

Labor Hour Estimates

September 2025

Labor hours in FINPACK Crop and Livestock Budgets are used for long range planning (FINLRB) and for monthly cash flow projections with budgets (FINFLO). Labor hours are used in long range planning (FINLRB) to compare the labor requirements of alternative plans. Monthly cash flow projections with budgets (FINFLO) use labor hours with the cost of production calculations. Here, labor hours from the budgets are used as the default for allocating related operating expenses to the particular crop and livestock enterprises in the plan. This approach streamlines data entry in the FINFLO plan.

To help with this data entry element, the tables on the following pages list labor hour estimates for various crop and livestock enterprises using data from FINBIN (www.finbin.umn.edu). These estimates are helpful if labor hours are not available from the farm / ranch records or another local source.

The crop labor hour estimates are averages from owned and cash rented land, from 2022 through 2024, and includes farms from Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, and Wisconsin.

The livestock labor hour estimates are averages from 2022 through 2024 and includes farms and ranches from Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah, and Wisconsin.

Crop Labor Hours per Acre

Crop	Average	Acres								
		≤ 50	51 – 100	101 – 250	251 – 500	501 – 1,000	1,001 – 1,500	1,501 – 2,000	2,000 – 5,000	> 5,000
Barley	1.4	1.4	2.1	1.3	1.4	1.3	-	-	-	-
Beans, Dry	2.0	-	2.4	2.2	2.0	1.7	-	-	-	-
Canola	1.2	-	-	1.7	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.0	-	-
Corn	2.7	4.2	3.5	3.2	2.8	2.6	2.2	2.5	2.3	-
Corn Silage	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.4	3.3	-	-	-
Hay, Alfalfa	3.5	3.7	3.9	3.4	3.3	3.1	-	-	-	-
Haylage, Alfalfa	3.2	3.7	2.7	3.4	3.0	-	-	-	-	-
Oats	1.6	2.0	1.5	1.7	1.5	-	-	-	-	-
Potatoes	13.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye	1.4	1.9	1.7	1.4	1.4	-	-	-	-	-
Sorghum, Grain	2.0	2.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soybeans	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.4
Sugar Beets	5.8	5.9	5.4	5.9	5.4	6.9	4.8	-	-	-
Sunflowers	1.5	2.2	-	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.4	-	-	-
Sweet Corn	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.3	-	-	-	-	-
Wheat, Durum	1.1	-	-	1.5	1.2	1.3	-	0.9	-	-
Wheat, Spring	1.4	1.8	2.1	1.6	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	-
Wheat, Winter	1.8	2.4	2.1	2.1	1.5	1.5	-	-	-	-

Livestock Labor Hours per Head

Breeding Type Enterprises	Enterprise Size (head)					
	Average	≤ 50	51 – 100	101 – 200	201 – 500	> 500
Beef Cow-Calf	8.4	14.4	11.6	7.2	4.5	7.7
Dairy	39.0	43.4	37.5	37.3	37.8	40.3
Dairy and Replacement Heifers	43.1	49.3	44.5	42.2	43.4	42.9
Sheep, Market Lamb Production	4.2	9.7	5.6	3.7	3.4	-

Dairy Grow / Finish Enterprises	Enterprise Size (head)					
	Average	≤ 25	26 – 50	51 – 100	101 – 250	> 250
Dairy Replacement Heifers	6.2	9.5	8.3	6.4	6.2	6.1
Dairy Finishing Steers	4.9	4.5	8.0	6.0	4.9	4.6

Beef Grow / Finish Enterprises	Enterprise Size (head)					
	Average	≤ 100	101 – 200	201 – 500	501 – 1,000	> 1,000
Beef Backgrounding	1.3	2.9	2.7	1.8	0.8	0.5
Beef Finishing	2.8	5.7	3.5	4.0	2.9	2.1

Hog Grow / Finish Enterprises	Enterprise Size (head)					
	Average	≤ 500	501 – 1,000	1,001 – 2,500	2,501 – 5,000	> 5,000
Hogs, Finishing	0.2	-	-	-	0.3	0.2

Livestock Labor Hours per Litter

Hog Enterprises	Enterprise Size (litters)					
	Average	≤ 100	101 – 200	201 – 500	501 – 1,000	> 1,000
Hogs, Farrow to Finish	8.4	12.9	-	-	-	-
Hogs, Farrow to Weaning	2.0	-	-	-	-	1.9