
Cornhusker Economics

2025 Nebraska Custom Rates for Livestock-Related Agricultural Services

This report presents the results of the 2025 custom rates survey for livestock-related services in Nebraska. The findings provide benchmark pricing for 26 custom operations commonly performed in livestock production, including processing, hauling, feed delivery, manure application, and fencing. The information is intended to help agricultural producers and service providers make informed decisions about custom service arrangements.

Custom farming services are a vital component of agricultural operations in Nebraska. When labor, equipment, or time is limited, producers often rely on external service providers for critical livestock-related tasks. Accurate and up-to-date information on custom rates is essential for budgeting, cost analysis, and contract negotiation.

To address this need, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Center for Agricultural Profitability conducts regular surveys of custom service providers and users. This report presents the results of the 2025 livestock-related custom rates survey, with a focus on state-level averages and trends compared to those of prior years.

Data was collected via an online and paper survey administered to Nebraska-based custom service providers and producers during the first quarter of 2025. A total of 50 responses were received:

- 68% of respondents identified as custom service providers
- 32% indicated they had paid for livestock-related custom services in the previous 12 months

Respondents reported rates for a range of services. Reported rates typically cover the costs of labor, equipment, fuel, and supplies used while providing a service. Reported rates were averaged and included in the summary only if three or more responses were received for a given service. In cases where fewer than three responses were recorded, the rate was omitted due to statistical limitations.

Overview of Rates

The 2025 data show that livestock custom rates remain relatively stable compared to those reported in 2023. However, a few notable changes were observed:

- Artificial insemination services increased by approximately \$2 per head
- Certain services were added or modified based on updated survey questions
- Some services only appear for one year due to limited response counts or newly introduced survey items

Table 1 summarizes statewide average rates for all qualifying livestock-related services. Table 2 compares selected rates from the 2023 and 2025 reports and the general Nebraska custom rates report published in 2024, which focuses more heavily on crop-related services.

Geographic Considerations

Unlike the general biennial Nebraska Custom Rates Report, which includes district-level data, the livestock-focused report is presented only at the statewide level. This is due to the lower number of survey responses, which prevents reliable geographic disaggregation.

Limitations

This report is subject to several limitations:

1. Sample Size – With fifty total respondents, the findings may not fully represent regional differences or market variability within the state.
2. Reporting Bias – Voluntary participation may introduce response bias due to the selection of participants who chose to complete the survey.
3. Comparability – Changes in survey design and question wording may impact year-over-year comparisons.

Conclusion

The 2025 livestock custom rates report serves as a valuable reference for cost benchmarking and service pricing in Nebraska's livestock sector. While most rates have remained stable, producers and service providers should refer to multiple years' reports to understand trends and regional variation. As always, actual service rates will vary based on job complexity, geographic location, provider availability, and market demand.

Participation in Future Surveys

To strengthen future reports, producers and service providers are encouraged to participate in upcoming surveys. Interested individuals may register at the following URL: <https://cap.unl.edu/nebraska-custom-rates-survey-sign>

The 2025 Custom Service Rates related to Livestock Production in Nebraska report is available for download at: <https://cap.unl.edu/customrates/>

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				

Table 2 - Comparison of some Nebraska statewide custom rates from 2023 - 2025 surveys

Custom Service	2025 Average Rate from LS CR survey *	2024 Average Rate (from regular CR survey) **	2023 Average Rate from LS CR survey ***
Artificial Insemination - \$ Rate per head	\$ 13.75		\$ 11.83
Wintering cows (without charge for calving labor) - \$ Rate per head per day	\$ 1.01		\$ 1.11
Care for cow-calf pairs on summer pasture (exclude pasture rent and feed charges) - \$ Rate per head per day (added new to survey in 2025)	\$ 1.56		
Processing fee calves (branding, vaccinations)- \$ Rate per head	\$ 2.50		\$ 2.46
Processing fee (not including supply costs for feeder cattle) - \$ Rate per head	\$ 2.07		\$ 1.96
Yardage rate for weaning calves (without feed charges) - \$ Rate per head per day	\$ 0.47		\$ 0.54
Yardage rate for finishing cattle (without feed charges) - \$ Rate per head per day	\$ 0.50		\$ 0.43
Clearing Cedar Trees - \$ Rate per hour		\$ 126.92	\$ 96.67
Clearing Cedar Trees - \$ Rate per acre	\$ 19.33		
Building New Fence - Labor charge only for 4 strand barbed with wood posts - \$ Rate per foot		\$ 1.70	\$ 1.24
Hauling Cattle by 18 wheeler (semi-trailer) - \$ Rate per loaded mile	\$ 5.25	\$ 5.50	\$ 6.24
Hauling Cattle by stock trailer - \$ Rate per loaded mile	\$ 5.10	\$ 3.68	\$ 3.88
Baling Hay (large square bale) - \$ Rate per bale		\$ 15.00	\$ 16.40
Baling Hay (large round bale without net wrap) - \$ Rate per bale		\$ 15.09	\$ 15.64
Baling Hay (large round bale with net wrap) - \$ Rate per bale	\$ 16.44	\$ 16.54	\$ 16.24
Skid Steer Rental (Exclude fuel and operator) - \$ Rate per hour		\$ 102.23	\$ 71.67
Solid Manure Loading - \$ Rate per ton			\$ 7.64
Solid Manure Application - \$ Rate per ton		\$ 7.30	\$ 3.25

* McClure, G. Jansen, J., Parson, J., Dennis, E., Saner, R. "2025 Custom Service Rates Related to Livestock Production in Nebraska"

**McClure, G., Jansen, J. 2024 Custom Rates Report. University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension Circular (EC823). May 2024.

*** McClure, G. Jansen, J., Parson, J., Dennis, E., Saner, R. "2023 Custom Service Rates Related to Livestock Production in Nebraska"

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