#24-SK October 2025

Saskatchewan 2024 Benchmarks

In 2021, the COP Network launched its first round of data collection. Saskatchewan's initial benchmark data was gathered between 2020 and 2022. A new round of data collection is scheduled for 2027.

When looking at the years from 2020 to 2024, some broad observations can be made when analyzing the data. In 2020, moisture conditions were normal. In 2021, a drought occurred in Western Canada. By 2022, moisture conditions had improved, and cattle prices began to strengthen, though producers also faced higher input costs such as fertilizer and energy. During 2023 and 2024, record-high cattle prices continued, but parts of Western Canada still experienced drought. In these years, input costs continued to rise; but were more moderate compared to the jump in 2022.

What is the COP Network?

The Canadian Cow-calf Cost of Production Network (COP Network) uses standardized data collection which allows for comparison both within and between provinces, and internationally. Since launching in 2021, the COP Network has collected data from over 235 producers contributing to 64 cow-calf benchmark farms that represent various production systems. Each benchmark is based on data from 3-7 producers. Data collection occurs every 5 years with annual indexing of input and output prices, as well as crop and forage yields, in subsequent years. Individual benchmark farm summaries, can be found at: https://canfax.ca/resources/cost-of-production/cop-results.html

Farm Descriptions

There are 16 Saskatchewan benchmark farms and one Saskatchewan-Alberta, which are consist with those featured in the 2024 COP Network summary.

Herd sizes range from 85 to 950 head. These farms calve anywhere from February to May, with majority in April. Weaning times vary across the farms, ranging from October to December, with the majority in November. SK-1a, SK-1b, SK-7, SK-8a, SK-8b, SK-12 and SK-13 background their calves after weaning (Tables 1-3).

A wide variety of feeding systems and purchased feed proportions are used within these benchmark farms. SK-1b and SK-AB-1 depend mainly on purchased feed. Nearly half (7) of the Saskatchewan benchmark operations use some form of field feeding, such as swath grazing, aftermath grazing and corn grazing. Days on full winter feed vary from 42 to 205 days (Tables 1-3). Hay, greenfeed and cereal silage are the most common feedstuffs, with some farms also utilizing greenfeed.

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Table 1. Saskatchewan Benchmark Farm Descriptions

	SK-1a	SK-1b	SK-3	SK-4	SK-5	SK-6
Beef Cows	350 head	350 head	245 head	120 head	135 head	135 head
Calving	May	May	March	March	April	February
Weaning	December	December	October	October	November	October
Enterprises	Cow-calf, Yearling grassers and bred heifers 159 days on feed, 95 days on grass	Cow-calf, Yearling grassers 150 days on feed, 135 days on grass	Cow-calf	Cow-calf	Cow-calf, Cash crop	Cow-calf, Cash crop
Feed	180 days of swath grazing and corn grazing, and 42 days on hay	150 days on hay	30 days of aftermath grazing supplemented with hay and 150 days on hay and grain or pellets	60 days of bale grazing, 60 days of corn grazing, and 45 days on greenfeed and hay	60 days aftermath grazing and 140 days on cereal silage, hay, straw and chaff, cereal screenings, and camelina meal	186 days on cereal silage, hay, and barley grain
Purchased feed	12%	100%	11%	5%	30%	0%
Maturity	Medium	Medium	Medium	Start-up	Start-up	Medium

Table 2. Saskatchewan Benchmark Farm Descriptions

	SK-7	SK-8a	SK-8b	SK-9	SK-10
Beef Cows	375 head	950 head	950 head	85 head	140 head
Calving	April	April	April	March	April
Weaning	October	October	October	October	November
Enterprises	Cow-calf, Yearling grassers 180 days on feed, 130 days on grass, Cash crop	Cow-calf, Yearling grassers 180 days on feed, 145 days on grass, Cash crop	Cow-calf, Yearling grassers 180 days on feed, 145 days on grass	Cow-calf, Cash crop	Cow-calf
Feed	180 days on hay and barley silage	45 days of aftermath grazing supplemented with hay, and 135 days on hay	30 days of swath grazing and 125 days of barley silage and straw	205 days on hay, straw, and barley grain	130 days on hay and grain
Purchased feed	0%	0%	10%	1%	14%
Maturity	Medium	Mature	Medium	Medium	Medium

Table 3. Saskatchewan Benchmark Farm Descriptions

	SK-11a	SK-11b	SK-12	SK-13	SK-AB-1
Beef Cows	200 head (incl. 40 purebred)	160 head	125 head	290 head	448 head
Calving	February	February	April	April	April
Weaning	October	October	November	November	October
Enterprises	Commercial and purebred cow-calf	Cow-calf	Cow-calf, Background 107 days	Cow-calf, Yearling grassers 155 days on feed, 120 days on grass, Cash crop	Cow-calf
Feed	165 days on barley silage, hay and greenfeed	165 days on barley silage, hay and greenfeed	30 days of swath grazing and 151 days on greenfeed and hay	165 days on greenfeed, hay, straw and pellets	year-round grazing 60 days and supplemental feeding on pasture with hay
Purchased feed	2%	2%	1%	30%	100%
Maturity	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Mature

Benchmarks

For all Saskatchewan benchmark farms the total cost of production averaged $1,812 per cow in 2024. Saskatchewan had the greatest variation is production systems and cost structures; with a lot of mixed operations with shared costs. On average, 57% of their costs were cash expenses, 11% depreciation and 32% opportunity. All farms covered their cash and depreciation costs with an average medium-term profit at $840 per cow. Ten out of 16 covered long-term costs.

Cash costs ranged from $548 to $1,721 per cow (Figure 2), averaging $1,034 per cow. Depreciation costs ranged from $30 to $368 per cow, averaging $204. Lower depreciation was seen on mixed farms due to allocation for machinery to cash crops. Opportunity costs ranged from $134 to $928 per cow, with an average of $574. These opportunity costs were primarily driven by unpaid labor and return to owned land (Figure 3).

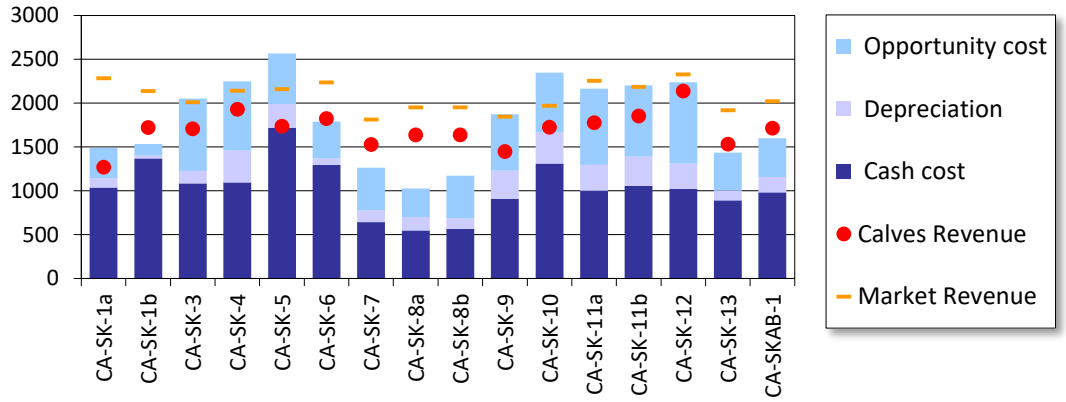

Figure 2. Cost of Production for each individual benchmark farm

Market Revenue = Receipts from calves, calves transferred to backgrounding enterprise, cull animals and breeding stock
Calf Revenue = Receipts from calves or calves transferred to backgrounding enterprise

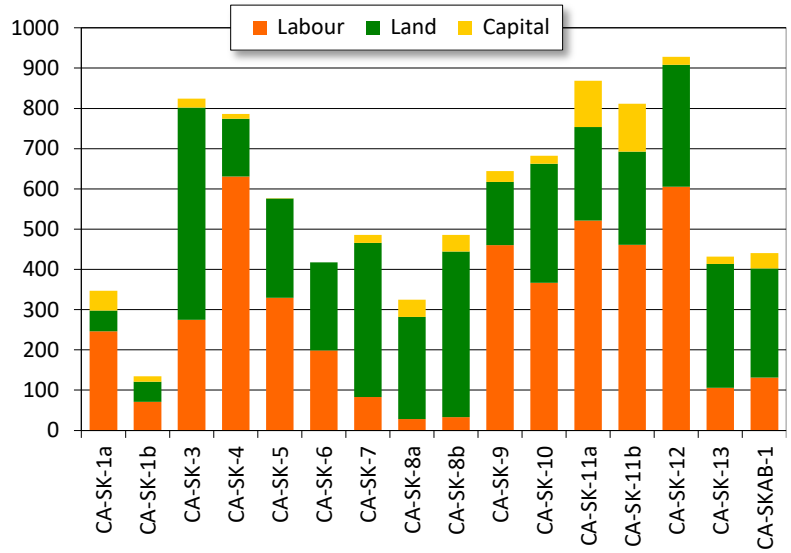

Figure 3. Breakdown of land, labour and capital for each individual benchmark farm

Annual Trends

In 2024, average cash costs were $1034 per cow in Saskatchewan. Over the past five years, there has been a steady rise in cash costs, with an average annual increase of $69 per cow. Overall, cash costs increased $274 per cow, going from $759 in 2020 to $1,033 in 2024 (see Figure 4).

Depreciation costs have had an average annual increase of $19 per cow, with a total increase of $77 per cow, going from $127 in 2020 to $204 in 2024.

Opportunity costs have had an average annual increase of $22 per cow, with a total increase of $88 per cow, going from $486 in 2020 to $574 in 2024.

For more information, on ways to stay competitive check out the other COP Network Fact Sheets at [Cost of Production Analysis - CanFax]

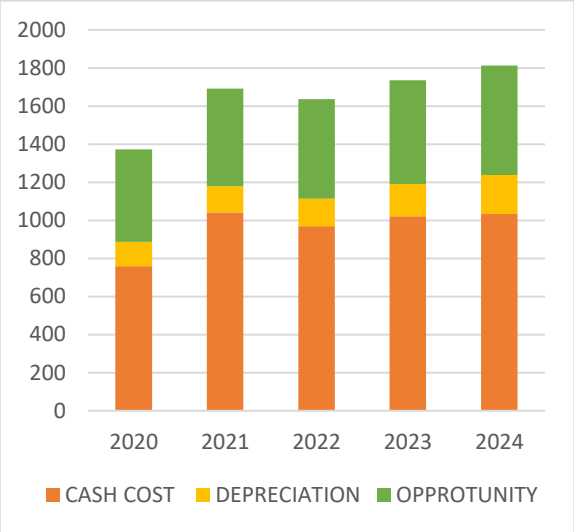

Figure 4. Saskatchewan cash, depreciation and opportunity costs from 2020-2024