

Summary of 2020/21 Central Florida (Ridge) and Indian River-Southwest Florida Citrus Custom Rate Charges

Ariel Singerman¹ and Faith Aiya²
University of Florida, IFAS, CREC, Lake Alfred, FL

This report presents the results of a survey conducted by mail during December 2020 among Florida citrus caretaking companies to collect data on their custom rate charges during the 2020/21 season. Cooperatives, their members, and growers performing their own cultural practices were not included in the survey. Therefore, this report refers to grove practices that growers may contract out. The custom rates for growers who are members of such cooperatives or the costs for growers who conduct their own cultural practices may differ from the rates reported below.

Sixteen caretakers participated in the survey this season, giving a response rate of 38%. From the total number of participants, eight were citrus caretakers and service providers from Central Florida (Ridge), two were from the Indian River, and three were from the Southwest Florida region. The remainder three caretakers serviced two or three regions, and the data they provided was used for both reported regions. Seven participants reported servicing 40,430 acres, which accounts for approximately 9% of the total citrus acreage in Florida (USDA-NASS, 2020).

The average custom rate charges for the Central and the combined Indian River and Southwest Florida regions are presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Tables are organized by program; each with an itemized list of grove practices. The tables also include the minimum and maximum rates reported for each practice.

Comparative data from previous seasons, additional information on citrus budgeting and cost analysis, harvesting charges, packing charges can be obtained at UF|IFAS CREC Economics Extension website: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/economics/>.

¹ Assistant Professor and Extension Economist, Food and Resource Economics Department, Citrus Research and Education Center

² Graduate Research Assistant, Food and Resource Economics Department

Table 1. Listing of 2020/21 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers.

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Cultivation and Equipment²				
Backhoe	Hour	69.10	70.00	69.55
V-Mower	Hour	52.65	52.65	52.65
Rotovate	Hour	29.00	60.00	45.58
Ant Bait Application with ATV (bait not included)	Hour	25.00	30.40	27.70
Scouting for Diseases and Pests	Hour	26.60	26.60	26.60
ATV with Driver	Hour	18.00	40.00	27.99
ATV with Driver for Imidacloprid Soil Drench Application	Hour	27.00	40.00	31.57
Flatbed Truck with Driver	Hour	35.00	39.10	37.05
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	30.00	50.00	35.94
Tractor with Driver	Hour	25.00	96.50	47.17
Water Supply Truck with Driver	Hour	36.50	38.90	37.47
General Labor ³	Hour	16.00	19.50	17.52
Mechanic Labor ³	Hour	25.00	65.00	46.67
Mechanic Labor with Truck	Hour	40.00	75.00	60.83
Weed Management²				
Disc 7 - 8'	Hour	42.00	42.00	42.00
Disc 7 - 8'	Acre	11.00	12.00	11.50
Disc 9 - 10'	Hour	41.40	45.00	43.20
Disc 9 - 10'	Acre	12.00	15.00	13.50
Disc 11 - 12'	Acre	12.00	12.00	12.00
Bush Hog	Acre	15.00	15.00	15.00
Mow 5 - 7'	Acre	12.50	15.00	13.75
Mow 8 - 12'	Acre	12.50	23.00	16.50
Mow 13 - 16'	Acre	14.00	15.00	14.50
Chopping	Hour	45.00	45.00	45.00
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Hour	38.55	38.55	38.55
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Acre	14.00	23.00	17.00
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Acre	12.00	40.00	18.14
Chemical Mow	Hour	29.00	29.00	29.00

Table 1. Listing of 2020/21 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Spraying Air Blast Sprayer With Electronic Sensors⁴				
		PTO Powered (1,000 gallons tank)		
50 to 99 GPA	Acre	18.00	19.00	18.50
100 to 124 GPA	Acre	21.00	30.00	26.00
125 to 149 GPA	Acre	21.00	27.00	24.00
150 to 249 GPA	Acre	21.00	28.00	24.50
Irrigation²				
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Hour	37.20	42.00	39.07
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Run	30.00	50.00	37.00
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Trip	17.00	17.00	17.00
Maintenance of Drip System	Hour	16.00	19.50	17.66
Maintenance of Microsprinkler System	Hour	17.15	27.40	19.59
Drainage System and Canal Management²				
Water Furrow Disc	Hour	41.40	41.40	41.40
Water Furrow Cleaner	Hour	41.20	41.20	41.20
Ditch Bank Mower	Hour	44.45	44.45	44.45
Ground Herbicide Application	Hour	20.00	47.25	33.63
Fertilizer Application and Soil Amendments²				
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Hour	42.00	51.20	47.73
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Acre	2.00	4.00	2.99
Fertilizer (every middle)	Acre	9.50	23.00	14.50
Fertilizer (every other middle)	Acre	7.75	12.50	9.94
VRT Spreader (every middle)	Acre	12.50	13.00	12.67
VRT Spreader (every other middle)	Acre	7.75	12.50	9.56
Hand Spread (Young Trees)	Hour	16.00	27.00	19.52
Fertilizer Spreader (Young Trees)	Hour	30.00	49.80	39.93
Lime or Dolomite Application	Acre	10.00	23.00	16.10

Table 1. Listing of 2020/21 custom rates reported by Central Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Pruning²				
Hedging (double side)	Hour	275.00	300.00	287.50
Topping	Hour	125.00	350.00	236.00
Push brush out of the grove	Hour	68.00	80.00	73.00
Chop Brush	Hour	40.45	40.45	40.45
Mow Brush	Hour	15.00	55.00	30.24
Front-end Loader	Hour	68.00	100.00	76.00
Tree Removal and Disposal²				
Tree Pushing	Hour	68.00	100.00	76.33
Tree Clipping	Hour	62.50	80.00	71.50
Hauling Clipped Tree out of the grove	Hour	68.00	80.00	71.60
Herbicide spray tree stump	Hour	18.00	30.00	25.55
Tree Resetting and Care²				
Tree Site Preparation ⁵	Hour	47.75	47.75	47.75
Tree Planting and First Watering ⁶				
1 to 5 trees per acre	Tree	3.24	3.24	3.24
6 to 10 trees per acre	Tree	2.94	2.94	2.94
11 to 25 trees per acre	Tree	2.50	3.00	2.75
26+ trees per acre	Tree	2.47	2.47	2.47
Solid set block	Tree	1.85	2.00	1.93
Tree Wrap Installation ⁶	Hour	18.85	18.85	18.85
Sprouting and Pruning	Hour	18.00	21.70	19.73
Spot Herbicide Application	Hour	20.00	30.40	25.80
Neonicotinoids Drench Application (Psyllid Management)	Hour	27.00	30.40	28.13
Slow Release Fertilization	Hour	21.70	27.00	24.57
Grove Management²				
Grove Care Supervision	Acre/Month	2.50	8.25	4.79
Chemicals and Fertilizers Handling/Supervision	Percent	9.00	25.00	16.48
Marketing and Fruit Handling	Box	0.10	0.20	0.15

¹Calculated by averaging the total number of data points reported.

²Rates include labor and equipment.

³Rates only include labor.

⁴Rates are based on every middle application.

⁵Includes disk and/or rotovate tree site.

⁶Does not include tree cost.

Table 2. Listing of 2020/21 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers.

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Cultivation and Equipment²				
Backhoe	Hour	55.00	60.00	58.33
V-Mower	Hour	45.00	82.50	60.17
V-Mower	Acre	16.50	17.50	17.00
Rotovate	Hour	50.00	60.00	55.00
Ant Bait Application with ATV (bait not included)	Acre	5.00	5.00	5.00
Scouting for Diseases and Pests	Hour	80.00	80.00	80.00
ATV with Driver	Hour	25.00	36.00	28.60
ATV with Driver for Imidacloprid Soil Drench Application	Hour	27.00	40.00	32.33
Flatbed Truck with Driver	Hour	35.00	60.00	51.67
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	40.00	58.00	46.67
Tractor with Driver	Hour	40.00	96.50	65.50
Water Supply Truck with Driver	Hour	44.00	44.00	44.00
General Labor ³	Hour	16.00	28.00	20.38
Mechanic Labor ³	Hour	45.00	75.00	60.00
Mechanic Labor with Truck	Hour	60.00	110.00	76.00
Weed Management²				
Disc 7 - 8'	Hour	45.00	75.00	60.00
Disc 9 - 10'	Hour	46.75	46.75	46.75
Mow 8 - 12'	Acre	12.00	16.50	13.88
Mow 13 - 16'	Hour	53.00	82.50	65.17
Mow 13 - 16'	Acre	13.00	17.50	15.50
Herbicide Strip/Band (Single Boom)	Acre	16.00	18.50	16.13
Herbicide Strip/Band (Double Boom)	Acre	12.00	17.00	15.33
Chemical Mow	Acre	2.00	8.00	4.60

Table 2. Listing of 2020/21 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Spraying Air Blast Sprayer With Electronic Sensors⁴				
		PTO Powered (1,000 gallons tank)		
50 to 99 GPA	Acre	19.00	19.00	19.00
100 to 124 GPA	Acre	21.00	32.00	28.25
125 to 149 GPA	Acre	21.00	35.00	30.08
150 to 249 GPA	Acre	21.00	42.00	33.69
250 to 500 GPA	Acre	40.75	52.50	46.63
Greater than 500 GPA	Acre	48.75	48.75	48.75
Irrigation²				
Start/Stop, System Supervision	Hour	42.00	60.00	50.67
Maintenance of Microsprinkler System	Hour	18.00	19.50	18.75
Drainage System and Canal Management²				
Water Furrow Disc	Hour	49.50	60.00	54.75
Water Furrow Cleaner	Hour	44.25	44.25	44.25
Water Furrow Shaper	Hour	48.75	110.00	81.25
Rotary Ditcher or Auger	Hour	50.00	50.00	50.00
Ditch Bank Mower	Hour	49.25	110.00	71.06
Fertilizer Application and Soil Amendments²				
Injection of Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Hour	42.00	60.00	50.67
Fertilizer - every middle	Acre	12.00	15.00	13.67
Fertilizer - every other middle	Acre	10.00	11.75	10.88
VRT Spreader - every middle	Acre	12.00	12.50	12.25
VRT Spreader - every other middle	Acre	10.00	12.50	11.33
Hand Spread (Young Trees)	Hour	16.00	27.00	19.80

Table 2. Listing of 2020/21 custom rates reported by Indian River & Southwest Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd).

Grove Practice	Unit	Rate Reported		
		Min	Max	Average ¹
Pruning²				
Tree Skirting - single side	Acre	22.00	32.00	27.00
Hedging - double side	Acre	19.00	28.00	22.00
Topping	Acre	32.00	42.00	37.00
Push brush out of the grove	Hour	65.00	100.00	81.67
Mow Brush	Hour	16.50	50.00	33.25
Front-end Loader	Hour	75.00	95.00	81.25
Tree Removal and Disposal²				
Tree Pushing	Hour	65.00	95.00	78.00
Tree Clipping	Hour	70.00	95.00	81.67
Grinding Tree in place	Hour	150.00	250.00	200.00
Grinding Clipped Tree	Hour	250.00	250.00	250.00
Hauling Clipped Tree out of the grove	Hour	80.00	95.00	87.50
Tree Resetting and Care²				
Tree Planting and First Watering ⁵				
1 to 5 trees per acre	Tree	3.00	3.50	3.25
6 to 10 trees per acre	Tree	2.94	3.00	2.97
11 to 25 trees per acre	Tree	2.50	2.70	2.60
26+ trees per acre	Tree	2.47	2.47	2.47
Solid set block	Tree	1.65	1.85	1.75
Tree Wrap Installation ⁵ (solid set block)	Tree	0.20	0.20	0.20
Sprouting and Pruning	Hour	19.50	22.00	20.75
Spot Herbicide Application	Hour	22.00	40.00	29.80
Neonicotinoids Drench Application (Psyllid Management)	Hour	27.00	35.00	31.00
Slow Release Fertilization	Hour	16.00	30.00	23.25
Grove Management²				
Grove Care Supervision	Acre/Month	3.00	5.00	3.60
Chemicals and Fertilizers Handling/Supervision	Percent	8.00	19.90	13.58
Marketing and Fruit Handling	Box	0.05	0.15	0.10

¹Calculated by averaging the total number of data points reported.

²Rates include labor and equipment.

³Rates only include labor.

⁴Rates are based on every middle application.

⁵Does not include tree cost.

References

USDA-NASS. 2020. Florida Citrus Statistics 2018/19.