New Cash Rental Survey Shows Some Downward Trends

The latest USDA cash rental survey shows decreasing rental rates in some areas of Missouri. Some of the better crop counties in central and north Missouri showed a decrease in rental rates, reflecting lower crop prices. Other counties remain unchanged, and pasture rates held stable or showed slight increases.

USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released its annual survey Sept. 9. View data on Missouri counties at bit.ly/2dfym0d.

Low prices and high corn yields will put pressure on rental rates. Soybean prices dropped, but not as much as corn prices. A decrease in soybean prices also will likely affect rent prices. How much is still to be determined. It is important for landowners and renters to know yields on cropland. Yields and land quality affect what the renter pays.

Pasture and forage land rental rates remain stable. Lower livestock prices will likely put pressure on pasture rental rates, but they are not likely to decrease as much due to the current competition and lack of available pasture. Factors besides yield, such as good fences and adequate water, also affect pasture rental rates.

Last year, an MU Extension survey showed corn dryland rent averaged $145.50 per acre per year statewide while soybean cropland averaged $148.74. Good pastureland ranged from $10 to $100 per acre, with the average at $38.41. To see the survey, go to agebb.missouri.edu/mgt/cashrent2015.pdf.

Atchison County, in the far northwestern corner of the state, topped cash rental rates at $192 per acre. Iron and Crawford counties in southern Missouri published the lowest rates at $18 and $17 per acre, respectively. Landowners should keep abreast of changing trends to assure fair leases. The MU Extension guide “Farm Lease Agreement” (G426) is available for free download at extension.missouri.edu/p/G426.

Check out aglease101.org for information on leases related to agriculture including sample documents.

Joe Koenen, Ag Business Specialists, University of Missouri Extension, Unionville, MO
Bull Selection

Bull buying season is quickly approaching and if you are in the market for a natural service bull here are some things to consider. First, you need to determine your market endpoint. Will you sell calves at weaning, retain ownership, raise replacement heifers? Knowing your market plans can help you narrow down which traits you should place emphasis on.

You also need to know what goals (traits) you want to match or improve from previous year’s calf crops. Do you want to improve weaning weights, carcass traits, etc. Check the EPD’s on your previous bull so you have a benchmark. If his weaning weight EPD was +60, and you want to improve weaning weights on your calf crop, focus on finding a bull with a higher weaning weight EPD.

Take care in selecting for single traits because it can have consequences. For example, by continually selecting bulls for the heaviest yearling weight, producers inadvertently would increase the mature cow size in their herd if they keep replacement heifers out of that same bull. In addition, the heaviest yearling weights may be associated with heavier birth weights, which could lead to calving difficulty. This is where the $Index traits such as $W, $B, API, TI, etc. can be helpful. These values are calculated by incorporating several traits and also takes into account their economic value.

Structural soundness is key when selecting a herd bull. Plan to arrive to a sale a few hours early so you can physically look at the bulls which you have designated to meet your farm goals. You will want to make sure they are visually appealing, have good, sound feet & legs, are fluid in their movement, have a nice trim sheath, and have acceptable behavior. Points to reference when looking at the structure of a bull are in the table.

Bulls should fill their tracks, with the hind feet stepping into the footprints of the front feet. If the animal does not, it is an indication of structural problems.

The shoulder structure of a bull should be examined because it can impact his ability to walk and ride cows. Bulls with straight shoulders are particularly prone to early breakdown. Bulls with wide, prominent shoulders may throw heavily shouldered calves, increasing the chance of calving difficulty.

Make sure not to put too much pressure on calving ease, especially if you are buying a bull to breed cows. Other factors to consider are frame size, scrotal circumference, horned or polled status, and coat color genotype. Bulls that are homozygous-black will have only black progeny when mated to black cows. If you buy a bull that is heterozygous-black and have cows that could carry the red gene, you could end up with red calves.

Erin Larimore, Livestock Specialist, University of Missouri Extension, Jackson, MO
Farm to School Grant Program

From the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Website:

The growth in farm to school programs and the increased market opportunities for farmers has been aided by the small but powerful USDA Farm to School Grant program.

On September 13, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Office of Community Food Systems released a request for applications (RFA) for up to $5 million in grant funds.

Since 2012, the Farm to School Grant Program, administered by USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), has provided $5 million in grants each year on a competitive basis to schools, nonprofits, state and local agencies, agricultural producers, and Indian tribal organizations to increase local food procurement for school meal programs and to expand educational activities on agriculture and food.

This year’s announcement invites proposals for the funding available for fiscal year 2017. Four different types of grant categories are available for this latest round of F2S funding available:

- **Planning grants** are for schools or school districts just getting started on farm to school activities
- **Implementation grants** enable schools or school districts to expand or further develop existing farm to school programs
- **Support service grants** allow community partners such as non-profit entities, Indian tribal nations, state and local agencies, and agriculture producers to provide support to schools in their efforts to bring local products into the cafeteria and for other farm to school activities
- **Training grants** are intended for eligible entities to support trainings that strengthen farm to school supply chains, or trainings that provide technical assistance in the area of local procurement, food safety, culinary education, and/or integration of agriculture-based curriculum.

Planning grants range from $20,000 – $45,000, implementation grants and support service grants from $65,000 – $100,000, and training grants from $15,000 – $25,000 (state-focused) or from $25,00 – $50,000 (regional or national). All four grant types require matching funds in the form of 25 percent of the total project cost.

**To help prospective applicants,** On September 29, 2016; USDA will host a webinar at 1:00 pm EST to review the RFA. [Click here to register.](#)

**Complete grant applications must be uploaded to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), on December 8, 2016.**
Crop Update

Corn

Last Friday USDA released their September 1 quarterly stocks report. This would be the ending stocks for the 2015-16 marketing year and the beginning stocks for the 2016-17 marketing year. Stocks were projected at 1.738 billion bushels slightly below the average trade guess but 22 million bushels larger than projected 2015-16 ending stocks in the September supply and demand estimate. In general, I would call this a neutral report. Demand is still good but this year’s production will have a big impact on price direction.

Technically, December futures are in a trading range between $3.28 and $3.42.

The moving averages that I follow are all converging in this price range and if we could get 2 – 3 strong close above $3.42 it could propel prices to the 200 day moving average which is presently at $3.75. However, at this time I am just a little cautious with the major harvest pressure still coming and the uncertainty about yields. While locally yields are down, other parts of the country are reporting good yields. USDA yield projection of 174.4 bu/ac. may not be too far off. With the basis getting weaker, I would recommend using storage to target sales in the December to February time frame to pick up the seasonal bounce in basis.

Soybeans

Soybean ending stocks came in at 197 million bushels versus the trade guess of 200 million bushels. The market will now focus on the soybean production and yields. Reports are indicating good yields across most of the country.

Technically, November futures are in a trading range between $9.35 and $9.95. Several of the moving averages I follow are converging at $9.75 and a break through at this price will open the door to $9.95. The next resistance levels are at $10.10 and $10.20. Just as in corn, I would use storage to take advantage of better basis in December to February.

Wheat

Wheat stocks came in at 2.527 billion bushels 90 million bushels above the trade guess. USDA also updated wheat production. All wheat production was slightly below the trade estimate at 2.31 billion bushels. The only surprise in the report was spring wheat production was projected at 534 million bushels 34 million bushels below the trade guess.

Technically, July 2017 wheat futures are trading in a range of $4.33 to $4.50 with major price resistance in the $4.70 to $4.80 level. With new crop prices in the low $4.00 range, there will not be a lot of incentive to plant wheat this fall. Sometimes it pays to be a contrarian. If U.S. acres are down and if we have production problems in the U.S. or World, it could result in a nice rally. I would not plant the entire farm to wheat, but having some wheat acres may pay off.

David Reinbott, Ag Business Specialist, University of Missouri Extension, Benton, MO
Millions of Americans ride horses every year whether for pleasure, work, or competition. Experienced riders may be injured just as quickly as inexperienced riders; therefore, safety cannot be overemphasized. Riders of all disciplines should have a working knowledge of horse behavior in order to avoid and/or prevent dangerous situations.

**Pre-Riding:** Ensure the skill of the rider is matched to the horse’s temperament and the rider is comfortable with the chosen horse. All riding equipment should be appropriate for the occasion and inspected regularly. Worn or damaged parts should be replaced prior to use. Ensure the horse’s tack fits well and is clean.

Dressing properly is important for the safety of the rider as well as the horse. Riders should wear closed toe shoes with smooth treads and a 1-inch heel to prevent the foot from slipping through the stirrup. Steel-toed shoes are not recommended. It is best if shoes cover the ankles. Long pants should be worn for the comfort of the rider, in order to prevent saddle sores and to protect the legs from the riding environment. Avoid loose-fitting clothing which could get caught in equipment and may lead to dragging or trapped limbs.

Always protect your head by wearing an ASTM/SEI-certified helmet. When choosing a helmet, measure your head just above the ears and around the widest part of your head. Use centimeters for a more accurate measurement. Try on the corresponding helmet making sure it slides down to just above the ears. You want a firm snug fit but not tight. Try to slide the helmet forwards and backwards, if it moves try the next size down. The helmet should not slide forward, backwards, or sideways. A general rule of thumb is when rocking the helmet back and forth your eyebrows should move up and down. The straps should be snug under the chin but not uncomfortably tight.

Preparing the horse for the ride is also important and can prevent harmful situations from arising. Cleaning the feet of the horse is important before rides to ensure there are no foreign items which could cause lameness. Use a hoof pick from the heel to toe (see picture at left) and clean the entire ground surface of the hoof, making sure to get into crevices. Move down the center of the frog, on each side and around the bars of the hoof.
Prior to saddling, the horse should be groomed thoroughly to ensure there are no sores or debris (mud, burrs, etc.) on his back or in the cinch area. The saddle and cinch may irritate any sores or debris, and this may cause the horse to wring his tail or buck. If saddle sores are present, give the horse time off until the sores heal. While grooming, always keep your free hand on the horse’s body so you can feel if they become tense or can use that arm to push yourself away from them quickly if needed.

Using a rubber curry (shown below), which is designed to lift deep dirt and loose hair away from skin, begin grooming on the left side of the horse at the top of the neck, and work in a backwards circular motion against the grain of the hair. Use extra care when currying under the belly and in areas where bones are close to the skin. Do not use a curry comb on the head or legs, as these are sensitive areas. Next, use a coarse brush in the direction of the hair to sweep the dirt and hair away. Fly control is necessary for the comfort of the rider and horse. Water based-insecticides can be sprayed directly onto the horse, while it is recommended oil-based insecticides be rubbed on with a rag. You should follow the directions on the chosen fly spray bottle. Be careful around the eyes as some water based insecticides may have a tendency to wash out with sweat.

For further reading see MU publication G2862, *Practical Horse Psychology*; G2878, *Safe Ground handling of Horses*.

Heather Conrow, Livestock Specialist, University of Missouri Extension, Fulton, MO.
Pearls of Production: Women in Agriculture is a program designed to provide a leadership and hands-on training opportunity for women involved in livestock production in Missouri. The program is designed to reach women who are playing larger roles and making key decisions in livestock production on the farm.

To register go to: http://muconf.missouri.edu/womenandagriculture/index.html

November 4, 2016
12:30 p.m. Conference Registration Opens
1:00 p.m. Educational Sessions Begin
- Small tractor and ATV maintenance
- Farm safety for women
- Local marketing of farm products
5:30 p.m. Keynote and Dinner

November 5, 2016
Hands-on Demonstrations with lunch from 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Breakout sessions will be offered as follows:

Morning Sessions: 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Beef - Anita Snell, Reagan Bluel and Erin Larimore
Stock piling fescue; Developing a supplement program; Managing around hot fescue

Forages and Pasture Management - Amie Schleicher and Valerie Tate
Weed and forage ID; Poisonous plants; Pasture walk:
- Assessing your pastures - The "then what" of pasture assessments: How to use it - Forage ID in the field - Grazing stick demo - Budgeting forages during good and bad years - Annual forages/ emergency forages

Afternoon Sessions: 1:00-5:00 p.m.
Beef - Anita Snell, Reagan Bluel and Erin Larimore
Cattle handling; Bull selection and EPDs; Timed - AI and synchronization

Small Ruminants - Charlotte Clifford-Rathert and Kendra Graham
Herd Health and Quality Assurance; Parasite Management; Hoof Trimming
Kidding and Lambing
Future Meetings & Events -

Pearls of Production: Women in Agriculture Conference. November 4-5, 2016, Columbia, MO. This program is designed to provide a leadership and hands-on training opportunity for women involved in livestock production in Missouri. The program is designed to reach women who are playing larger roles and making key decisions in livestock production on the farm. Visit: http://muconf.missouri.edu/womenandagriculture/index.html for agenda and conference registration. Transportation to the conference can be arranged from the Jackson, Missouri Extension office; call 573-243-3581 for more details.

Winter Education Series - scheduled at 7:00 p.m. in the lower level meeting room of the Cape Girardeau County Extension office over next 4 months. Registration is $20/person to attend all four meetings or $10/person per meeting if choosing a particular topic. We have out of town guest speakers coming in November and December, so we ask that you please call to register so that we can plan accordingly. Please direct questions to Anthony Ohmes or Erin Larimore, (573) 243-3581.

Workshop 2: Fescue toxicosis and T-Snip program on November 8th
Workshop 3: Livestock risk protection insurance and weed management in pastures on December 6th
Workshop 4: Weed management in row crops and grain market outlook on January 10th

Certified Crop Advisor meeting scheduled for November 21st and 22nd. This is an opportunity to receive up to 16 CEU’s (4 in each category). The meeting is held at the Fisher Delta Research Center. Please direct questions to David Dunn (DunnD@missouri.edu) or Anthony Ohmes.

Watermelon meeting is scheduled for November 30, 2016 in Kennett, MO. Call the extension center at 573-686-8064 if you plan to attend.

Regional Corn meeting is scheduled for December 7th at the Miner Convention Center in Sikeston, MO. Please direct questions to David Reinbott (ReinbottD@missouri.edu) or Anthony Ohmes.

Regional Soybean meeting is scheduled for January 18th at the Miner Convention Center in Sikeston, MO. Please direct questions to David Reinbott (ReinbottD@missouri.edu) or Anthony Ohmes.

Commodities and markets - http://extension.missouri.edu/scott/crop-budgets.aspx