

Crop and Livestock Labor Standards

Department of Agricultural Economics — www.agmanager.info



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

Michael R. Langemeier
Professor, Agricultural Economics

Kevin C. Dhuyvetter
Agricultural Economist
Farm Management

The crop and labor standards in this guide were developed to provide labor information for use in whole-farm and enterprise budgeting, forward planning, and comparative studies. The labor standards were developed using enterprise information from the Kansas Farm Management Association (KFMA). Three size categories were used to depict labor standards for common enterprises used on KFMA farms. Farms categorized as “small” represented information for the farms that were in the lowest one-third in terms of enterprise acreage or livestock units. Similarly, farms categorized as “medium” or “large” had enterprise acreage or livestock units that were in the middle and highest one-third size categories for a particular enterprise, respectively. The number of acres and livestock units required to be in a specific category varied across enterprises. Enterprises represented by a single value were not represented by a sufficient number of farms to be broken into more than one category. For these enterprises, only the average value is reported.

Crops in Eastern Kansas

Table 1 presents labor standards for nonirrigated crops in Eastern Kansas. Crops represented include alfalfa, brome, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, and wheat. The average labor standards for corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, and wheat were 2.20, 1.95, 1.90, and 1.60, respectively. The soybean data represent the standards for full-season soybeans. The average number of hours per acre or the labor standard for double-crop soybeans was 1.05. The difference in hours per acre between the smallest third of farms and the largest third of farms ranged from 0.8 to 1.0 hours.

Crops in Central Kansas

Labor standards for nonirrigated crops in Central Kansas are presented in Table 2. Crops represented include alfalfa, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, and wheat. The average labor standards for grain sorghum, soybeans, and wheat were 1.95, 1.95, and 1.90, respectively. The difference in hours per acre between the smallest third of farms and the largest third of farms ranged from 0.85 to 1.05 hours.

Table 1. Labor Standards for Crop Enterprises in Eastern Kansas.

Crop	Farm Size	Hours per Acre
Nonirrigated Alfalfa	Average	2.30
Nonirrigated Brome	Average	1.55
Nonirrigated Corn	Small	3.00
	Medium	2.45
	Large	2.00
Nonirrigated Grain Sorghum	Small	2.75
	Medium	2.05
	Large	1.80
Nonirrigated Soybeans	Small	2.60
	Medium	2.00
	Large	1.75
Nonirrigated Wheat	Small	2.25
	Medium	1.75
	Large	1.45

Table 2. Labor Standards for Crop Enterprises in Central Kansas.

Crop	Farm Size	Hours per Acre
Nonirrigated Alfalfa	Average	2.90
Nonirrigated Corn	Average	2.15
Nonirrigated Grain Sorghum	Small	2.60
	Medium	2.15
	Large	1.75
Nonirrigated Soybeans	Small	2.80
	Medium	1.95
	Large	1.80
Nonirrigated Wheat	Small	2.65
	Medium	2.20
	Large	1.60

Crops in Western Kansas

Table 3 presents crop labor standards for Western Kansas. Crops represented include nonirrigated corn, nonirrigated grain sorghum, nonirrigated wheat, and irrigated corn. The average labor standards for nonirrigated grain sorghum, nonirrigated wheat, and irrigated corn were 1.35, 1.45, and 1.85, respectively. The difference in hours per acre between the smallest third of farms and the largest third of farms ranged from 1.10 to 1.40 hours.

Table 3. *Labor Standards for Crop Enterprises in Western Kansas.*

Crop	Farm Size	Hours per Acre
Nonirrigated Corn	Average	0.95
Nonirrigated Grain Sorghum	Small	2.60
	Medium	1.55
	Large	1.20
Nonirrigated Wheat	Small	2.50
	Medium	1.55
	Large	1.25
Irrigated Corn	Small	2.70
	Medium	2.30
	Large	1.60

Livestock

Labor usage values, by size of operation, are provided for dairy and beef cows based on the number of cows handled. The average herd size and number of hours per cow for the beef cow enterprise were 126 cows and 5.50 hours per cow, respectively. The difference in hours per cow between operations with fewer than 100 cows and those with greater than 200 cows was 2.50 hours. The average herd size and the average number of hours per cow for the dairy enterprise were 102 cows and 39 hours per cow, respectively. There was little difference in hours per cow between operations with fewer than 100 cows and those with greater than 100 cows. Labor standards are reported on a per month basis for the backgrounding and the backgrounding and finishing operations. The average enterprise size for the backgrounding enterprise was 464 head. For the backgrounding and finishing enterprise the average number of head was 904.

Table 4. *Labor Standards for Livestock Enterprises.*

Livestock Type	Farm Size	Hours per unit
Backgrounding	464 head	0.30/month
Backgrounding and Finishing	904 head	0.15/month
Beef Cows	< 100 cows	6.90/cow
	100-200 cows	5.90/cow
	> 200 cows	4.40/cow
Dairy	< 100 cows	39.90/cow
	> 100 cows	38.70/cow

Publications from Kansas State University are available on the World Wide Web at: www.oznet.ksu.edu

Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Michael R. Langemeier and Kevin C. Dhuyvetter, *Crop and Livestock Labor Standards*, Kansas State University, October 2005.