

## Custom Work Charges in Maryland

### Introduction

Financial and economic considerations such as limited capital, untimely cash flow, insufficient labor, small acreage or other reasons require farmers to hire custom service for field operations. Custom work charges are determined by demand and supply and are negotiated between farmers and custom operators. The purpose of this publication is to provide information on custom work charges in Maryland and to provide data to assist in decision making regarding purchasing equipment.

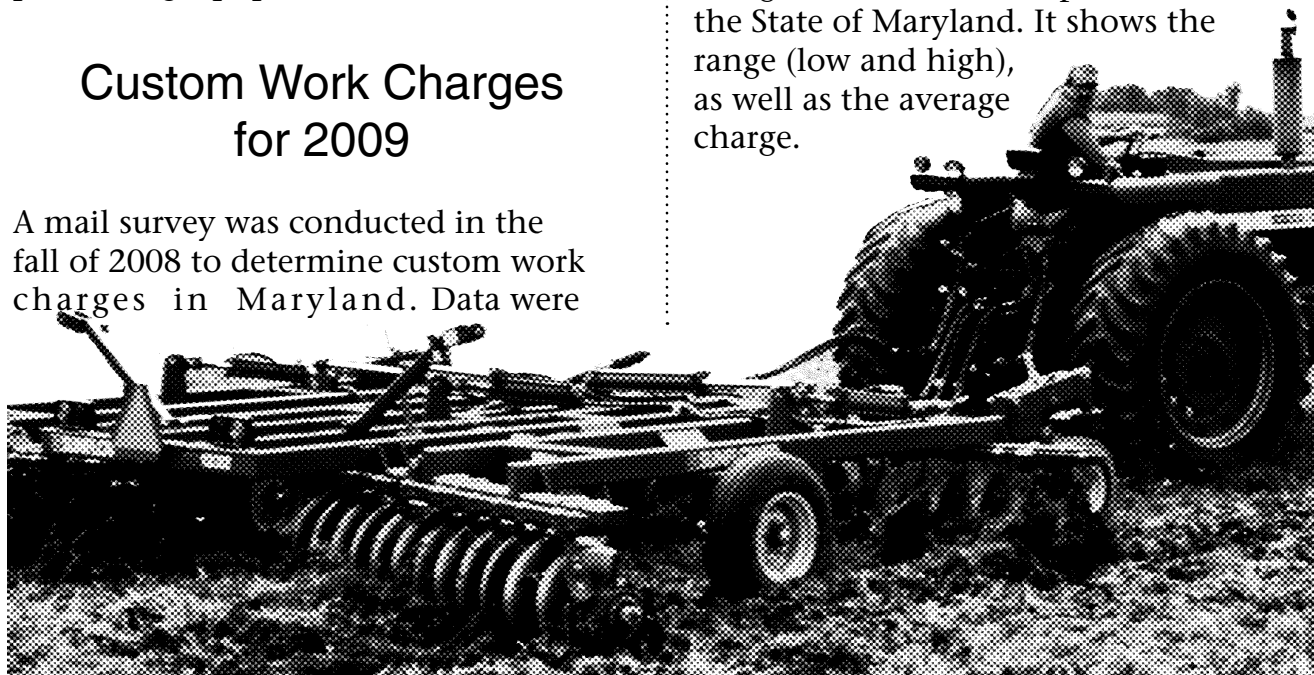
### Custom Work Charges for 2009

A mail survey was conducted in the fall of 2008 to determine custom work charges in Maryland. Data were

collected from 47 custom operators and farmers and summarized for the state.

Participants indicated the rates they charge for various field operations. The charges reported in this publication may serve as a guide in determining an acceptable rate for a particular job where little other information is available. The charges can also be compared with costs and returns and may be used as a basis for working out more equitable charges for both the custom operator and customer.

Table 1 summarizes the custom work charges for the various operations for the State of Maryland. It shows the range (low and high), as well as the average charge.



**Table 1. Custom Work Rates in Dollars for the State of Maryland, 2009.**

	<b>UNIT</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>RANGE</b>
Stalk Cutting	Acre	12.89	6.00-22.00
Plowing—Chisel	Acre	16.17	12.00-22.00
Plowing—Moldboard	Acre	22.67	20.00-26.00
Disking—Heavy	Acre	17.48	9.75-40.00
Disking—Light	Acre	17.72	8.75-35.00
Cultivating	Acre	11.25	8.50-14.00
Disking with cultipacker or harrow	Acre	15.33	10.75-19.25
Cultipacking	Acre	3.75	2.00-7.25
Subsoiling	Acre	19.75	13.25-35.00
Soil Finishing	Acre	15.68	9.50-25.00
Corn Planting—conventional w/ fertilizer	Acre	17.31	13.00-23.25
Corn Planting—conventional w/o fertilizer	Acre	16.65	12.00-20.00
Corn Planting—no-till w/fertilizer	Acre	21.50	21.50-21.50
Corn Planting—no-till w/o fertilizer	Acre	21.75	20.00-23.50
Soybean Planting—conventional w/ fertilizer	Acre	18.00	15.00-23.50
Soybean Planting—conventional w/o fertilizer	Acre	16.36	14.00-20.00
Soybean Planting—no till w/o fertilizer	Acre	20.73	15.00-45.00
Soybean Planting—no-till and spraying	Acre	23.22	15.00-31.25
Drilling—small grain with fertilizer	Acre	22.67	14.00-40.00
Drilling—small grain w/o fertilizer	Acre	18.08	12.00-25.00
Seeding—grass drilling	Acre	21.91	12.50-40.00
Seeding—grass broadcasting	Acre	10.60	5.00-16.50
Spreading—dry fertilizer	Acre	7.93	5.00-14.00
Spreading—lime (includes lime and application)	Ton	38.43	25.00-60.00
Fertilizer Application—dry bulk	Acre	8.07	5.00-12.00
Fertilizer Application—sidedress	Acre	8.77	7.00-15.00
Fertilizer Application—injecting	Acre	10.43	7.00-15.50
Spraying pesticides	Acre	7.80	6.00-10.00
Hauling grain—local	Bushel	0.18	0.07-0.30
Hauling grain—long distance	Bushel	0.31	0.12-0.52

**Table 1. Custom Work Rates in Dollars for the State of Maryland, 2009  
(continued).**

	<b>UNIT</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>RANGE</b>
Storing Grains	Bushel	0.06	0.02-0.14
Drying Grains	Point	0.10	0.03-0.15
Mowing and Conditioning Hay	Acre	15.79	10.00-25.00
Raking Hay	Acre	10.05	5.00-15.75
Baling Hay—Small squares	Bale	0.98	0.35-2.00
Baling Straw—Small squares	Bale	0.99	0.35-2.00
Baling Straw—Small round	Bale	7.42	6.00-10.00
Baling—Large round bales	Bale	7.25	2.00-12.00
Mow, Rake, Bale hay—no haul	Bale	3.65	1.05-10.00
Complete hay harvest	Bale	3.24	1.45-5.00
Bushhogging	Hour	74.00	18.00-110.00
Grinding Feed	Cwt	0.47	0.09-1.45
Mixing Feed	Cwt	0.85	0.85-0.85
Posthole Digging	Hole	5.33	2.00-10.00
Post Driving	Hole	1.50	1.50-1.50
Snow Removal	Hour	87.91	65.00-140.00
Bobcat	Hour	70.83	30.00-100.00
General Farm Labor	Hour	17.96	7.50-35.00
Machinery Operation	Hour	31.25	12.00-70.00
Manure Loading and Spreading	Ton	23.92	7.00-100.00
Spreading Liquid Manure	Hour	100.00	100.00-100.00
Combining—corn	Acre	30.58	25.00-40.00
Combining—soybeans	Acre	30.73	25.00-40.00
Combining—small grains	Acre	30.43	25.00-45.00
Soil Testing	Sample	3.50	2.00-5.00
Clearing Land	Hour	93.43	9.00-140.00
Trenching	Foot	42.25	4.50-80.00
Livestock hauling with a trailer	Loaded Mile	2.38	1.25-4.00
Mowing CRP Acres	Acre	27.80	11.00-65.00
Mowing	Acre	23.25	10.00-65.00

There are wide ranges with some charges. Variations may be due to the lack of knowledge about charges and difference in location, topography, field size and shape, crop yields, soil conditions, weather conditions, work quality, equipment type and size, timeliness, or the ratio of available jobs to custom operators.

### **Using Custom Rate Information**

- Custom operators use custom rates to compare rates with competitors.
- Farmers use custom rates as a guide for machinery, budgeting and financial planning.
- Lenders, educators and government agencies use custom rates for budgeting, advising and analysis.

Rates that are quoted in this publication are expressed in different ways depending on the specific job (per acre, hour, ton, mile, bale, etc.). The rates provided are to help custom operators and farmers make decisions about rate charges. The prices reported are not official or established

rates but an average of responses from the survey.

Reported rates include charges for machines, power, fuel, lube, and the labor/operator. These rates do not include the costs of chemicals, seeds, and other materials with the exception of hay baling materials and where noted (i.e., spreading lime).

Custom rates in this publication may not suit all custom operators and those hiring custom work. It is important that operators calculate their own custom costs. It is also important that farmers create their own budgets that include their variable costs and fixed costs and do not rely only on custom rates to determine their cost of production.

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## **Custom Work Charges in Maryland**

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