

Summary of 2010 Ridge and Indian River-South Florida Citrus Custom Rate Charges

Ronald P. Muraro, Farm Management Economist
University of Florida, IFAS, CREC, Lake Alfred, FL

This year's annual questionnaire surveys were conducted through the mail from April through June, 2010. Twenty-one citrus caretakers participated in the Central Florida-Ridge area survey, while fourteen citrus caretakers participated in the Indian River-South Florida area survey. Cooperatives, their members, and growers performing their own cultural practices were not included in this study. The author expresses sincere thanks to those caretakers and their staffs who took time from their busy schedules to report their custom charges.

A majority of Indian River-South Florida growers perform their own cultural practices. During the past few years, there has been a consolidation among citrus caretaker firms along with citrus grove acreage resulting in fewer citrus caretakers participating in the annual study. Also, from 2004 to 2010, primarily due to the citrus canker eradication program, real estate development, and the removal of HLB-citrus greening symptomatic trees, there has been a 32% reduction of the citrus acreage in the Indian River-South Florida region compared to a 17% acreage reduction in the Central Florida-Ridge citrus region.

The itemized custom rates, expressed as the low and high rate reported, along with the average of the rates for the 2010 surveys are the most current available (Tables 1 and 2). During the past several years, more citrus caretakers have

been reporting the use of **electronic sensing technology** as shown in the **spraying section** on the 2010 summary of the citrus caretaker custom rate charges. The 2010 custom citrus caretaker rates showed an overall 2% average increase over the 2009 rates. Custom rates for growers who are members of cooperatives and costs for growers who conduct their own cultural practices may differ from these average caretaker rates.

Additional information on citrus budgeting and cost analysis and harvesting charges (pick, roadside and hauling) can be obtained by contacting your County Extension Citrus Agent or going to the UF/IFAS EDIS website: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> or UF/IFAS CREC website:

www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/economics

Table 1. A listing of 2010 custom rates reported by twenty-one Ridge citrus caretakers

Grove Practice	Unit	Range of Rate Reported		Average Rate ^y	Comments
CULTIVATION AND EQUIPMENT:					
Labor	Hour	\$13.00-	\$20.00	\$15.49	Plus transportation
Mechanic Labor	Hour	25.00-	39.50	33.32	
Mechanic Labor with Truck	Hour	45.00-	65.00	56.25	
Rotovate	Hour	35.00-	55.00	43.79	
Disc 7'	Hour	33.50-	45.00	36.87	Averaged \$12.75/acre
Disc 9'-10'	Hour	34.00-	54.00	41.20	
Disc 9'-10'	Acre	10.00-	15.00	12.08	One-way discing
Chop	Hour	33.50-	52.00	41.78	Averaged \$12.66/acre
Mow 5'-7'	Hour	31.10-	45.00	37.96	
Mow 9'-12'	Hour	36.70-	42.00	38.18	
Mow 5'-7'	Acre	12.00-	15.00	13.57	
Mow 9'-12'	Acre	11.00-	15.00	13.02	
Mow 15'-16'	Acre	13.25-	15.00	14.02	Averaged \$45.00/hour
Herbicide ^z (Strip/Band--Single Boom)	Acre	14.00-	18.00	15.50	Plus materials
Herbicide ^z (Strip/Band--Double Boom)	Acre	12.00-	18.90	15.17	Plus materials
Herbicide ^z (Chemical Mow)	Acre	3.50-	8.00	5.67	Plus materials
Temik ^z	Acre	14.00-	20.00	16.75	Plus materials
Plow	Hour	29.80-	40.00	37.07	
Deviner	Hour	38.00-	52.00	43.91	
Bush Hog	Hour	33.50-	60.50	41.34	Averaged \$14.50/acre
Backhoe	Hour	40.00-	55.00	47.40	
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	30.00-	48.00	36.92	One reporting \$25.00/day; Average miles/year: 24,567
Flatbed Transport Truck with Driver	Hour	50.00-	75.00	64.00	Average miles/year: 25,087
Tractor with Driver	Hour	30.00-	43.65	35.95	
Water/Supply Truck	Hour	33.25-	52.00	37.34	
ATV with Driver	Hour	23.50-	39.00	29.57	
SPRAYING:^z					
PTO AIR BLAST SPRAYER					
1,000 Gallon Tank with Electronic Sensing					
		<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Average</u>	
500 GPA	Acre	\$40.00-	\$45.00	\$42.35	
250 GPA	Acre	30.00-	38.50	34.62	
150 GPA	Acre	26.00-	33.00	29.88	
125 GPA	Acre	27.00-	33.00	30.69	
100 GPA	Acre	22.00-	30.00	24.80	
Curtec Sprayer @ 25 GPA (325 Gallon Tank)	Acre	—	—	24.00	
Low Volume Ground Spray for Psyllid Control					
Every Other Middle	Acre	5.00-	12.00	6.87	Average 25 acres/hour
Every Middle	Acre	8.00-	19.00	12.08	Average 16 acres/hour
FERTILIZE AND SOIL AMENDMENTS:^z					
Inject Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Hour	\$37.00-	\$40.00	\$38.22	Truck plus labor and plus materials; One reporting \$59.50
Inject Liquid Fertilizer into Irrigation System	Acre	3.00-	3.50	3.18	per application
Dry (Bulk)	Acre	8.00-	13.00	9.96	
Dry (Bulk) VRT Spreader - Electronic Sensor	Acre	12.00-	15.00	13.15	
Lime or Dolomite	Acre	8.00-	15.00	10.82	
Lime or Dolomite	Ton	8.00-	15.00	11.76	
Fertilize Young Trees: ^z Hand Spread	Hour	13.00-	20.00	15.49	Plus transportation and materials
Fert. Spreader	Hour	30.00-	45.00	37.37	Plus materials; Average \$10.31/acre; VRT spreader @
Ant Bait Application with ATV @ \$4.00 per acre					\$12.00/acre
IRRIGATION:					
Microsprinkler	Hour	31.00-	35.00	33.14	Start/stop and supervision; truck and driver
Microsprinkler/Drip Irrigation Maintenance - \$3.00/acre/month					Check/repair microsprinkler irrigation system-plus materials

(OVER)

Table 1. A listing of 2010 custom rates reported by twenty-one Ridge citrus caretakers (cont'd.)

Grove Practice	Unit	Range of Rate Reported		Average Rate ^y	Comments
REMOVING TREES:					
Tree Shearing (Cutting Tree at Ground Level)	Hour	\$55.00-	\$80.00	\$65.85	Average trees sheared: 5 to 15 trees/hour
Front-end Loader	Hour	54.00-	80.00	66.93	Average trees removed: 5 to 15 trees/hour
Bulldozer	Hour	—	—	55.00	
Mulching Trees with a Grinder Head	Hour	—	—	115.00	7 to 15 trees per hour depending on tree size
PRUNING:					
Rehab or Freeze Damage Pruning – \$5.50/tree; Power Saw with Operator - Averaged \$25.70/hour					
Hedging:					
Single Side (Tractor Mounted)	Hour	\$ 65.00-	\$ 87.00	\$ 77.54	
Double Side (Self Propelled)	Hour	250.00-	290.00	273.12	8 to 20 acres/hour depending on wood size
Average \$21.33/acre annual cut depending on wood size					
Topping:					
Double Sided Topper (Self Propelled)	Hour	250.00-	300.00	277.14	Avg. 8-15 A depending on wood size type of cut; \$30/A
Double Sided (Tractor Mounted)	Hour	155.00-	225.00	192.58	
Double Sided (Tractor Pulled)	Hour	235.00-	290.00	243.33	Gable Cut
Limb Lifter/Tree Skirt Trimmer	Acre	21.00-	26.00	23.29	3 to 5 acres/hour
Limb Lifter/Tree Skirt Trimmer (Single Side)	Hour	60.00-	95.00	81.66	One reporting \$135/hour (Double-Sided)
Removing Brush:					
Haul Brush out of Grove	Hour	37.00-	52.00	40.15	Tractor-trailer plus 2 people
Front-end Loader (Push Brush)	Hour	54.00-	80.00	66.93	2-10 acres/hour
Chop/Mow Brush	Hour	35.75-	45.00	40.18	3-6 acres/hour; \$15.00/acre
COLD PROTECTION:					
Annual Maintenance Cost for Wraps	Tree	\$ —	\$ —	\$ 0.41	
Install Wraps	Each	0.38-	0.50	0.45	
OTHER CUSTOM RATES:					
Solid Set Planting	Per Tree	\$1.00-	\$1.50	\$1.37	Stake, plant and first watering
Plant Resets	Per Tree	1.60-	3.75	2.39	Stake, plant and first watering; cost depends on number resets per acre
Grove Management Charge/Month:					
Supervising Grove Care Operations	Acre	2.50-	6.00	4.20	In addition to caretaking charges; One reporting 6% of equipment labor charge
Handling Fruit Marketing	Box	0.10-	0.20	0.13	
Supervising/Handling Chemicals/Fertilizer	5% to 25% of materials cost				
Charge for personnel to oversee harvesting operations and coordinate harvest in different blocks/groves and keeping of harvesting labor compliance record.	10¢/box to 20¢/box; average 17¢/box				Note: One reporting adding a 3.5% fuel surcharge on all billed equipment charges.
Total Reported Acreage Provided Grove Service to:	Acre	600-	12,670	3,718	Total acres reporting: 63,211

^z Plus materials. Caretakers reporting rates include labor, tractor and sprayer; supply truck included by most caretakers.

^y Calculated by dividing the total number of caretakers reporting a grove practice rate into the sum reported. Unless otherwise stated, labor included with all charges.

^x Low acres is for 2 years regrowth hedging; high acres is for annual maintenance hedging.

Source: Ronald P. Muraro, Extension Farm Management Economist, Lake Alfred CREC, September 2010.

Table 2. A listing of 2010 custom rates reported by fourteen Indian River and South Florida citrus caretakers

Grove Practice	Unit	Range of Rate Reported		Average Rate ^z	Comments	
CULTIVATION AND EQUIPMENT:						
Labor	Hour	\$ 14.00-	\$20.00	\$16.45	Plus transportation and equipment	
Mechanic Labor	Hour	45.00-	75.00	50.95	Labor and service truck	
Rotovate	Hour	40.00-	60.00	46.93		
Disc 7-8'	Hour	35.00-	45.00	39.69	One reporting \$11.00/acre	
Disc 10-12'	Hour	38.00-	50.00	41.51		
Mow: 9-10'	Acre	12.00-	14.00	12.83	Average \$36.50/acre	
15-16'	Hour	38.00-	55.00	46.87		
15-16'	Acre	12.00-	16.00	13.50		
V-Mower	Acre	11.00-	16.00	12.45		
V-Mower	Hour	42.00-	46.75	45.00		
Herbicide ^z (Strip/Band–Single Boom)	Acre	13.75-	15.00	14.37	Plus materials	
Herbicide ^z (Strip/Band–Double Boom)	Acre	13.00-	15.50	14.29	Plus materials	
Herbicide ^z (Chemical Mow)	Acre	3.50-	5.00	3.73	Plus materials	
Temik ^z	Acre	13.50-	15.00	14.09	Plus materials	
Plow	Hour	38.00-	45.00	41.00		
Backhoe	Hour	47.50-	60.00	51.33		
Bush Hog	Hour	—	—	45.00		
Middle Buster	Hour	40.00-	45.00	42.14	With tractor and driver	
Mound Builder	Hour	—	—	40.00	With tractor and driver	
Grader Blade	Hour	36.00-	45.00	41.50	Tractor/blade and driver	
Water Truck with Driver	Hour	35.00	42.00	39.02		
Pickup Truck with Driver	Hour	34.30-	50.00	40.29	Average miles traveled per year: 20,400 miles	
Flatbed/Transport Truck with Driver	Hour	—	—	85.00		
Tractor with Driver	Hour	35.00-	45.00	38.60		
ATV with Driver	Hour	24.00-	30.25	26.12		
SPRAYING:^z						
PTO AIR BLAST SPRAYER						
1,000 Gallon Tank with Electronic Sensing						
		Low	High	Average		
500 GPA	Acre	\$38.00-	\$45.00	\$41.89		
250 GPA	Acre	30.00-	38.75	35.21		
125 GPA	Acre	25.00-	30.50	28.68		
100 GPA	Acre	—	—	25.00		
50 GPA	Acre	20.00-	25.00	23.33		
Low Volume Ground Spray for Psyllid Control (every other middle)	Acre	5.00-	9.00	6.83	Average 60 acres/hour	
Aerial Fixed Wing:	\$5.50/acre @ 5 gallons/acre; \$7.50/acre @ 10 gallons/acre; \$10.50/acre @ 15 gallons/acre; One reporting \$4.10 @ 2 gallons/acre					
FERTILIZING:^z						
Dry (Bulk)	Acre	\$ 9.00-	\$10.75	\$ 9.75	Plus materials	
Dry (Bulk) VRT Spreader-Electronic Sensor	Acre	9.00-	12.00	10.71	Plus materials	
Lime or Dolomite	Acre	8.50-	10.75	9.79	Plus materials	
Fertilize Young Trees: ^z	Hand Spread	Hour	14.00-	20.00	16.45	Plus transportation and materials; 15¢/tree
	Fert. Spreader	Average:	\$6.96/acre; \$35.00/hour		Plus materials	

(OVER)

Table 2. A listing of 2010 custom rates reported by fourteen Indian River and South Florida citrus caretakers (cont'd.)

Grove Practice	Unit	Range of Rate Reported		Average Rate ²	Comments
IRRIGATION:					
Start/Stop, Supervise Irrigation System	Acre	\$ 4.50-	\$ 5.00	\$ 4.68	One reporting \$35/hour/run
Ditch Mower	Hour	35.00-	60.00	48.03	One reporting \$90/hour for 25 ft reach
Water Furrow Disc	Hour	43.75-	45.15	44.63	
Water Furrow Cleaner	Hour	41.75-	45.15	43.07	
Water Furrow Shaper		\$30/acre; \$68/hour (non-laser); \$90/hour (laser)			
Rotary Ditcher or Auger	Hour	35.00-	45.15	41.28	
Microsprinkler/Drip Irrigation Maintenance	Acre/Month	4.50-	7.00	5.62	Check & repair system; parts extra; average 3 times/yr
REMOVING TREES:					
Bulldozer	Hour	\$ —	\$ —	\$95.00	
Front-end Loader	Hour	60.00-	85.00	70.00	Avg. range 10-20 trees per hour
Tree Shearing (Cutting Tree at Ground Level)	Hour	60.00-	85.00	70.00	Avg. range 5-15 trees per hour
Mulching Trees with a Grinder Head	Hour	—	—	115.00	7 to 15 trees per hour depending on tree size
Prepare Site for Replanting	Tree	\$0.25 - \$1.00			
PRUNING:					
Rehab or Freeze Damage Pruning – \$5.50/tree; Power Saw with Operator - Averaged \$25.70/hour					
Hedging:					
Single Side (Tractor Mounted)	Hour	\$ 65.00-	\$ 87.00	\$ 77.54	
Double Side (Self Propelled)	Hour	250.00-	290.00	273.12	8 to 20 acres/hour depending on wood size
Average \$21.33/acre annual cut depending on wood size					
Topping:					
Double Sided Topper (Self Propelled)	Hour	250.00-	300.00	277.14	Avg. 8-15 A depending on wood size type of cut; \$30/A
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Limb Lifter/Tree Skirt Trimmer (Single Side)	Hour	60.00-	95.00	81.66	One reporting \$135/hour (Double-Sided)
Removing Brush:					
Haul Brush out of Grove (Front-End Loader)	Hour	60.00-	85.00	70.00	Tractor & driver, trailer and 2 workers: \$63.67/hour
Mow/Chop Brush	Hour	42.00-	60.00	47.75	Averaged \$12.38/acre
OTHER CUSTOM RATES:					
Install Tree Wraps	Per Wrap	0.25-	0.35	0.28	
	Per Tree				
Plant Trees (Solid Set)	Tree	\$1.00-	\$2.00	\$1.43	Varies as to density
Plant Trees (Resets)	Tree	2.00-	3.00	2.37	Varies as to the number of resets
Grove Management Charge/Month:					
Supervising Grove Care Operations	Acre	4.00-	7.25	5.27	In addition to caretaking charges
Handling Fruit Marketing		\$0.05-\$0.25/box – For Supervising and Marketing fruit			
Supervising/Handling Chemicals/Fertilizer		5% to 15% of materials cost			

²Plus materials. Caretakers reporting rates include labor, tractor and sprayer; supply truck included by most caretakers.

³Calculated by dividing the total number of caretakers reporting a grove practice rate into the sum reported. Unless otherwise stated, labor included with all charges.

⁴Low acres is for 2 years regrowth hedging; high acres is for annual maintenance hedging.

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