

### Bluestem Pasture Survey Completed

Results from the 2013 Bluestem Pasture Survey, conducted by the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistic Service (NASS), show that cattlemen and women in the 14-county Flint Hills region of Kansas are facing challenges related to reduced stockwater availability and diminished pasture conditions.

The survey, which was conducted for the first time since 2009 due to budgetary restraints, was sent to 2,200 ranchers in the Flint Hills and collected data related pasture availability, pasture use and practices, pasture leasing rates, pasture condition and fence building rates.

According to the survey, pasture conditions in the Flint Hills at the beginning of the grazing season are 16 percent very poor, 41 percent poor, 34 percent adequate and 8 percent good. Meanwhile, stockwater supplies on May 5 were reported as 22 percent very short, 26 percent short, 50 percent adequate and only 2 percent surplus compared to the 2009 survey, where 92 percent reported adequate or better supplies.

In 2013, just 8 percent of respondents reported burning pastures, down from 78 percent in 2009.

As of mid-April, 97 percent of pastures were already contracted, with 46 percent under full summer season contracts, 34 percent under partial-season contracts and 20 percent leased for the full year. The average grazing season start date for summer season contracts is April 24 and the average ending date is October 17.

Partial season contracts with 90 grazing days or less reported an average lease rate of \$27.90 per acre where care is provided and \$23.10 per acre where care is not provided. The average price per acre for partial season contracts of more than 90 days was \$22.60 where care is provided and \$19.50 where care is not provided. For a full summer season, the average price per acre with care was reported at \$25.90 and without care at \$21.00.

In addition, the 2013 survey also collected data related to fence building rates. According to the survey, the rate charged for building a five-wire, all steel post fence, including materials, averaged \$25.40 per rod. The rate excluding materials averaged \$17.70 per rod. The average hourly rate for fence building is \$63.10 per hour with equipment and \$26.30 without.

The full survey is available online on the Kansas NASS office website by [clicking here](#).