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**2020 LEASE SURVEY  
SUMMARY REPORT  
K-State Research and Extension  
Post Rock District  
SMITH County**

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# 2020 FARM LEASE ARRANGEMENT SURVEY SUMMARY FOR DRYLAND CROPS

## K-STATE RESEARCH & EXTENSION



### Post Rock District SMITH County



Number of survey responses: 29 (31% return rate)

#### Summary of Cash Rent Paid to Landlord

CROP ENTERPRISE	AVERAGE RENT/ACRE	CASH RENT RANGE
Cropland (dryland)	\$72.00	\$45 - \$120
Cropland (irrigated)	\$153.00	\$65 - \$185

Other comments: As taxes keep edging up will most likely need more cash rent especially with irrigated cropland. 28% of respondents indicated no cash lease.

#### Estimated Trend for 2021 Dryland Crop/Pasture Leases in SMITH County

No change	76%
Higher	19%
Unsure of 2021 Trend	5%
Lower	No responses

#### Trend of Lease Arrangements for 2021

MORE CASH RENT	NO CHANGE	MORE CROP SHARE
53%	42%	5%

#### Adjustments to Cash Rents due to rising input costs in 2020

NO ADJUSTMENTS	DECREASE	INCREASE
100%	No responses	No responses

**Percentage of acres in the different Tillage Systems in 2020  
(Number of responses)**

<b>No -Till</b>	<b>Minimum Till</b>	<b>Conventional Till</b>	<b>Summer Fallow</b>
12 - 100% 3 - 75% to 90% 2 - 50% or less	2 – 100% or less	3 – 50% or less	4 - 33% or less

**When were the cash rent payments made to the landlord for 2020  
(% of responses)**

<b>All at once</b>	<b>Split payment</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>After Harvest</b>
19% (Payments in December)	69%	March/Sept. March/Dec. April/Dec. May/Nov. May/Dec. July/Nov.	12% (Payments in July and November and also varies by landlord.)

**Interest in Flexible Leasing Arrangements**

<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
94%	6%

**Crop Share Summary**

<b>DRYLAND CROP ENTERPRISE</b>	<b>SHARE PAID TO LANDLORD</b>	<b>OTHER COMMENTS</b>
<b>Wheat</b>	1/3 – 77% 2/5 – 15% 30% - 8%	
<b>Grain Sorghum</b>	1/3 - 75% 2/5 – 17% 30% - 8%	
<b>Corn</b>	1/3 - 77% 2/5 - 15% 30% - 8%	
<b>Sunflowers</b>	1/3 – 75% 2/5 - 25%	
<b>Soybeans</b>	1/3 - 77% 2/5 - 15% 30% - 8%	
<b>Alfalfa</b>	1/3 - 50% 1/2 - 33% 2/5 - 17%	-As renter, I get 100%
<b>Other Dryland Crops (Brome Hay)</b>	1/3 – 80% 2/5 - 20%	
<b>Landlord's Share of Government Payments</b>	1/3 - 79% 100% - 7% 2/5 – 7% 30% - 7%	
<b>Landlord's Share of Crop Insurance Proceeds</b>	1/3 - 57% None - 22% 2/5 - 14% 30% - 7%	-Tenant has their own insurance. -Landowner has their own insurance.

Comment: 28% indicated no crop share.

**Percentage of Written and Oral Leases  
For Pasture and Cropland (number of responses)**

Written Leases			Oral Leases	
6 - 100%	3 - 75% to 95%	2 - 50% or less	8 - 100%	4 - 50% or less

**Landlord Share of Input or Cost  
(Percent of responses)**

EXPENSE OR INPUT	Landowners % Share of Crop Expenses	Other Comments
Fertilizer	1/3 - 74%    None - 13% 2/5 - 13%	-Share on dryland only.
Fertilizer Application	None - 60%    1/3 - 33% 2/5 - 7%	
Herbicide	None - 50%    1/3 - 43% 2/5 - 7%	
Herbicide Application	None - 71%    1/3 - 29%	
Insecticide	None - 50%    1/3 - 43% 2/5 - 7%	
Insecticide Application	None - 71%    1/3 - 29%	
Harvesting Costs	None - 100%	
Hauling Grain	None - 100%	
Drying costs after harvest	None - 50%    1/3 - 43% 2/5 - 7%	
Crop Insurance	1/3 - 62%    None - 15% 2/5 - 15%    30% - 8%	-Landowner has own insurance. -Landowner has own insurance for his 1/3 share. -Tenant has own insurance.
Other production costs (seed, fungicide, crop consulting, water, etc.)	None - 71%    1/3 - 29%	
Terrace/Conservation Structure Maintenance (annual upkeep costs)	None - 53%    100% - 27% 1/2 - 20%	
Terrace/Conservation Structure Construction (major land investments)	100% - 93%    None - 7%	-Landowner pays for all costs for long term improvements.

# Pasture Lease Summary

## Physical Location of Pasture Land

Smith Co. 100%

## Pasture Land Rental Rates

Average rent/acre \$25.00/acre  
Range/acre \$15 – \$36/acre

## Trends for stocking rates for 2021

No Change 82%  
Decrease 18%

## Livestock Stocking Rate (Cow/Calf)

Average 7 acres/pair  
Range 2-10 acres/pair

## Mature Weight of Cow

Average 1,175 lbs.  
Range 1,000-1,300 lbs.

## Livestock Water Supply

Pond 50%  
Well 24%  
Stream 24%  
Transport 2%

## Summary of Tenant/Landlord Responsibilities

Responsibility	Tenant	Landlord
Maintaining Water Supply	89%	11%
Maintaining Fences - Furnishing Materials	50%	50%
Maintaining Fences - Furnishing Labor	89%	11%
Controlling Weeds	65%	35%

## Special arrangements for weed control in pastures:

No - 67% Yes - 33%

## Comments:

- Landowner sprays by plane on part of the pasture.
- Musk thistle spray cost is going up.
- Landowner pays part or 1/2 of cost for spray with a plane.
- 17% of respondents indicated no pasture leases.

## Grazing Period in 2020

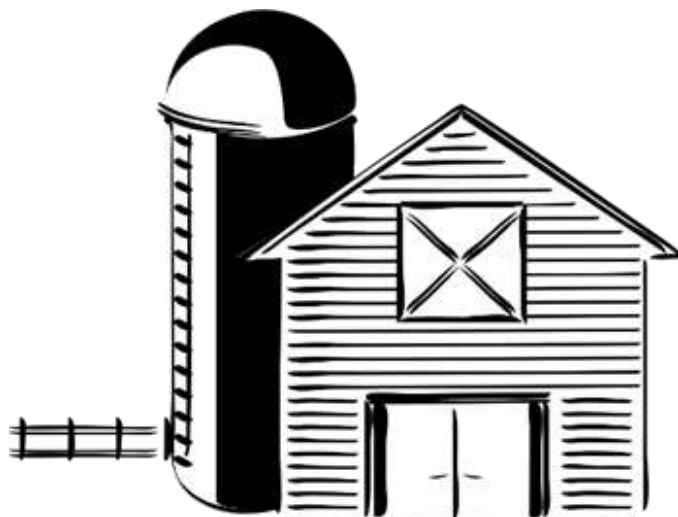
Pasture season length (months)	Month Started	Month Ended
2 mo. – 7%	Jan. – 13%	Oct. – 33%
6 mo. – 67%	Apr. – 33%	Nov. – 54%
7 mo. – 13%	May – 47%	Dec. – 13%
12 mo. – 13%	Aug. – 7%	

## Grazing Period in 2019 (previous year)

Pasture season length (months)	Month Started	Month Ended
5 mo. – 24%	Jan. – 13%	Oct. – 74%
6 mo. – 50%	Apr. – 13%	Nov. – 13%
7 mo. – 13%	May – 74%	Dec. – 13%
12 mo. – 13%		

## Kinds of Pastureland - 2020

Upland	Lowland/River	Mixture
7 – 100% 6 – 55%-90%	5 – 45% or less	3 – 100% 1 - 10% or less



# Crop Residue Grazing Summary

## Physical Location of Crop Residue Land

Smith Co. 91%  
Jewell Co. 9%

## Crop Residue Rental Rates

Average: \$11.00/acre  
Range: \$7- \$20/acre

## Type of Cattle/Livestock On Crop Residue

Cow/Calf Pairs 50%  
Dry Cows 50%

## Stocking rate on crop residue

Average: 5 acres/animal  
Range: 1-8 acres/animal

## Livestock Water Supply

Other (pond, natural spring) 38%  
Transported 31%  
Well 31%

## Crops Utilized for Grazing - (% of responses)

Corn 50%  
Cover Crops 33%  
Milo 17%

(Cover crops used: oats, rye, millet, sudan grass, and grass hay.)

## Protein supplemented

Tubs/cubes 80%  
Distillers 20%

## Goals of crop residue grazing system

Maintain body condition 100%

## Crop Residue Grazing Period 2020

Grazing Season Length (months)	Month Started	Month Ended
1 mo. - 12%	Oct. - 38% Nov. - 62%	Nov. - 12%
2 mo. - 25%		Jan. - 51%
3 mo. - 51%		Feb. - 25%
6 mo. - 12%		April - 12%

## Crop Residue Summary of Tenant/Landlord Responsibilities 2020

Responsibilities	Tenant	Landlord
Maintaining water supplies	100%	No responses
Maintaining Fences - Furnishing Materials	82%	18%
Maintaining Fences - Furnishing Labor	100%	No responses
Livestock Care	100%	No responses

## Other comments with crop residue grazing

- Tenant has first choice to rent stalks and tenant makes choice to rent out.
- Stocking rate is unlimited. Monitor the stalks to move if necessary.
- 48% of respondents indicated no crop residue rental.



# Recreational Leasing Summary

## Percentage of Written and Oral Leases For recreational hunting:

Written	Oral
75%	25%

## Years with same tenant:

3-4 years 100%

## Leasing Arrangements for Hunting 2020:

Hunting Type	Acres	# Hunters	Length	Rental \$
Deer	584	2	-Fall -Season	\$5/Acre
Turkey	584	2	Season	\$5/Acre

## Rating of Hunting

Good 100%

## Are users required to sign a waiver of liability or carry liability insurance?

No 100%

## Is the property specifically managed to improve the wildlife or fish habitat?

Yes 50%  
No 50%

## Other comments related to recreational hunting:

- No hunting leasing indicated (72% of respondents).
- Walk-in Hunting (No - 75%; Yes – 25%)

## Information related to recreational hunting:

In many parts of Kansas, hunting leases for cropland and pasture offer an additional revenue source for land-owners. Whether or not to pursue this option is going to depend on a couple of factors: how much can I charge and what is my liability exposure?

Information on hunting leases and rental rates is challenging to find and, when it is available, interpret accurately. There is very little consistency across hunting leases and learning what other people pay and/or receive is only half of the equation. How much a hunter is willing to pay for a lease will depend on the amount of land, the quality of the habitat, the range of wildlife and seasons the land can be hunted, along with documented harvests of trophy animals on that land. Each of these factors can affect the rental rate, as well as how many years the land may be rented. Another aspect of hunting leases that affects the rental rate is the availability of additional services such as housing, meals, guide services, and even transportation from the nearest airport. Landowners who cater to more of the needs of hunters will be able to charge a higher rent for their land.

The question of liability is an important one because risk exposure depends on the type of lease that is negotiated. Agricultural land owners can avoid liability if they allow hunters on their land at no charge or if they charge a fee for hunting only. This means if any additional services are provided such as guiding, lodging, etc. the landowner may be liable. Another option for the landowner to rent their land and not have to deal with liability is by contracting with the State of Kansas through the Walk-In Hunting program.

Regardless of the type of lease that is pursued, it is important to remember that the hunting rights to a piece of rented farmland transfer to the tenant unless they are explicitly retained by the landowner in a written contract. This means both landowners and producers need to discuss how a hunting lease would work for them and how the costs and benefits will be split. Examples of questions to answer include: Who pays for any improvements that affect the hunting lease, i.e. permanent blinds? Will the presence of livestock on the land be affected by hunting?

Communication between the landowner and producer can make hunting leases a beneficial option.



# General Lease Concepts

## Rules & Regulations:

- Leases must be longer than two years to allow tenants to sublease.
- When a farm is sold, the new owner substitutes for the old.
- Leases are binding on executors and heirs.
- Written leases can cover any length of time.
- Oral leases are **unenforceable** if they are one year or more in length.

## Test of a Good Lease:

- Is it written?
- Does it encourage proper amounts of yield increasing expenses?
- Does it plan for new or needed improvements?
- Does it promote conservation?
- Is the crop shared in the same percentage as the contribution?

## Lease Termination Notice:

- In writing
- At least 30 days prior to March 1
- **Spring planted crops:** must fix termination date of tenancy to take place on March 1
- **Fall seeded crops:** will be terminated the day after harvest or August 1
- **Exception to above:** written lease providing otherwise

## Crop Share Leases

### A good crop share lease should follow five basic principles:

- Yield increasing inputs should be shared.
- Share arrangements should be re-evaluated as technology changes.
- Total returns divided in same proportion as resources contributed.
- Compensation for unused long-term investments at termination.
- Good landlord/tenant communications

## Advantages of Crop Share Leases:

- Yield and price risks and opportunities are shared by tenant and landlord.
- Less operating capital needed by the tenant.
- Management skills may be shared by an experienced landlord and tenant.
- Tax management opportunities from timing of sales and input purchases.
- Material participation issues

## Disadvantages of Crop Share Leases:

- The landlord's income is more variable.
- More record keeping is required.
- Landlords have marketing decisions to make.
- Joint management decisions must be made and disagreements may occur.
- Material participation/Social Security issues

## Cash Rental Leases

### Methods to Determine Cash Rental Rates:

- **Market going rate (if available)**  
Local competitive rental rates
  - **Landowner's cost**  
Depreciation, Interest, Repairs, Taxes, Insurance - Based on the premise of landowner's continuing to receive comparable returns to what has been received in the past.
  - **Crop share equivalent (adjusted for risk)**  
Converts equitable crop share rent to an expected dollar amount per acre.
  - **What Tenant Can Afford to Pay**  
 $\text{Revenue} - \text{Non-land Costs} = \text{Rent}$
- (The last three require yield, price, and government payment projections as well as cost information used for crop share.)





## Advantages of Cash Leases:

- **For Landlords**
  - Less involvement in management.
  - No production costs to share.
  - No marketing decisions to make.
- **For Tenants**
  - More managerial control and freedom.
  - More income for above-average managers.
  - More potential for windfall profits in good years.

## Disadvantages of Cash Leases:

- **For Landlords**
  - No potential for windfall profits in good years.
  - Less tax management flexibility from timing sales and expenses.
  - Risk of exploiting or “mining” of the farmland by a tenant.
- **For Tenants**
  - Bears all yield and price risk.
  - Crop production and expenses are higher.

# Trends in Leases and Values of Agricultural Land in Kansas

by Robin Reid, K-State Research and Extension, Ag Economist

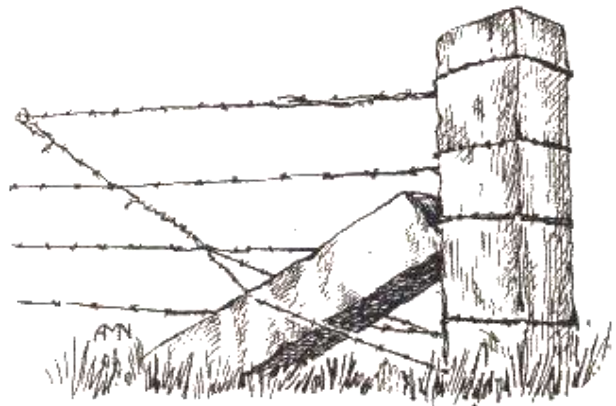
The past 4-5 years have seen increased volatility in commodity prices and therefore uncertain profitability for farmers and ranchers, resulting in fluctuations in both land values and rental rates. According to surveys by USDA-NASS, the statewide average land value for non-irrigated cropland in 2009 was \$981/acre. Within a five-year span, that average more than doubled to \$2,150/acre in 2014. By 2020, non-irrigated land values in Kansas had fallen to \$1,970/acre. A similar pattern can be observed in pasture values. The state average of pasture was \$761/acre in 2010 and, within five years, values increase 80% to a record high of \$1,400/acre. Pasture values have fallen off slightly to \$1,370/acre in 2020. Farm profitability is expected to increase in 2020, largely due to government payments, which will help to stabilize the land market.

For most producers, high volatility in commodity prices translates into higher risk exposure from rental rates. During periods of high profitability, rental rates will increase and competition for land can be fierce as producers try to expand their land base to capture more returns. However, a sudden decline in profitability in the sector will not necessarily translate into lower rents in the short run.

Rental rates tend to lag behind commodity prices and profitability for several reasons. First, land contracts and cash rental rates are often set for 3-5 year periods to allow both producers and landowner to plan for expected costs and returns. As a result, producers can be locked into rents that are not aligned with the current market.

Another reason rental rates do not decline as quickly as might be expected is due to concern over losing land. Rented land is often a significant part of the land base in an ag operation, driving decisions on machinery and labor. If a landowner will not accept a lower rent, then some producers will pay more than their total costs of production to keep it. The expectation is that taking a loss in the short run is preferable to losing acres and incurring an increase in total costs per acre.

Regardless of the particular situation a producer faces, strong communication with their landowner can be very beneficial to the long-run economic viability of their operation. Landowners will not be excited to lower rental rates, but if they have a strong understanding of the current market conditions they may be more willing to negotiate. Tenants who take extra time to work with their landowners, answer questions, and keep them up to date on the farm's situation will find it easier to have those difficult conversations about lowering the rent.



# Flexible Cash Rents

## Principles:

- Flexible cash rents simply refer to land rental arrangements where the amount of cash rent paid (received) can vary based upon some pre-determined formula (i.e. formalizes bonus rents).
- Methods of “flexing” rental rates, i.e., formulas are based on:
  - Yield (actual for producer, co avg., etc.)
  - Price (harvest, season average, actual)
  - Revenue (yield x price, crop insurance, residue)
  - Costs (i.e. fertilizer price)
  - Other

## Advantages of Flexible Cash Rents:

- Method of allowing rents to vary year-to-year without having to renegotiate rents annually.
- Way of sharing/managing risks associated with volatile markets (without hassles of crop share lease).
- Somewhat “forces” a higher level of communication relative to fixed cash rent (poor/lack of communication is often an issue with problem lease arrangements).
- Trend in Kansas has been moving away from crop-share leases to more cash leases.
- Volatility of last few years has significantly increased the risk of **fixed** cash rents.

## Disadvantages of Flexible Cash Rents:

- Complex!
- Theory and intuition guide conceptual design, but little help with specific details.
- Not needed if cash rents are renegotiated frequently or every year.
- Hard to think of everything, which means we might need to be “tweaking” the arrangements regularly.
- If designed wrong, might increase risk.
- Appealing for certain situations, but not appropriate in all cases (depends on why you are considering flexible cash rent).

## How to determine Flexible cash rents:

- There is not a single right way to do this! (But there are plenty of wrong ways).
- Establish a base cash rent:
  - Budget-derived value (KSU-Lease.xls) Online KSU spreadsheet (Excel) tailors to a specific situation and an equitable crop share can be calibrated to the local area.
- **Questions to ask:**
  - Does cash rent flex up and down or only up?
  - What yields and prices are used to determine actual gross revenue?
  - What crops should be included in calculations?
  - Are crop insurance and government payments included/accounted for?
  - What about flexing cash rent based on costs of crop inputs?
  - What will final rent be under alternative potential outcomes?

## Summary:

- Flexible cash leases are simply a way of sharing risks of unpredictable markets and yields without the hassles of crop ownership.
- Why not simply give landowner ad hoc “bonuses” when times are good?
- There are many types of flex leases – no one method is right or best in all cases.
- Communication, communication, communication! (Remember, it likely is a learning process for both parties.)
- The KSU website [www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info) has more information on **Flexible Cash Rents**.

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## **K-State Research & Extension**

### **Post Rock District**

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