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### **Kansas Custom Rates**

In our most recent District Newsletter (read it at: <https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/news/index.html> ), there's an article referencing the focus placed on evaluating lease agreements this time of year. For those doing or using any sort of custom farming, it's the time of year to take a look at those numbers as well.

Every other year, a custom rates survey is conducted in Kansas, the results of which are posted each spring at: <https://www.agmanager.info/machinery/papers/custom-rates-survey> . While they're the best information we have on custom rates, they aren't perfect. They can't be if you consider all the factors included in a custom rate. There's the 'easy to figure' ones like purchase price or interest or insurance, etc... Then there's the more difficult ones to account for like varying levels of efficiency between operators/equipment. Still, they are the very best number reflecting what producers are actually paying for custom machinery hire.

Like a good rental rate negotiation, custom rate discussions should include a hard look at what is 'fair and equitable'. If you're looking at custom rates, take a look at the published numbers above as well as a companion publication *entitled Custom Rates and the Total Cost to Own and Operate Farm Machinery in Kansas*. It shares results of a 2003 study of machinery ownership costs, plus how well custom rates really cover those costs - and the long-term ramifications of not looking further in to those costs. Request a copy of it from any District Office or see the link at <https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/crops-soils/index.html> .

### **Late-Season Turfgrass Nitrogen**

Did you apply any fertilizer to your turfgrass in September? It's a pretty critical time for turf going in to fall dormancy – with a November application being a close second.

November applications don't help much with top growth. That's pretty well slowed in response to cool temperatures, even as plants are still making food in the form of carbohydrates via photosynthesis. Instead, November nitrogen applications boost the photosynthesis rate with excess food stored in plant crowns that will be called up on next spring to initiate green up and sustain it until an in-season application of fertilizer in May (May applications are preferred over early spring applications that tend to favor shoot growth over root growth). November-applied nitrogen is also great for improved winter hardiness, root growth and shoot density.

You don't need much. A pound to pound and a half of actual N (as a quickly available nitrogen source) per 1000 square feet is plenty.