

MICHIGAN PASTURE RENTAL RATES FOR 2014

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The renting of pasture land for grazing animals is coming under increased demand across the country and in the State of Michigan. The reasons for this increased demand include the rising price of all meat animals, and the increasing price of common alternative feed sources for these grazing animals including hay and corn. In the beef industry for example, cattle herds are starting to expand as profitability has returned to the beef sector. In an attempt to control their cost of production, cattle producers are seeking feed sources other than corn to get cattle closer to their final market weight. Pasture forages are one of those feed sources seeing more use.

The value of pasture to livestock producers is strongly influenced by not only the prices mentioned above, but also by local land prices, the types of pasture forage present, the soil type, the fence quality, water access, water quality, and the location of the land in relation to the cattle industry. Also the value of the land will be higher if animal handling and load out facilities are available, and if the landlord can provide additional services. These services may include: checking the health and number of cattle, checking water supply, feeding mineral if necessary, maintaining fences, etc.

Landlords must realize that just as rental prices may rise with increasing commodity prices, they also should be decreased if corn or cattle prices fall significantly. Pasture renters must realize that in order to keep land in pasture they must stay competitive with the markets trends and demands for land from other crop commodities.

There are many different methods to calculate pastures rental rates. The prices below are a market analysis utilizing many of these methods to determine value. Ranges are provided based on the numerous variables mentioned above such as forage quality, fence condition, etc. These prices assume payment based on the number of animals grazed per month.

Michigan Grazing Pasture Rates 2014

Animal Type	\$ Per Head per Month	Typical Stocking Rates*
Beef Cow (1,300 lbs.) with calf	\$19.55 - \$28.20	2.5 - 4.5 acres for a cow & calf
Beef Yearling Cattle (600 – 800 lbs.)	\$ 11.20 - \$15.80	1.4 - 2.6 acres per head
Goat: doe with kids	\$ 2.00 - \$ 3.45	0.15 - 0.7 acres per doe & kids
Horse (2 years of age & above)	\$ 19.55 - \$30.00	2.7 - 4.8 acres per head
Horse (yearling)	\$ 16.00 - \$20.10	1.9 - 3.5 acres per head
Sheep: ewe with lambs	\$ 2.30 - \$ 4.00	0.2 - 0.8 acres per ewe & lambs

* Stocking rates are averages for the entire grazing season May – September and are variable

The process of setting a fair rental rate is always a negotiation between the animal owner and the landlord. Developing a written lease agreement is highly advised to avoid mis-understandings and conflict down the road. A downloadable Pasture Lease form is available from the North Central Region Cooperative Extension Service located at https://dev-mwps.sws.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/imported/free/NCFMEC03A_D9E5FDD476870.pdf or by contacting the author.

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For more information or for other methods of calculating pasture rental rates contact Michigan State University Extension Grazing Educator Jerry Lindquist at lindquis@msu.edu or by calling 231-832-6139.