acre	18	13.31		
<i>PRECISION AGRICULTURE</i>	<i>UNIT</i>	<i>RESPONSES</i>	<i>AVERAGE</i>	<i>VARIATION</i>	
Precision Fertilizer Application	\$/acre	14	7.90		
Precision Chemical Application	\$/acre	7	9.00		
<i>Grain Planting Operations</i>					
<i>OPERATION</i>	<i>UNIT</i>	<i>RESPONSES</i>	<i>AVERAGE</i>	<i>VARIATION</i>	
Conventional Till Corn - 30" row	\$/acre	31	22.97	16.4	29.5
No-Till Corn - 30" row	\$/acre	24	22.79		
Conventional Till Soybeans - 15" row	\$/acre	18	21.64		
No-Till Soybeans - 15" row	\$/acre	31	21.94	16.8	27.0
Conventional Till Soybeans - Drilled	\$/acre	6	18.33		
No-Till Soybeans - Drilled	\$/acre	8	19.50		
Conventional Till Small Grains	\$/acre	3	17.33		
No-Till Small Grains	\$/acre	12	19.46		
<i>Grain Harvesting Operations</i>					
<i>OPERATION</i>	<i>UNIT</i>	<i>RESPONSES</i>	<i>AVERAGE</i>	<i>VARIATION</i>	
Corn - Combine Only	\$/acre	53	36.97	28.8	45.1
Soybeans - Combine Only	\$/acre	54	35.94	28.1	43.8
Small Grain - Combine Only	\$/acre	15	32.37		
Corn - Combine and Haul to Bin	\$/acre	26	43.88		
Soybeans - Combine and Haul to Bin	\$/acre	28	40.79		
Small Grain - Combine and Haul to Bin	\$/acre	7	41.14		

Hiring Machinery & Operator for All Growing and Harvesting Operations					
CROP	UNIT	RESPONSES	AVERAGE	VARIATION	
Corn	\$/acre	8	122.34		
Soybeans	\$/acre	8	107.23		
On-Farm Corn Drying					
POINTS OF MOISTURE REMOVED	UNIT	RESPONSES	AVERAGE	VARIATION	
Five	¢/bushel	11	19		
Ten	¢/bushel	10	32		
Grain Hauling					
ITEM	UNIT	RESPONSES	AVERAGE	VARIATION	
Total Cost of Hauling Grain to Market	¢/bushel	47	18.8	12.6	25.1
Average Farm to Market Haul One-Way	Miles	47	23.2	11.4	35.0
Hay/Straw or Corn Stover Harvesting Operations					
MOWING & CONDITIONING HAY OR STRAW	UNIT	RESPONSES	AVERAGE	VARIATION	
Tractor and Mower/Conditioner	\$/acre	10	20.10		
Tedding	\$/acre	6	8.17		
Raking (windrowing)	\$/acre	9	11.44		
BALING HAY/STRAW OR CORN STOVER	UNIT	RESPONSES	AVERAGE	VARIATION	
Small Rectangular Bales (25-60 lbs.)	\$/bale	9	1.12		
Large Rectangular Bales (over 1000 lbs.)	\$/bale	6	13.17		
Medium Round Bales (4 feet wide)	\$/bale	2	25.00		
Large Round Bales (5 feet wide)	\$/bale	13	19.58		
Large Round Corn Stover Bales	\$/bale	2	15.00		
BALE WRAPPING & MOVING	UNIT	RESPONSES	AVERAGE	VARIATION	
Charge for Plastic Wrapping Large Bales	\$/bale	N/A	N/A		
Charge for Moving Bales to Farm Storage	\$/bale	4	3.50		
BALE HAY ON SHARES	UNIT	RESPONSES	AVERAGE	VARIATION	
Custom Operator's Share of Harvest	%	3	38		
Miscellaneous Custom Work					
TYPE OF ACTIVITY OR MACHINE OPERATION	UNIT	RESPONSES	AVERAGE	VARIATION	
Tiling (excluding cost of tile)	¢ / per foot	6	95		
Mowing Pasture or CRP Acres	\$/acre	9	30.85		
Bulldozing (blade = 9 feet wide or less)	\$/hour	9	129		
Bulldozing (blade = larger than 9 feet)	\$/hour	4	165		
Machine Rental Rates (Excluding Operator and Fuel Cost)					
MACHINE TYPE	UNIT	RESPONSES	AVERAGE	VARIATION	
Tractor (Average HP = 195)	\$/hour	3	78		