



KSU Farm Management Guide

MF-802

Crop and Livestock Labor Standards by Size of Operation

Department of Agricultural Economics



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

Larry N. Langemeier
Extension Agricultural Economist
Farm Management Studies

Crops

The following crop labor standards, by size of machinery, were derived to provide labor information for use in enterprise studies, farm budgets, forward planning, and comparative studies. The Kansas Farm Management and K-MAR-105 Associations utilize an “average” of these crop labor standards for use in farm typing studies, enterprise budgets, and expense allocations. In addition, the KSU

Farm Management Guide Cost-Return Budgets developed for crop and livestock enterprises use an “average” labor standard value.

Farm size represents the size of machinery and equipment utilized in a given farm operation, and not the number of acres. For example, the “Large Size Farm” represents typical labor usage for farm operations using machinery which can be classified as large.

Table 1. Labor Standards for Dryland Crop Enterprises in Eastern Kansas By Machinery Size¹

Crops	Hours Per Acre		
	Small Size Farm	Average Size Farm	Large Size Farm
Wheat, Barley, Rye	2.10	1.80	1.55
Oats	1.95	1.65	1.40
Corn	3.80	2.75	2.25
Grain Sorghum	2.55	2.10	1.65
Soybeans	2.55	2.00	1.60
Alfalfa	6.30	6.25	5.00
Brome, Bermuda, Prairie	2.55	2.50	2.05
Silage	5.80	5.45	5.15

¹Source: Larry N. Langemeier, Kim Witt, and Chris Akhimien, “Derived Labor Requirements for Eastern Kansas Crops,” Contribution Number 91-88-D, Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

**Table 2. Labor Standards for Dryland Crop Enterprises in Central Kansas
by Machinery Size¹**

Crops	Hours Per Acre		
	Small Size Farm	Average Size Farm	Large Size Farm
Wheat, Barley, Rye	2.10	1.65	1.35
Oats	1.75	1.40	1.15
Corn	3.15	2.50	1.95
Grain Sorghum	2.15	1.75	1.40
Soybeans	2.30	1.85	1.55
Alfalfa	6.35	5.10	4.30
Brome, Bermuda, Prairie	2.05	1.70	1.45
Silage	5.40	4.80	4.55

¹Source: Larry N. Langemeier, Chris Akhimien, and Kim Witt, “Derived Labor Requirements for Central Kansas Crops,” Contribution 91-89-D, Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

**Table 3. Labor Standards for Dryland Crop Enterprises in Western Kansas
by Machinery Size¹**

Crops	Hours Per Acre		
	Small Size Farm	Average Size Farm	Large Size Farm
Wheat, Barley, Rye	1.30	.90	.70
Grain Sorghum	1.35	1.20	.80
Alfalfa	3.00	2.55	2.55
Brome, Bermuda, Prairie	1.40	1.35	1.20

¹Source: Larry N. Langemeier, Kim Witt, and Chris Akhimien, “Derived Labor Requirements for Western Kansas Irrigated and Dryland Crops,” Contribution Number 90-398-D, Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

**Table 4. Labor Standards for Irrigated (Sprinkler) Crop Enterprises in Eastern Kansas
by Machinery Size¹**

Crops	Hours Per Acre		
	Small Size Farm	Average Size Farm	Large Size Farm
Wheat, Barley, Rye	2.20	1.65	1.45
Corn	3.10	2.50	2.00
Grain Sorghum	2.15	1.75	1.40
Soybeans	2.05	1.75	1.45
Alfalfa	3.75	3.25	3.00
Brome, Bermuda, Prairie	2.50	2.15	2.00
Silage	4.50	4.25	4.15

¹Source: Larry N. Langemeier, Kim Witt, and Chris Akhimien, “Derived Labor Requirements for Western Kansas Irrigated and Dryland Crops,” Contribution Number 90-398-D, Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

**Table 5. Labor Standards for Irrigated (Flood) Crop Enterprises in Eastern Kansas
by Machinery Size¹**

Crops	Hours Per Acre		
	Small Size Farm	Average Size Farm	Large Size Farm
Wheat, Barley, Rye	2.65	2.25	1.80
Corn	3.80	3.15	2.65
Grain Sorghum	2.70	2.30	1.95
Soybeans	2.50	2.25	2.00
Alfalfa	4.40	3.95	3.90
Brome, Bermuda, Prairie	3.10	2.80	2.80
Silage	5.05	4.80	4.45

¹Source: Larry N. Langemeier, Kim Witt, and Chris Akhimien, “Derived Labor Requirements for Western Kansas Irrigated and Dryland Crops,” Contribution Number 90-398-D, Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

Livestock

The following livestock labor standards, by size of operation, provide the in-depth labor information needed for use in enterprise studies, farm budgets, forward planning, and comparative studies. In addition, these standards can be used for a specific farm business.

The Kansas Farm Management and K-MAR-105 Associations utilize an “average” of these livestock labor standards for use in farm typing studies, enterprise budgets, and expense allocations. The KSU Farm Management Guide

Cost-Return Budgets developed for livestock enterprises also use labor usage values.

Labor usage values, by size of operation, are provided for dairy and beef cows based on the number of cows handled. Size of operation for swine, farrow to weaning, is the number of litters. Size of operation for sheep is the number of ewes. Average labor standards also are given for swine, sheep, and cattle feeding enterprises.

Table 6. Labor Standards for Livestock Enterprises, by Size of Operation¹

Livestock Type	Enterprise Size	Hour Per Unit
Dairy:	Number of Cows	
	< 50	54.00
	50 – 100	49.70
	> 100	37.10
Beef Cows:	Number of Cows	
	< 100	9.20
	100 – 200	6.00
	> 200	4.20
Swine (Farrow to Wean):	Number of Litter	
	≤ 175	6.00
	> 175	4.30
Swine (Feeder Pig):	Unit Pig	.40
Sheep (Ewes)	Unit Ewe	2.70
Sheep (Feeder Lamb)	Unit Head	.50
Cattle Feeding:	Unit	Hours Per Month
Summer Grazing	Head	.15
Winter Grazing	Head	.25
Backgrounding, Drylot	Head	.25
Finishing	Head	.20
Custom Finishing	Head	.10

¹Source: Larry N. Langemeier “Derived Labor Requirements for Kansas Livestock Enterprises,” *Contr. Number 95-421-S, Report of Progress 732, Agricultural Experiment Station. Kansas State University Manhattan Kansas.*