



2024 Georgia Custom Rate Survey Summary

Agriculture is Georgia's leading industry, contributing a total economic impact of \$83.6 billion annually (Kane, 2024). When broken down by commodity group, row and forage crops account for 18.1% of the total value, vegetables make up 7.1%, and fruits and nuts represent 5.8%. Among these commodity groups, Georgia leads the nation in peanut and pecan production, ranks second in cotton and watermelon production, and is fourth in the U.S. for blueberry production.

Many of Georgia's farms are small to medium-sized operations, with 74.1% of farms being 179 acres or less and 81.1% reporting annual sales of \$50,000 or less (Kane, 2024). Given these characteristics, many agricultural producers face financial challenges, particularly in acquiring the specialized equipment necessary for crop production. To mitigate these financial hurdles, many Georgia landowners and producers rely on custom hiring.

Custom hiring farm operations is the practice in which a crop producer or landowner hires an operator to perform a specific agricultural task to produce a crop. The operator uses their equipment and labor to perform these tasks and is paid an agreed-upon rate by the landowner or farm tenant. In this agreement, the producer owns the crop and makes all managerial decisions while outsourcing some specific operations required to grow the crop. This farming model is beneficial to both parties and is essential for farming operations in many cases. For the operator, custom farming allows them to make more efficient use of their equipment by spreading the fixed costs associated with owning the equipment over more acres and generating extra income. Similarly, the landowner can save capital by not having to make a large investment in some machinery necessary to produce a crop. This is especially relevant to small and beginning farmers, with limited start-up capital.

Because custom hiring plays a vital role in Georgia's agricultural sector, crop producers and custom operators must determine appropriate service rates. However, there is limited publicly available information regarding the current market values for custom rates in the state of Georgia. The objective of this effort is to fill this information gap by providing producers and operators with accurate information so they can make more informed business decisions.

To achieve this objective, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension agents and specialists developed a Qualtrics survey to collect custom operations pricing data for tasks such as land preparation, planting, spraying, and harvesting from producers and custom operators. 58 usable responses were collected across Georgia from 29 counties in heavy crop-producing regions of the state. The pricing data collected from these surveys are summarized in the following tables.

It is important to note that the reported rates in this document should only serve as a general reference when crop producers and custom operators are negotiating individual rates. Actual custom rates may differ based on factors such as machinery availability in a specific area, timing, operator expertise, field size and shape, crop conditions, and machinery performance characteristics.

Land Preparation

Operation (\$/Acre)	Average	Median	High	Low
Disk Bed (Hipper)	\$ 24.92	\$ 22.00	\$ 63.00	\$ 10.00
Disk Ripper	\$ 24.14	\$ 22.00	\$ 47.00	\$ 10.00
Disk-Chisel	\$ 28.78	\$ 23.50	\$ 69.00	\$ 10.00
Disk-Harrow/Cultipacker	\$ 21.74	\$ 20.00	\$ 58.00	\$ 8.00
Field Cultivate	\$ 15.86	\$ 15.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 4.00
Row Cultivate	\$ 18.06	\$ 16.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 10.00
Row Cultivate and Fertilize	\$ 32.13	\$ 23.00	\$ 82.00	\$ 10.00
Deep Plow	\$ 38.32	\$ 30.00	\$ 86.00	\$ 19.00
Shallow Plow	\$ 28.79	\$ 25.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 18.00
Sod-Breaking Plow	\$ 34.10	\$ 33.50	\$ 74.00	\$ 19.00
Plow Up Stubble	\$ 28.30	\$ 26.00	\$ 44.00	\$ 17.00
V-Rip	\$ 27.39	\$ 25.50	\$ 50.00	\$ 9.00
Bed	\$ 26.95	\$ 25.00	\$ 54.00	\$ 15.00
Subsoil (16-20)"	\$ 28.58	\$ 25.00	\$ 78.00	\$ 10.00
Subsoil and Bed	\$ 26.29	\$ 25.00	\$ 48.00	\$ 10.00
Strip-Till	\$ 25.29	\$ 20.00	\$ 54.00	\$ 10.00
Strip, Rip and Plant	\$ 36.17	\$ 35.00	\$ 53.00	\$ 15.00
Rotary Hoe Work	\$ 16.68	\$ 14.50	\$ 71.00	\$ 8.00
Rolling Stalk Chopper	\$ 19.17	\$ 15.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 10.00
Pull Stalks	\$ 19.43	\$ 19.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 6.00
Shred Stalks	\$ 20.96	\$ 20.00	\$ 58.00	\$ 8.00

Planting Operations

Operation (\$/Acre)	Average	Median	High	Low
Aerial Small Grains	\$ 24.33	\$ 20.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 8.00
Drill Forages	\$ 23.43	\$ 19.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 10.00
Drill Small Grains	\$ 21.87	\$ 20.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 10.00
Corn	\$ 27.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 12.00
Cotton	\$ 26.42	\$ 25.00	\$ 59.00	\$ 12.00
Peanut	\$ 31.92	\$ 30.00	\$ 79.00	\$ 16.00
Soybean	\$ 27.91	\$ 25.00	\$ 52.00	\$ 12.00
Bermudagrass	\$ 39.70	\$ 35.00	\$ 84.00	\$ 10.00
Alfalfa	\$ 43.67	\$ 33.00	\$ 83.00	\$ 15.00
Small Grains	\$ 30.57	\$ 25.00	\$ 86.00	\$ 10.00
Cover Crops	\$ 20.79	\$ 20.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 8.00
Twin Row Corn	\$ 33.72	\$ 27.50	\$ 88.00	\$ 14.00
Twin Row Peanuts	\$ 34.40	\$ 32.50	\$ 77.00	\$ 18.00
Strip-Till Plant	\$ 34.28	\$ 31.00	\$ 61.00	\$ 15.00
Plant Pecan Trees	\$ 52.25	\$ 57.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 10.00
Plant Pine Trees	\$ 90.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 50.00

Spraying Operations

Operation (\$/Acre)	Average	Median	High	Low
Pecan Spray	\$ 53.25	\$ 51.00	\$ 91.00	\$ 20.00
Blueberry Spray	\$ 44.75	\$ 40.00	\$ 79.00	\$ 20.00
Fruit Trees Spray	\$ 53.33	\$ 56.00	\$ 84.00	\$ 20.00
Aerial Spray	\$ 12.81	\$ 10.00	\$ 44.00	\$ 7.00
Ground Apply Spray	\$ 14.88	\$ 10.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 8.00
Apply Fertilizer (Aerial)	\$ 25.08	\$ 13.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 6.00
Spread Lime/Gypsum	\$ 14.30	\$ 10.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 1.00
Ground Rig Fertilizer	\$ 13.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 8.00
Broadcast Fertilizer	\$ 12.36	\$ 10.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 2.00
Side Dress Fertilizer	\$ 18.44	\$ 10.00	\$ 81.00	\$ 5.00

Harvest Operations

Operation (\$/Acre)	Average	Median	High	Low
Cotton (Round Bale)	\$ 107.50	\$ 100.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 85.00
Cotton (Basket)	\$ 85.22	\$ 80.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 50.00
Dig Peanuts	\$ 36.52	\$ 30.00	\$ 99.00	\$ 15.00
Pick Peanuts	\$ 70.75	\$ 60.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 24.00
Combine Corn	\$ 58.50	\$ 55.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 40.00
Combine Soybeans	\$ 54.67	\$ 50.00	\$ 87.00	\$ 40.00
Combine Small Grains	\$ 52.33	\$ 47.50	\$ 97.00	\$ 25.00

Hay Operations

Operation (\$/Acre)	Average	Median	High	Low
Mow Hay	\$ 22.68	\$ 20.00	\$ 57.00	\$ 11.00
Condition Hay	\$ 22.93	\$ 20.00	\$ 63.00	\$ 5.00
Rake Hay	\$ 18.28	\$ 14.00	\$ 73.00	\$ 5.00
Spray Hay	\$ 28.93	\$ 20.00	\$ 83.00	\$ 9.00
Rake Peanut Vines	\$ 22.63	\$ 10.00	\$ 74.00	\$ 5.00

Hay Harvest

Operation (\$/Bale)	Average	Median	High	Low
Bale Hay-Peanut Vines	\$ 26.73	\$ 20.00	\$ 101.00	\$ 10.00
Bale Hay-Round Bales	\$ 22.60	\$ 20.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 8.00
Bale Hay-XL Round Bales	\$ 26.92	\$ 25.00	\$ 42.00	\$ 10.00

Hauling Operation

Operation (\$/Mile)	Average	Median	High	Low
Haul Grain/Beans	\$ 3.11	\$ 3.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 1.00
Haul Livestock	\$ 3.26	\$ 3.25	\$ 5.00	\$ 2.00
Haul Hay	\$ 3.21	\$ 3.62	\$ 5.00	\$ 1.00

Labor

Operation (\$/Hour)	Average	Median	High	Low
Farm Labor	\$ 15.14	\$ 15.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 8.00

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