2013 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey Follows Recent Trends

Article | Mon, 02/25/2013 - 12:13 | By Ann Johanns, William Edwards

AMES, Iowa — The 2013 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey followed the recent trend of small, but consistent increases in rates each year. According to William Edwards, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach economist, most operations showed increases of three to five percent over the average rates in the 2012 survey.

The values reported on the survey are the average of all the responses received for each category. The range of the highest and lowest responses received is also reported. These values are intended only as a guide.

“There are many reasons why the rate charged in a particular situation should be above or below the average,” Edwards said. “These include the timeliness with which operations are performed, quality and special features of the machine, operator skill, size and shape of fields, number of acres contracted and the condition of the crop for harvesting. The availability of custom operators in a given area will also affect rates.”

Several new operations and services were included in the 2013 survey, including vertical tillage, providing a seed tender, soybean combining with a draper head and mowing lawns.

The Ag Decision Maker offers a Decision Tool to help custom operators and other farmers estimate their own costs for specific machinery operations. The Machinery Cost Calculator can be found under Crops, then Machinery in the Ag Decision Maker table of contents.

The 2013 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey can be downloaded from the Extension Online Store, https://store.extension.iastate.edu, or the Ag Decision Maker website, www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/, as Information File A3-10, Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey. Print copies will be available at county extension offices.

EXTENSION DROUGHT WEB PAGE

ISU Extension continues to add resources on a web site to help you deal with the drought. The resources listed under various categories: “Crops”, “Livestock”, “Dealing with Stress”, “Home and Yard”, “Financial Concerns”, and “Tips for Businesses”. Go to: www.extension.iastate.edu/topic/recovering-disasters
CALVING SEASON

As we continue the calving season, it will be worthwhile to spend a little time planning and preparing. Management decisions made now can have a big impact on the success of the calving season and the following breeding season.

There is tremendous fetal growth during the third trimester of pregnancy, particularly during the last 45 days of pregnancy. Nutrient requirements of the cow will increase accordingly. Nutrient requirements will also increase with cold weather, wind, moisture, etc. Make sure that you are providing adequate nutrition to meet the high energy demands of fetal growth and winter weather. This point is particularly important this year following the drought of 2012. Some cows may have come into the winter thinner than usual. Some producers may not have the quantity or quality of winter feed that they usually do. Adequate nutrition is critical not only for the health and rebreeding success of the mother but also for the health and vigor of the calf.

One way to analyze nutritional status of the cow is to monitor body condition score (BCS). It is worthwhile to systematically and consistently evaluate body condition scores every two weeks in order to notice small changes in condition and hopefully prevent any severe loss of condition. Ideally cows should enter the calving season with a BCS of 5. For early calving cows and heifers (two and three year olds) it is usually recommended they enter the calving season with a BCS of 5.5 to 6. It is critical to assess BCS now and adjust nutrition accordingly. Nutritional demands will continue to increase through the third trimester of pregnancy and into early lactation.

Vaccinations are important to protect herd health and prevent illnesses, particularly reproductive and respiratory diseases. There are many different vaccines available and many different vaccination strategies depending on your situation. Some vaccinations are designed to be administered to the cow prior to calving in order to boost the antibody levels of the colostrum, effectively offering the calf more protection. Proper timing and administration of these vaccines will be very important. Work with your veterinarian to come up with a health management plan that makes sense for your herd.

Try to prepare some sort of maternity pen with functional head-gate, crowd-gate, etc. to make things easier when you do have to assist with calving. Have your veterinarian’s phone number readily available. Make a list of the necessary supplies and be sure to have everything on hand. Some important supplies include OB sleeves, chains or straps, calf jack, towels, halters, feeding tube, light source, OB lube, soap, water, bucket, calving book, etc. Finally, plan ahead for problems and unique situations. A little planning can go a long way!

CASH RENT IS UP SLIGHTLY

By Steve Johnson, Farm & Ag Business Management Specialist

Iowa State University’s cost estimates for producing corn and soybeans are made according to crop rotation and displayed as four different categories: land, crop inputs, machinery and labor. For a rotation of corn following soybeans, there are three different yield expectations: 160 bushels per acre, 180 bushels and 200 bushels. Costs are then assigned based on these expected yield levels. The cash rent equivalent cost is estimated at $276 per acre, but keep in mind that yield expectations above 180 bushels will likely carry a higher rent.

Many cash rental rates for 2013 are still being established between landlords and tenants, despite the fact that the termination deadline for existing leases has passed. In Iowa, the deadline is September 1 for one party to serve a termination notice to the other party on a cropland lease.

Increases of 5 to 10 percent in cash rent for 2013 will likely be common on the more productive Iowa land. An upward limit on cash rents is expected depending on the impact of drought on yields and when the lease terms are established. Many farmers own land and rent land with multi-year land rental agreements. Most locked in their fertilizer for fall application. Farmers who control the land and have fertilizer prices locked in have already established two of the largest crop production costs for growing corn in 2013. These two prices added together for land and fertilizer likely represent nearly 50 percent of the total cost to produce the crop.
SOYBEANS - 11 NEW FACT SHEETS FROM ISU & ISA

These are available in the Online Publications Store, https://store.extension.iastate.edu/ProductList.aspx?CategoryID=20 and from the direct links below. To make these available at NO COST to the reader, they are available only in PDF format and only in the ISU Publications Online Store. No print copies are available.

2013 COUNTY FAIR DATES
The 2013 County Fair Dates for Counties within Region 19 listed by date in chronological order.

Jefferson County Fair, Fairfield, 6/26/13 - 7/01/13
Davis County Fair, Bloomfield, 7/10/13 - 7/14/13
Appanoose County Fair, Centerville, 7/15/13 - 7/20/13
Wapello County 4-H Expo, Ottumwa, 7/15/13 - 7/21/13
Van Buren County Fair, Keosauqua, 7/17/13 - 7/22/13
Wayne County Fair, Corydon, 7/23/13 - 7/29/13
Monroe County 4-H & FFA Fair, Albia, 7/26/13 - 7/29/13
Lucas County Fair, Chariton, 7/27/13 - 8/1/13

IOWA STATE FAIR: 8/8/13 - 8/18/13

SOUTHERN IOWA FORAGE PRICES
These are hay prices paid for mid to late January. Much of this information is obtained from USDA Hay Market News. Contacts of local Iowa hay auctions secured price information for these market outlets. Other nearby auctions may exist. No endorsement of the listed auctions is intended.

Keosauqua (SE IA) Sat 11:30A
Alfalfa & Mixed Lg/Gr: SmSq $5.50-7.50/bale
Grass : SmSq $3.50-5.75/bale; LgRd $80-105/bale
Straw: SmSq $2.00-3.25/bale
Cornstalks: (LgRd $27-32/bale Jan)
CRP LgRd: ($45-65/bale)

Yoder Auction (Frytown)
Alfalfa: SmSq $5.50-
Mixed: SmSq $4.75-6.75/b; LgSq $115-122.50/b; LgRd $105-145/bale
Grass: SmSq $3.75-5.75/bale; LgSq $80-115/bale; LgRd $35-110 bale
Straw: SmSq $1.50-3.50/bale; (LgSq $30-62.50/b; LgRd $30/bale Jan)
Cornstalks: LgRd $40-45/bale
Soybean ‘straw’: LgRd $35-42.50/bale
CRP (LgRd $65-97.50/bale Jan)

Kalona Auction (SE IA) Thursdays 11:00 AM
Alfalfa: SmSq $5.00-7.50/bale; LgSq $60-140/B; LgRd $75-210/B
Mixed Legume/Gr: SmSq $4.75-6.75/B; LgSq $115-122.50/b; LgRd $185 bale
Grass: Sm Sq $3.75-5.5/bale; LgSq $180-210/bale; LgRd $35-110 bale
Straw: SmSq $1.50-3.50/bale; (LgSq $29-31/b Jan)
Cornstalks: LgRd $42.50-50/bale
Soybean ‘straw’: LgRd $24-41/bale; LgRd $35-42-50/bale

Creston (SW IA) 10:30AM Friday
Alfalfa & Mixed: (Sm Sq $4.00-6.00/b Jan); LgRd $195-215/bale
Mixed Legume/Gr: SmSq $4.00-6.00/b; (clover/Gr) LgRd $100-180/bale
Grass: SmSq $3.75-5.5/bale; LgSq $80-115/bale; LgRd $150-210 bale
Oat Hay: LgRd $150-210/bale
‘stubble hay’: LgRd $85/bale
Straw (SmSq $5.00-7.00/bale; LgRd $55/b Jan)
Cornstalks: LgRd $47-48/bale
CRP: LgRd $130/bale
REFERENDUM TO INCREASE THE SHEEP ASSESSMENT TO BE HELD FEB. 25 TO MARCH 15

Eligible farmers can vote at local Iowa State University Extension office

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Iowa Sheep Industry Association today announced plans to conduct a referendum from February 25 to March 15, 2013.

As part of the referendum, all eligible producers will be able to vote on two questions, the first is whether the $.10 per head assessment on all sheep should be increased to $.25. The second question would allow the Iowa Sheep and Wool Promotion Board, beginning in 2016, to change the assessment rate by $.05 every three years. The Board would only be granted this authority if producers approve increasing the assessment to $.25 and the board could only make such changes by resolution only following a producer comment period.

Any producer who is actively engaged within this state in the business of producing or marketing sheep or wool and who receives income from the production of sheep or wool is eligible to participate in the referendum and is entitled to one vote.

Farmers may vote in the Iowa State University Extension office in the county in which they live. When voting each farmer will have to sign an affidavit stating they are a producer eligible to vote or provide proof of their county of residence and a sheep or wool sales receipt from the previous 12 months.

The current Sheep and Wool assessment is $.10 per head on each sheep sold by a producer and $.02 per pound of wool sold by a producer. The Iowa Sheep and Wool promotion board is governed by Iowa Code Chapter 182, which was initially passed in 1985 and was updated last year to allow for the current referendum to increase the assessment rate.

Producers with questions about the procedures or eligibility for voting in this referendum can contact the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship at 515/281-5321 or by e-mail to sheepvote@iowaagriculture.gov.

For more information on how funds generated by the assessment are used, Iowans can contact the Iowa Sheep Industry Association at 712-790-6303 or via email at info@iowasheep.com or find out more online at www.iowasheep.com.

In accordance with Iowa Code, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship is responsible for holding referendum votes and all costs incurred by the Department will be reimbursed by the Iowa Sheep Industry Association.
2013 FRUIT TREE GRAFTING WORKSHOPS

Iowa State University Extension & Outreach will have three Fruit Tree Grafting Workshops this year. March 27, 6:30-8:30 pm in Altoona at the Polk County Extension Ofc., March 28, 7:00-9:00 pm in Bettendorf at the Scott County Extension Ofc., April 2, 7:00-9:00 pm in Mt. Pleasant at the Henry County Extension Ofc.

ISU Extension & Outreach Field Specialist Patrick O’Malley will teach the workshops on March 27, 28, & April 2. Each participant will receive two apple rootstocks and a access to a variety of scions (e.g. ‘Honeycrisp’ plus others). The rootstocks, various scion wood, grafting tape, grafting sealant, and knives, will be provided (feel free to bring in your own knife). The rootstocks offered are Polish 22 (extreme dwarf), EMLA 26 (dwarf) and EMLA 7 (semi dwarf).

The program will start off with a presentation on reasons for grafting and the different types of fruit tree grafting. That will be followed by a demonstration of a whip and tongue grafting. Then participants will self-graft two apple trees to take home.

If you have any scion wood (one year old growth) from an apple tree, feel free to bring that in as well. Registration deadline is March 25th and there is a limit of 30 participants.

Fee structure is $35 per person or $60 for couple ($30 each for any two or more registering together and includes 2 rootstock for each person). Additional rootstock (will be available for a cost of $5 each. For additional questions about workshop content and preparation contact Patrick O’Malley omall@iastate.edu

Registration details for each site can be found here:
Altoona:  http://www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/ShowEventDetail.asp?programID=204280&sessionID=260419
Bettendorf:  http://www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/ShowEventDetail.asp?programID=204354&sessionID=260540
Mt. Pleasant:  http://www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/ShowEventDetail.asp?programID=203104&sessionID=259061

Quick Books and Excel classes for business and farm

Three two-session classes will be held in Chariton on March 20 and 27. All classes will be held in the Rotary Room of Carpenter’s Hall, located at 1215 Court Avenue. The computer lab from Indian Hills Community College will be used for these hands-on workshops. The classes will be led by Bryan Zeigler, Director of the Small Business Development Center at IHCC, with support from Joe Sellers, ISU Extension Beef Specialist.

Two-part workshops – March 20 and 27, Carpenter’s Hall, Rotary Room

QuickBooks (two sessions offered each day) – 9 am to noon or 6 pm to 9 pm. There is a fee of $40 per participant to attend both March 20 and 27; This is usually a $65 class; participation costs are offset by support from SCIAP and ISU Extension and Outreach.

Excel in Business – 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm, also on March 20th and 27th. There will be a fee of $20 to attend this class both days.

These classes are designed to provide entry level information on using QuickBooks and Excel for your farm, retail, or commercial business, but also will be a good refresher and update for current users of these programs. Registration is due March 18 to Joe Sellers, 641-203-1270; Lucas County Extension, 641-774-2016; or the Chariton Area Chamber/Main Street office, 641-774-4059
Eat Fresh Southern Iowa
Local Foods Conference

CONFERENCE EVENTS
Friday & Saturday, March 23 & 24, 2013

The Eat Fresh Southern Iowa Local Foods Conference is presented by Iowa Network For Community Agriculture. This two-day seminar kicks off Friday afternoon at the Albia Brewing Company with discussion, a buffet dinner and entertainment.

Saturday’s events take place at the Trinity United Methodist Church & Family Life Center in Albia with registration beginning at 8:00 am. Breakout sessions include topics such as Soil Health, The Iowa Food Coop, Farmers Market, Licenses to sell food, plus much more.

The goal of this conference is to connect and educate consumers, producers and outdoor enthusiasts, to enhance and expand production of local foods and to support local hunting of wild game and wild edibles.

The Iowa Network For Community Agriculture (INCA) was founded in 1995, by a diverse group of gardeners, farmers, consumers, and coordinators. It is a volunteer driven organization, focused on strengthening community capacity around local food systems. INCA's mission is to cultivate connections among Iowans to create healthy, fair, and sustainable local food systems. They seek the realization of a vital and integrated local food system within the state of Iowa that sustains producers, consumers, and the environment through dynamic supportive partnering networks.

In the last six years, INCA has focused its attention on our role as a community development organization focused on building food system capacity in rural communities. They’ve done this with three key programs: Growing Food and Profit, Food System Mapping, and the Local Foods Conference. As INCA moves forward, they have refined these processes into a single conference.

For more details about the conference, speakers, workshops and to register online, go to: http://southerniowalocalfoods.eventbrite.com or contact Stacie Gibler at 641-932-3547 or at gibbiegiblers@gmail.com

Regional Food Coordinator Position Available

Help wanted: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is looking for an enthusiastic, business minded, team player to assist with local foods capacity building in Appanoose, Monroe and Wayne Counties. 16 to 20 hours per week. Must have high school degree with BS in agricultural related field and/or experience in gardening and/or commercial horticulture preferred. Must be proficient in computer, organizational, facilitation skills and the ability to prioritize tasks. Valid driver’s license and reliable transportation necessary and able to lift 25 pounds. Please apply at hendy@iastate.edu by submitting a cover letter covering experience and education and a current resume. Subject line must read Regional Food Coordinator. Complete job description is available at www.extension.iastate.edu/monroe/ Deadline is March 26th or until position is filled. EOE
IOWA FSA TODAY

DCP/ACRE 2013 SIGN-UP
The Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program are being offered for the 2013 crop year under the 2008 Farm Bill Extension. DCP and ACRE sign-up for 2013 crops will begin on February 19, 2013. The DCP sign-up period will end on August 2, 2013 and ACRE sign-up will end on June 3. 2013. The only program change from 2012 to 2013 is that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013 (and vice versa).

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM
The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is $500,000. Participants are required to provide a minimum down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department. Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin. The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans: 1) Corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain  2) Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole Grain  3) Pulse crops - lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas  4) Hay  5) Renewable biomass  6) Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables for cold storage facilities  7) Honey For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

CATTLE TRENDS & CHANGES ARE UNDER WAY

By Lee Schulz, ISU Extension livestock economist
On Feb. 1, USDA released the much-anticipated January Cattle Inventory Report. The report itself was construed as moderately bullish for cattle prices in late-2013 and 2014. Most final estimates were within the range of pre-report expectations, with one surprising – and arguably most impactful – exception: the annual calf crop total was down nearly 3%, generally suggesting future cattle supplies may be even tighter than previously believed.

All cattle and calves in the U.S. as of Jan. 1, 2013 totaled 89.30 million, which is a 1.6% decrease from Jan. 1, 2012. This was the lowest Jan. 1 inventory of all cattle and calves since the 88.10 million in 1952. Here in Iowa, all cattle and calves totaled 3.85 million, a 1.3% decrease from last year. For the U.S., the number of beef cows and heifers that have calved was 2.9% lower than a year ago; while in Iowa the number of beef cows and heifers that have calved increased 3.4% year-over-year. Cattlemen have been adding youth to their breeding stock as evidenced in higher replacement heifer numbers. Heifers for beef cow replacement increased 1.9% and 7.1% year-over-year in the U.S. and Iowa, respectively. While heifer replacements were higher than estimates for 2011 and 2012, they remain lower than any other year since 1990 suggesting “real expansion” has yet to be initiated. The past three years of year-over-year increases in heifers for beef cow replacement indicate more than anything else, the contrast between what the industry would like to do and what it is able to do. Drought and continued beef cow liquidation meant that a very low percentage of potential replacement heifers actually entered the herd in 2012. Determining what percentage of those heifers may actually enter the herd in 2013 depends almost entirely on whether drought conditions moderate. It’s also important to keep in mind that quality bred beef heifers are selling in an extraordinarily high price range, and it likely will take some time to recoup even if cattle prices remain strong for the next several years.

The combined inventory of 500+ pound steers, 500+ pound other heifers, and calves was down 1.5% and 2.0% year-over-year in the U.S. and Iowa, respectively. After accounting for cattle already in feedlots, the supply of feeder cattle outside feedlots was 0.7% higher than a year ago in the U.S. However, this slight increase in feeder cattle supplies is not a result of more supplies than anticipated, but rather USDA’s downward revision in the 2012 estimates of steers and other heifers. In Iowa, feeder cattle supplies were estimated to be down 2.6% from last year. Overall, with a smaller forecasted 2013 calf crop and reduced cattle imports, the squeeze on feeder supplies will continue. Without continued reductions in feedlot inventories, the feeder supply will continue to shrink. And, if conditions permit, increased heifer retention will further squeeze feeder supplies in the coming years. You can read the full reports at (U.S.) http://usda01.library.cornell.edu/usda/current/Catt/Catt-02-01-2013.pdf and (Iowa) http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Iowa/Publications/Livestock_Report/reports/2013/Cattle/jan_cattle13.pdf
IOWA LEARNING FARMS WEBINAR SERIES CONTINUES IN 2013

AMES, Iowa — Iowa Learning Farms will continue its monthly educational webinar series in 2013. Webinars are held on the third Wednesday of each month, beginning at 11:30 a.m. through Adobe Connect. All that is needed is a computer with Internet access. The topics discussed will be beneficial for technical service providers, watershed project coordinators, extension specialists and others interested in the topic of the month.

2013 ILF webinars
Mar. 20 – Dan Barker, assistant scientist in the agronomy department at Iowa State, will discuss nitrogen-sensing technologies to apply variable-rate nitrogen fertilizer.

Apr. 17 – Andy Larsen, ISU Extension and Outreach agriculture specialist, will talk about Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). He is the Iowa coordinator for the national organization and will discuss building stronger relationships and grant opportunities through SARE.

May 15 – Michael Castelleno, assistant professor of agronomy at Iowa State, will focus on soil sustainability.

June 19 – Iowa State sociology professor Lois Wright Morton is the project director for the four-state Heartland Integrated Regional Water Coordination project. She will report the accomplishments of this project to date.

To connect to the webinars, go to: http://connect.extension.iastate.edu/ilf/ at 11:30 a.m. on the date of the webinar to log in. Webinars are archived and available on the ILF website at www.extension.iastate.edu/ilf/page/webinars.