

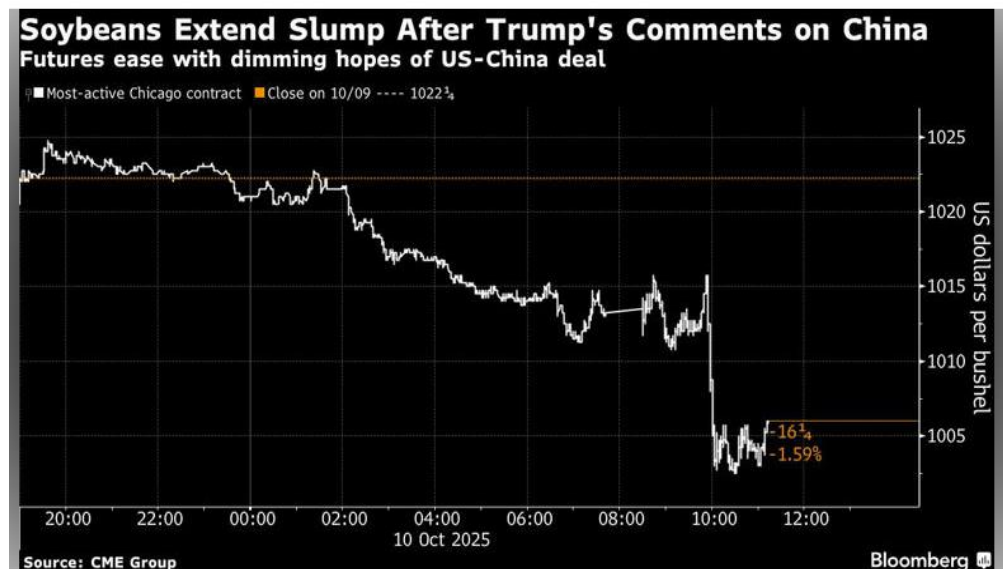


A weekly Cornbelt digest of marketing, economic, agronomic, and management information.

Commodity Market Drivers—

- **Soybean futures plunged Friday**, extending earlier losses, after US President Donald Trump threatened additional tariffs on China's goods and said there was "[no reason](#)" to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Trump's social media posts contributed to dimming hopes for a US-China trade accord that could restart stalled American soybean exports, with growers busy harvesting while their top export market remains shut. Chicago soybean futures fell as much as 1.9% to \$10.025 a bushel, hitting session lows after the posts. The intraday decline is the biggest since July 7. "The thought is China will not buy US beans now," Joe Davis, a director at brokerage Futures International LLC, said of traders' reaction. US farmers have yet to ship any soybeans to China, the world's top importer, this season. Beijing has turned to other exporters, including Brazil and Argentina, for its supplies. Trump said as recently as Thursday that the pressure he would bring on the Chinese president during their planned sit-down later this month would end Beijing's months-long moratorium on US soybean buys. "This market had been propped up by hopes of a commodity trade deal with China, but a dose of reality set in overnight," Arlan Suderman, chief commodities economist at StoneX, said before Trump's comments. "That doesn't mean that we can't get a deal, but the market is dealing with the realities of how difficult that might be to achieve." Suderman said later that US-China relations are at a new low, with Trump's statement reflecting a significant escalation. The latest developments are "deeply disappointing at a moment when soybean farmers are facing an ever-growing financial crisis," said Caleb Ragland, president of the American Soybean Assn., adding that the group hopes talks can be put back on track. Farming communities, which voted overwhelmingly for Trump in the 2024 election, have been hit as export markets have dried up and many federal-safety net programs have shrunk during his second term. →

- "I was to meet President Xi in 2 weeks**, at APEC, in South Korea, but now there seems to be no reason to do so," Trump posted Friday. Earlier, China announced [special fees](#) on US ships docking at its ports, a tit-for-tat measure signaling that trade tensions between the 2 sides are likely to persist. The measure kicks in Oct. 14, the same day that Washington plans to impose [new charges](#) on large Chinese ships calling at US ports. The Trump administration has teased billions of dollars in federal aid for struggling farmers, but Agriculture Secretary Rollins on Thursday signaled that a package is [on hold](#) with the US government shut down. Trump said he was looking at a "massive increase" of import taxes on Chinese products in response to Xi's moves. It's possible that this could amount to either posturing by the United States for eventual negotiations or a retaliatory step that could foster new fears about the stability of the global economy. Trump did not formally cancel the meeting with Xi, so much as indicating that it might not happen as part of a trip at the end of the month in Asia. Data on US crop production and harvest progress is also delayed during the shutdown.



Analysts

surveyed by Bloomberg expect US soy stocks to increase with a lack of exports.

- Trump's cancellation did not sit well with the American Soybean Assn.** "ASA is extremely disappointed that the planned meeting at the end of the month between President Trump and Chinese President Xi is canceled as of right now due to the recent actions of the Chinese government to further restrict access to rare earth minerals. ASA was hopeful that these upcoming talks between the United States and China would lead to a deal that would restore U.S. soybean exports to China, traditionally soybean farmers' largest export by far. Trade wars are harmful to everyone, and these latest developments are deeply disappointing at a moment when soybean farmers are facing an ever-growing financial crisis. ASA hopes that talks can be put back on track to restore markets and trade relationships."
- On Thursday**, the Chinese government [restricted access to the rare earths](#) ahead of the [scheduled Trump-Xi meeting](#). Rep. Don Bacon, R-NE, said "China has not been a fair-trade partner for years, but the Trump administration should have anticipated China's [restrictions on rare earths](#) and [refusal to buy American soybeans](#) in response to the tariffs."

- **So, what do market advisors think** of the White House verbiage regarding China, tariffs, trade policy, and social media postings?
 - ✓ **A market advisor with 60+ years** of advising farmers says, "Trump Trumps Soys again! Expect a soy bear (market) extension. Continuing the trade war increases futures risk to \$8.84-8.64. in time. Trump's Fri night, lengthy-tweet rant on China/Tariffs considered very bearish for commodity values next week and longer term. Maybe Ag Secretary and Trump can encourage NASS to lower yields. Weak futures during October hurts 26 crop insurance values."
 - ✓ **A popular market advisor said**, "Trump has this thing so messed up it's not funny. I'm concerned for the US grower the way this is going. These input costs aren't going to work with corn and bean prices where they're at."
 - ✓ **A long-time commodity market advisor suggested**, "There may be some export business/or commercials or soybean crushers who need more ownership before farm grain bin doors slam shut/or soybeans go under an FSA loan program. With FSA offices closed for the foreseeable future and a "\$1.50-\$2.00 tariff Premium coming, a market that is 30-50¢ higher may trigger some big producer sales. Corn, wheat soybean meal, oat and soybean chart action suggest price lows are in the rearview mirror."
- **On Oct 9, no news WAS the news.** Due to the government shutdown, the USDA did not release the October World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates, or WASDE, report that was scheduled for 11 am CST, according to Successful Farming. That means the market did not receive updated production data at a time when, according to one expert, traders are "fixated with yields." "There's still a chance we could get the October reports later this month, though USDA would have to restart field survey work, so that seems unlikely at this point," said Brian Grete, a senior grain and livestock analyst with Commstock Investments. Experts say in 2013 and 2019, the USDA never released the WASDE reports that were impacted by government shutdowns. This begs the question, what will the lack of new data mean for the market? Analysts have weighed in. "The main impact in the near term should be to keep traders more cautious than normal," said Ian Berry, lead editor of The Brock Report at Brock Associates.
- **The October WASDE was a "no-show" Friday**, as the scheduled update for the World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates fell victim to the government shutdown, and USDA's furloughs and firings of thousands of staff members in Washington, D.C. offices. "Due to a lapse in government funding, the release of the WASDE report will be suspended until further notice," USDA noted at its website, [usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov). Ahead of the scheduled report the market surveyed traders to find out their expectations for the size of the 2025 crop. The average trade estimates came in with national yield averages of 185 bu. per acre for corn and 53.2 bu. per acre for soybeans, down from USDA's September estimates of 186.7 bu. and 53.5 bu. Traders projected U.S. corn production at 16.64 bil. bu. and soybeans at 4.27 bil. bu., slightly lower than USDA's September report.

- **Which direction are the markets headed?** [World Grain reports](#), "In the markets for the 3 major US crops — wheat, corn and soybeans — growers, merchandisers, millers, food manufacturers and others are facing myriad challenges in the 2025-26 marketing year. Decisions on winter wheat planting amid ample global supplies, forecast record-high US corn production, the impact of tariffs on soybean exports to China and US energy policy delays on soybean oil use may be top of mind among participants. At least it was a year when weather, for the most part, was benign or favorable in the United States.
- ✓ For much of 2025, analysts and agencies have agreed that US farmers would grow a record amount of corn this year. With harvest underway, markets face 3 questions: What impact will disease have on yields? How much corn will there be? And who's going to buy it? "You hear of disease issues to some degree each year, but this year especially, with IA the main headliner given how wet they were this growing season," said Patrick Sparks, vice president of Global Risk Management, Inc., Minneapolis, MN, US. "Disease pressure from Southern rust and tar spot are high this year. I am not an agronomist, so, it is hard to say what the impact will be. But that is the question everyone is trying to answer." Despite lowering its yield forecast in September, the USDA stunned markets in the same report by raising its forecast for 2025 US corn outturn — to a record 16.814 bil. bu., up 72 mil. from the August forecast and 13% higher than 14.867 bil. bu. in 2024 — on an unexpectedly large increase in acreage. If realized, the domestic corn harvested area would be the highest since 1933. Sparks said yields will be the primary price driver from here into early 2026.
- ✓ Uncertainty continues to linger over all 3 legs of soy complex futures. But China not buying US soybeans for the 2025-26 year and delayed announcements from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on US biofuel policies have been the primary drivers of volatility. "The market seems to be pretty content in a range between \$10 and \$10.60," said Brian Harris, executive director and owner of Global Risk Management. Despite the lingering uncertainty weighing down the soybean futures market, there seems to be ample demand. In the latest National Oilseed Processors Association report, August soybean crush was the largest reported for 2025, which is significant as many facilities take downtime in late summer and early fall to do maintenance ahead of the harvest. Analysts have said both domestic and international demand have kept crushers running at capacity. But the absence of China, the world's largest soybean buyer, continues to cast a weighty pall. "Deal or no deal, maybe there is some backdoor stuff that gets done, but at some point, I believe China is going to have to step up and buy some US beans," Harris said. Soybean oil futures received a jolt of strength after the EPA on June 13 proposed much higher-than-expected Renewable Fuels Standard volumes for biomass-based diesel blends. With the information that's to be decided by the EPA, the administration better hope that there's some good news for the farmer in there."

- **Grain Market details from** General Manager Kevin Walker and staff at [Legacy Grain](#).
 - ✓ **Soybean market drivers:** Soybeans were under pressure from increased trade tensions on Friday, with losses of 14 to 16¢ and November down 11¼¢ on the week. The CmttyView national average [Cash Bean](#) price was 15¾¢ lower at \$9.31. Meal fell \$1.60 to \$2.30 on the day, with the weekly losses at \$3.60. [Soy Oil](#) was down 97 to 110 points on the day amid pressure from \$3.31 losses in crude oil. December soy oil was down 8 points this week. November soybeans have averaged \$10.19 so far through the 5 trade days in October, with the full month's average used in the harvest price discovery for crop insurance. News overall was light with the lack of USDA data, but that didn't stop the biggest story from pressuring the market. Earlier this morning, President Trump posted on Truth Social that China is becoming "hostile" in response to Chinese export control over rare earth minerals. In a lengthy post, he mentioned that he now may not be meeting with President Xi later this month in South Korea and "one of the policies that we are calculating at this moment is a massive increase of tariffs on Chinese products." Late in the day, after the close, President Trump announced a new 100% tariff on Chinese goods starting November 1, as well as imposing export controls on any critical software. [Nov 25 Soybeans](#) closed at \$10.06¾, down 15½¢, [Nearby Cash](#) was \$9.31, down 15¾¢.

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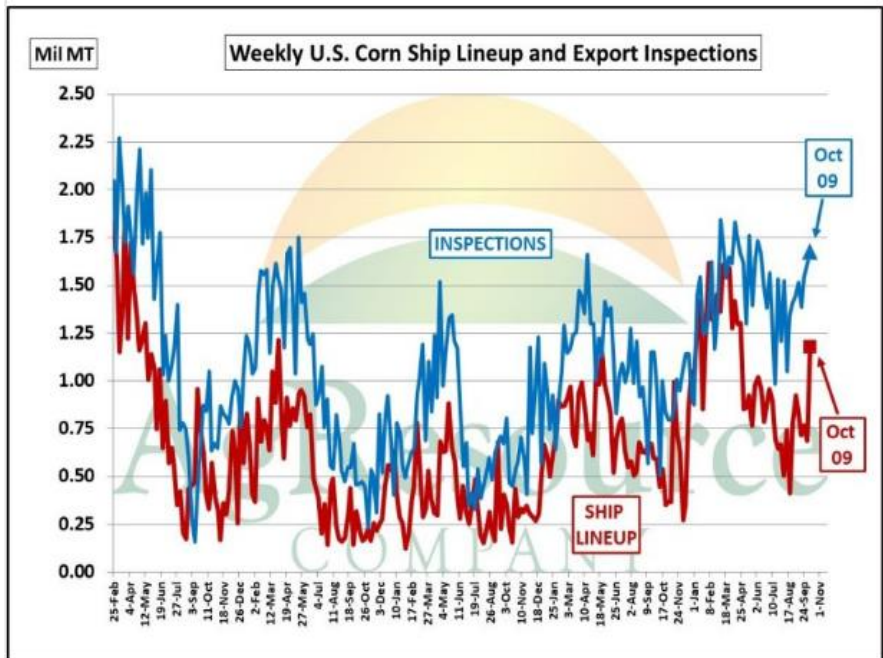


- ✓ **Corn drivers:** The corn market was under pressure in sympathy with the beans and other some outside pressure on Friday. Contracts closed down 4 to 5¼¢ cents, with December 6¢ lower this week. The CmdtyView national average [Cash Corn](#) price was down a nickel at \$3.71¾. The average close for December futures so far this month has been \$4.19. The whole month average price is used to determine the harvest price for crop insurance. Spillover pressure was noted from sharp losses in soybean futures following a President Trump post and threats to increase tariffs, which proceeded to be announced starting on November 2 following the close. Outside pressure from \$3.31 losses in crude oil was also weighing on the market. Harvest should continue to roll over the next week with very little precipitation expected across a majority of the US. The Buenos Aires Grain Exchange estimates the Argentina corn crop at 26% planted. [Dec 25 Corn](#) closed at \$4.13, down 5¼¢, [Nearby Cash](#) was \$3.71¾, down 5¢.

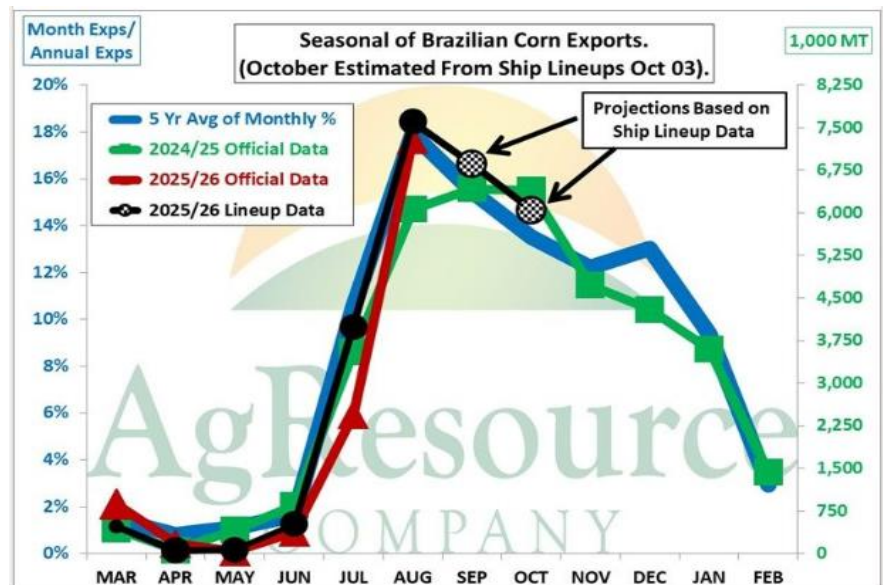
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- Corn keeps buying tickets for ocean cruises.** Chief economist Bill Tierney at AgResource tracks export inspections and ships waiting to load US corn for global shipment. "This week's ship lineup is 46 mil. bu. That is up 71% from the previous week and the highest it's been in 6 months. A year ago, the lineup was 17.5 mil. bu. Next week's corn export inspections could be 66 mil. bu. That would be up 4.7% from the previous week. October exports tracked by the US Census Bureau could be 298 mil. bu. In the September WASDE, the USDA raised its projection of U.S. corn exports by 100 mil. bu. to a record 2.975 bil. bu. Last year's exports were estimated to be 2.830 bil. AgResource expects exports will be 2.750 bil."



- The US is not the only global corn supplier.** Even though healthy corn exports are departing US ports, other global suppliers are remaining competitive, says Bill Tierney, chief economist at Ag Resource. He says, "Last week, Brazil exported 56 mil. bu. of corn, while Argentina exported 16 mil. Shipments from Ukraine totaled 1.4 mil., and exports from the U.S. reached 63

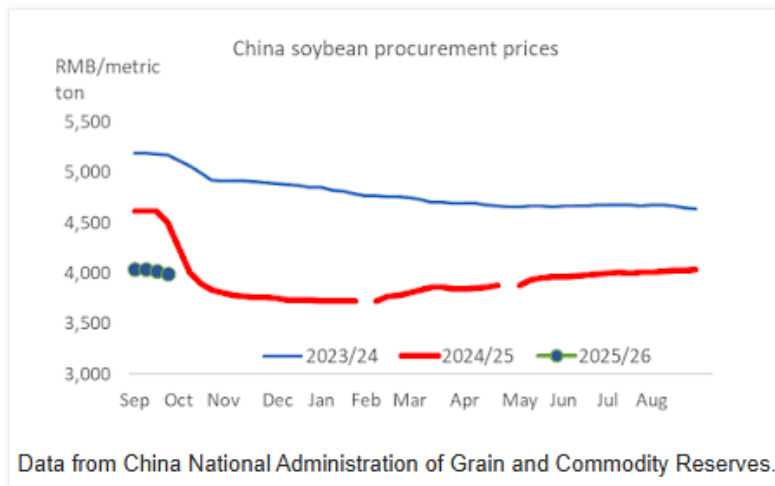


mil. bu. Brazil's corn commitments for the local marketing year (March-February) increased to 1 bil. bu., up 32 mil. bu. from the previous week. The ship lineup suggests that 225 to 265 mil. bu. may be exported in October. The USDA's September WASDE projection for Brazil's local marketing year (March 2025 - February 2026) remains unchanged at 1.7 bil. bu., while Ag Resource anticipates Brazil's final exports will be 1.57 bil. bu."

- **Total Farm Marketing's Naomi Blohm** [identified three market elements](#) that, by themselves or together, could signal a potential bull market: cash basis, the U.S. dollar and fund traders.
 - ✓ **Cash basis levels** across the Midwest are the first, and most important, element to watch. Preliminary corn and soybean yields across the Midwest are extremely mixed and variable, with many producers suggesting an overall theme of harvest yields "less than last year." Normally, cash basis levels tend to stay wide at harvest. With freshly harvested plentiful supplies coming to town, many grain processors or grain elevators do not need to "bid up" for inventory. But might that sentiment shift this fall? Some basis levels are said to already be improving. Why might that be? It could be due to a variety of reasons. It could be that in some areas of the country, the crop is smaller than normal and so end users may be trying to pull in as much grain as possible, while prices are low. Another theory is that with the government shut down, weekly export sales, or daily large export sales are not being broadcast, so potentially some global end users may be gobbling up cheap U.S. grain while they have the advantage of being on the "down low" for transparency. Or a final hypothesis might be that farmers are harvesting aggressively thanks to conducive harvesting weather, filling bins at home first, and might take the overage to town towards the end of harvest.
 - ✓ In January 2025, **the value of the U.S. Dollar Index** was trading near 110. Trending lower ever since, the U.S. dollar is now trading near 98. Some feel that the government shutdown may add downward pressure to the U.S. dollar because it increases the chance that the Federal Reserve may be compelled to cut interest rates. But a lower U.S. dollar can help keep U.S. ag exports more competitive (due to currency exchange rates). All you need to remember is that when the value of the U.S. dollar is down, currency exchange rates make it cheaper for other countries to import our commodities. A lower dollar has a tendency to increase demand for corn, soybean and wheat exports.
 - ✓ **Monitor the fund traders.** Who are "the funds"? They are traders who represent the big investment money that trades in commodities. Fund managers watch and monitor grain market fundamentals and technical chart aspects as they look for opportunities to invest and make money. When they are long (buyers) in the grain market, prices tend to trade higher, and underlying friendly fundamental components usually also support grain prices when they're long, too. When funds are short (sellers) in the market, it is often due to grain supply and demand fundamentals that are shifting to bearish. The good news is we can keep an eye on their actions. Every week, the government requires the funds to disclose the number of positions they bought or sold during the week. From there, we can track whether they are amassing a long or short position in the market.

- **Based on crop prices over the past 50 years,** is there any financial gain from storing grain? [IL Farmdoc Ag economists calculated the financial benefits](#) for both corn and soybeans. While stored grain has to be wisely marketed, the findings do not challenge the decision of building grain bins on the farm for a number of good reasons.
 - ✓ **Corn:** Price increased the most (3 percentage points) from November to December and from December to January. It declined on average after June. Largest decline was from August to September. US cash price was higher in roughly one-third of the years after June, specifically, 39%, 32%, and 32% of the years for July, August, and September, respectively.
 - ✓ **Soybeans:** Average cash price is highest in June. Largest average decline is from August to September. Soybean cash price did increase more consistently from its October low, specifically one to two percentage points per month through May and had a lower and less defined peak. Average soybean price for May, June, and July all rounded to 111% of the October low (corn's peak was 113% in June). US soybean's August and September cash price exceeded its July price in 32% and 28% of the years, respectively.
 - ✓ **Observations:**
 - Cash storage of corn and soybeans after June is generally not profitable as price declines on average and in a majority of years.
 - Net return to cash and futures hedged storage of corn and soybeans that ends no later than June does not differ statistically from \$0. On average, returns just cover the total cost of storage.
 - The preceding finding nevertheless is consistent with building on-farm storage since on-farm storage provides other opportunities to improve farm profitability. It allows faster harvest due to longer harvest days plus less travel and wait time in getting a crop stored. Faster harvest can reduce harvest loss due to inclement weather. On-farm storage also provides more flexibility for post-harvest marketing, such as the location of cash sales.
 - Although not statistically significant, net return to cash storage has been higher for US soybeans than corn. This is consistent with most other studies. The consistency should not be surprising because use has grown faster for soybeans than corn. As price increases to stimulate future production to satisfy increasing future demand, storage is more likely to be profitable.
 - A clear advantage of hedged storage over cash storage is a lower risk of net return variation, especially for longer storage periods. This finding is well documented in the literature and thus was expected.

- **There are a lot of bushels still in storage** as farmers harvest in 2025. Joe Janzen, an agricultural economist with the Univ. of IL, offered a couple of suggestions to farmers who still have grain to sell, "I think there are 2 things. I think that the 1 strategy that everyone is going to incorporate into their marketing activities is diversification across time. So, we're going to spread those sales out through time." Enough storage for the newly harvested commodities is a big concern as well, "The other part is to think about what your returns are to storage. If you do end up saying, 'Hey, I can't price a lot of grain in a market where I've got a weak basis,' with relatively low price levels, though we've kind of hung in pretty well, especially in the corn market. You know that new crop futures price could have a 3 in front of it, and it's got a 4 still, so let's take a step back and have some perspective on the situation. In that situation, thinking about what those returns to storage are? The market is offering a pretty reasonable carry. I don't know exactly where we're at today, and so, thinking about it, can I make some money storing grain if I have access to relatively low-cost on-farm storage? I think you're going to need to move some grain at all times of the year if you have a reasonably sized operation. That's part of that diversification across time story." (WILL radio)
- **The question is frequently asked** about China being able to avoid purchasing US soybeans, with total supplies from South American and Chinese farmers. The former will provide the bulk, but can the latter provide the balance? [Former USDA ag economist Fred Gale, a specialist on China's agriculture](#) says farmers there are not happy campers. "China's agriculture minister recently cited a boost in soybean output as an achievement during the



2021-25 5-year plan. Farmers' expansion of soybean plantings has been underwhelming despite subsidies of \$300 or more per acre. Production gains could be reversed by tumbling prices. Chinese soybean prices are down more than 25% from their 2022 peak and imports of soybeans are up to 3.86 bil. bu. annually. Meanwhile, production costs are higher than expected for a growing cadre of scaled-up

farming companies and cooperatives. Officials are counting on these scaled-up farms to consolidate fragmented plots, modernize farming and raise yields. But scaled-up farm operators complain that costs are bloated by rental payments paid to villagers to entice them to turn over their collectively owned land. These farms are also spending a lot on machinery and equipment which is subsidized but still requires considerable cash outlays. Sinking prices (chart) and rising costs make field crops unprofitable, prompting farmers to plant high-margin fruit trees, dig fishponds, build greenhouses, or quit farming altogether."

- **Where will the US farmer store unsold grain?** Grain storage and transportation logistics are expected to be more complicated than usual this harvest, with storage space extraordinarily tight and higher fees, according to a [new report from CoBank's Knowledge Exchange](#). The complications come at the same time as a bumper harvest of 21.5 billion bushels of corn, soybeans and grain sorghum and uncertainty surrounding the US trade relationship with China, noted the report. "The challenge for elevators will be prioritizing scarce grain storage," said Tanner Ehmke, grains and oilseeds economist with CoBank. "Among the top 12 corn-producing states, the US is facing a 1.4 bil. bu. shortage of upright grain storage this year with elevators relying more on bunkers and emergency storage like ground piles. This year's shortage stands in stark contrast to last year when those states had a combined 361 mil. bu. of excess storage." Export volumes of US corn and wheat have been exceptionally strong. Low prices, a weakening dollar and favorable transportation costs have bolstered the pace of exports. Outstanding corn sales are up 94% year over year and unshipped all-wheat sales are up 41%. Neither crop has been affected by the ongoing trade dispute between the United States and China. Conversely, soybean and grain sorghum export sales are lagging well behind prior years. Soybean sales are down 51% year over year while grain sorghum sales are starting the season down 58%. The weak shipping pace of soybeans and grain sorghum will allow more transportation and elevation capacity to be used to support corn and wheat shipments to the Pacific Northwest and the US Gulf, the report noted. "The slow pace of soybean and grain sorghum exports may benefit corn and wheat," Ehmke said. "Elevators struggling with tight storage may prioritize corn and wheat over soybeans and grain sorghum due to the more reliable export flows and lower risk associated with corn and wheat." Rail rate reductions are helping to spur demand for US commodities, specifically corn and wheat, to Mexico and the Gulf region. However, the lack of an export bid for soybeans at the PNW has caused rail companies to run a limited program to the region and focus on corn and wheat shipments. "The risk to the rail market would be a US and China trade resolution that results in a soybean export bid returning to the PNW and causing a sudden jump in rail freight rates," Ehmke said. Low water levels on the lower Mississippi River have led to restrictions on draft and tow sizes, elevating downbound barge rates. As of Sept. 23, the barge freight rate for shipping grain along the lower Mississippi was \$19.53 per ton, according to USDA-AMS. That's up 31% from 4 weeks prior but still 14% lower than the same time last year when extreme dryness restricted barge movement. However, below-average soybean shipments down the Mississippi may slow the rise in barge freight rates and allow for larger shipments of corn and wheat. To eliminate the risk and uncertainty associated with DP programs, some elevators have opted for cash-only programs with farmers. Others may offer minimum price contracts and extended price contracts to create alternative marketing programs for farmers. Fees on DP programs that are appropriately structured ahead of harvest may encourage farmers to sell. DP programs will need to be well-structured and limited to account for higher risk of carrying unpriced grain in a carry market."

- **"Grain price spreads are a significant indicator,"** says this week's [Brock Report](#). "One important indicator of price direction in the grain markets is the spread between futures contracts. Like basis, futures spreads are an important indicator of regional supply and demand and very important in planning a marketing program. The market, as we all know, has continued to decline and the corn spreads bottomed in August at the same time corn futures made a bottom. As we have said many times this year, storage of corn is going to pay big dividends. Why? In August, December futures were at a 36¢ discount to the July. That's not full carry but if one, particularly grain elevators, hedged the corn being purchased at harvest in the July futures, a good return to storage will materialize. What's most noteworthy now is what's happened in just the last 3 weeks. (The indication is the) demand for corn is increasing and yield (supply) estimates have peaked. There is strong technical evidence that this market has made a bottom. Now is not the time to be selling corn. Mississippi and Illinois river basis has improved from its lows near -40 just before harvest to -5 in several locations. Central IL is just the right latitude for where corn and soybean harvest overlap most. By that we mean, 75 miles north of there, soybeans are harvested almost entirely before corn. And 75 miles south, it's nearly exclusively all of the corn before any of the beans. However, Central IL is the epicenter of where farmers start with corn but usually have to switch to beans before corn is done. When that area switched from corn to beans en masse, while opting to store beans instead of harvest deliver, robust barge availability surpassed already high barge rates to dramatically rally basis at the most unseasonal time of year. The same effect, for several of the same reasons, played out in the corn futures spreads. When nearby demand increases (or supply decreases), it pressures the nearby contracts to rise more or fall less than later contracts. We should note here to exercise extreme caution when it comes to rolling futures contracts across production years. Chronologically for a given crop year, September is the first corn futures contract and July is the last. What demands caution is the increased volatility (stemming from much more unpredictable drivers) of old-crop-to-new-crop spreads, particularly the popular Jul/Dec spread. This past week the (soybean) market has broken through its resistance level and the spread has gone from -60¢ to -53¢. This is a sign that the soybean complex is making a bottom. The spreads are firming and now that harvest is wrapping up, basis will start to firm as well. Farmer selling of soybeans will now start to drop significantly. What producers did not have storage for on the farm has already been taken into grain elevators, most of which will be priced in the next 2 weeks. This indicator does not necessarily mean that soybean prices are going to skyrocket higher. It merely is a sign that prices are done going down and at least will start building a base. As we have been discussing for over a month, the August lows in both corn and soybeans should hold long term. The price pattern is very similar to last year when prices bottomed in August, set back in October, then rallied into February. This year will not be identical, but at this stage, we plan to sit back and watch until mid-December and then start making additional marketing plans for whether to sell the corn this year or next year. For many of you, that will depend on which year you need the income."

- **Marketing.** “The corn and bean markets were lower on the week, likely due to hedge pressure and the trade fiasco we’re in with China.” -- [Matt Bennett](#).
- ✓ **Corn—futures.** December '25 corn wasn't doing much until Friday when selling came in. On Friday, Dec settled at \$4.13, down 5¼¢. This was 6¼¢ off the high and ¾¢ off the low. Dec lost 6¢ for the week.
- ✓ **Corn—cash and basis.** Basis was mixed. At St. Louis terminals basis was 17¢ over Dec (7¢ improved) While it's not uncommon to see cash prices weak as we head through harvest, we are seeing some areas narrow the basis.
- ✓ **Corn—marketing strategy.** If it's going to cost us 40-50¢ to get out to next spring, I'd rather sell the corn, get my hands on some money and own corn with calls or call spreads for a third of what that storage cost might be. In this scenario, we may give up some basis appreciation, but I'm not sure basis will come close to taking care of what we'll invest in storage.
- ✓ **Corn—2026 crop.** December 2026 corn ended the week at \$4.53¼, down 8½¢. While I've felt Dec26 was too cheap due to the cost of putting this '26 crop in the ground, we're still seeing some weakness. We may be in a tough spot for '26 if bean prices continue to weaken. I know many growers are asking if we should lock in some corn above \$4.50, and it's a good idea if the grower can maintain some flex.
- ✓ **Beans—futures.** Beans also faltered heading into the weekend as traders were disappointed with the breakdown in US/Chinese relations. On Friday, November beans settled down 15½¢ at \$10.06¾. This was 18¢ off the high and 4¼¢ off the low. Beans lost 11¼¢ on the week. Oct meal settled \$3.30 lower on the week at \$267.40, while soy oil ended the week at 49.40¢ down .03¢.
- ✓ **Beans—cash and basis.** Basis was improving with St. Louis at 13¢ over the Nov (22¢ improved). Cash beans gained value in most places this week despite the move lower on the board.
- ✓ **Beans—marketing strategy.** For those harvesting beans now, if you can't store them at home, it's certainly tough to store them commercially. I like having some ownership with calls that are cheaper than storage, but I wouldn't necessarily feel like we must re-own all of them. For bushels in the bin at home, I'd be locking in the carry in the market.
- ✓ **Beans--2026 crop.** Nov 2026 beans settled at \$10.56¾, down 9¢ on the week. With this '26 bean market, it seems they're hanging in there a little better than cash beans. One thing is for certain, we don't want to see beans fall out of bed.
- ✓ **Price ratio—2026 crop.** 2.33/1, beans to corn, based on fall futures, +2¢/week.

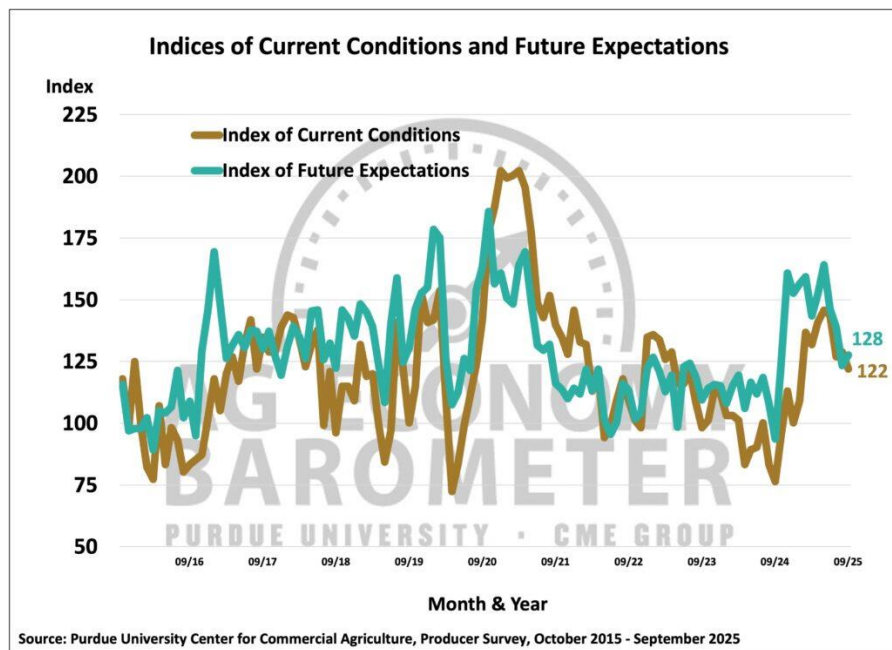
- **Market advisor thoughts/concerns:** [Matt Bennett](#). "With China slapping on more stringent export controls on rare-Earth metals, President Trump announced the proposed meeting with President Xi was off. He also announced 100% additional tariffs on China beginning on November 1st. The trade war is back on and most markets didn't like that news at all. With the government shutdown continuing, we missed out on the October USDA report as well as the other weekly reports they put out. Harvest is in full swing where producers aren't already finished. The amount of grain moving right now certainly puts some pressure on the markets as some corn is inevitably being sold across the scales. Given tightness of money for most of us and a big price tag to commercially store grain, cash sales are likely putting pressure on the market. While the trade issues with China aren't likely affecting the corn market as much as we'd think with beans, weakness for beans certainly spills over to corn. For instance, an acreage discussion must include how excited growers are to plant beans as well as corn. It's going to be quite interesting as we move through the winter. For now, I like having ownership of corn more-so down the road than I do today. It may take some patience to see a pop in this market, so locking in worst-case scenarios is what we'll likely be talking about for the next several weeks. We're at the mercy of what this corn market might do. It's tough to be bullish when looking at old-crop stocks, but I'm still of the opinion these cheap prices are keeping demand strong and this could provide support on down the road....This past week, the biggest news was of course the calling off of this meeting with Trump and Xi at the end of the month. Many of us were under the impression headway had been accomplished and these two sides were prepared to make a deal. Given that appears to be far from reality, the current absence of Chinese business continues. This keeps our export situation tenuous at best. While other customers in the world have bought beans and bean products, China is by far and away the lion's share of world bean export business. With the lack of a trade deal, we're likely looking at ending stocks closer to 400-500 mil. bu. instead of the 300-ish we've been working with for the last few months. This would certainly keep a lid on bean rallies, but this is all assuming Brazil's weather will be benign. IF we'd see issues with Brazil's weather in the next three months, it's certainly possible we could get beans to rally. Without either of these two big issues providing support, it's going to be a tough time to expect beans to rally. While we feel confident bean basis improves over the course of time, there's no way to know how the market might trade, so locking in for instance July beans up at \$10.65 would seem like a wise decision. If you want help in managing the risk of these beans going in the bin, be sure and reach out to one of us. We're here to help....If you need help with your marketing plan, let us know. I recommend using either the Profitability Calculator on the Channel website or the AgMarket.Net Profitability App. The AgMarket.Net® App, with revised MyFarm software, is now available on Google Play and the Apple App Store as a mobile app. A desktop version is available through the AgMarket.Net® website. Find it at <https://www.agmarket.app/app/> to get help on budgets and your marketing plan." [Click here to learn more.](#)



Farm Economy—

- **Farmer sentiments are weakening** which were measured late in September by ag economists with the [Purdue Ag Economy Barometer](#). “Producers’

perceptions of current conditions on their farms weakened as the Index of Current Conditions fell 7 points to 122. At the same time, farmers in September were a bit more optimistic about the future than in August, as the index of future expectations



rose 5 points to 128. Expectations for the future were buttressed by rising expectations that a program similar to 2019’s Market Facilitation Program (MFP) will provide payments to farmers in compensation for lower commodity prices.

- ✓ September marked the third month in a row that producers said they expect weaker financial performance in 2025 than a year ago. Consistent with their weak farm income expectations, fewer farmers this month said it is a good time to make major investments in their farm operations.
- ✓ Producers’ short-term outlook for farmland values weakened in September for the fourth consecutive month, which was attributable to fewer producers saying they expect values to rise and a larger proportion of farmers expecting farmland values to remain about the same.
- ✓ When asked specifically about whether they expect the increased use of tariffs to strengthen or weaken the U.S. agricultural economy, 51% said they expected tariffs to strengthen the agricultural economy in the long run. That’s down from 63% of June’s survey respondents and 70% of respondents in both the April and May surveys who said they expect the use of tariffs to have a long-run positive impact. 83% of respondents said they think that an MFP-style program is either likely or very likely if a trade war leads to lower prices for U.S. agricultural products.
- ✓ 53% of the farmers surveyed this month said they currently use cover crops on at least some of their acreage. That percentage has fluctuated between a low of 52% and a high of 57% over the last 5 years.

- **There are both smiles and frowns about the farm economy**, and [Purdue ag economists](#) have identified the farmers who are happy and angry. Given the large difference in prices received and projected net return prospects, it is not surprising to find a large difference in producer sentiment between crop and livestock producers in the Ag Economy Barometer survey. In addition to differences in producer sentiment, larger percentages of crop producers expected to have larger operating loans in 2026, listed unpaid operator debt from the prior year as a reason for those larger loans, and were

Table 1. Producer Sentiment by Farm Type

Variable	All Farms	Crop	Livestock
Ag Economy Barometer (AEB)	125	110	153
Index of Current Conditions (ICC)	129	101	179
Index of Future Expectations (IFE)	123	114	140
Farm Capital Investment Index	63	56	70
Financial Performance Index	91	47	114
Biggest Concern: Higher Input Costs	39.7%	40.4%	38.3%
U.S. Headed in the Right Direction	69.1%	64.2%	78.0%
Strong Balance Sheet (Agree; Strongly Agree)	67.1%	64.2%	72.3%
Larger Operator Loan in 2026	21.9%	23.5%	19.1%
Reason for Larger Loan: Unpaid Operating Debt	22.5%	27.6%	11.4%
Proxy for Financial Stress	4.9%	6.5%	2.2%
Number of Farms	401	260	141

Source: Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture, Ag Economy Barometer Survey, August 2025

financially stressed. The contrast in sentiment between crop and livestock producers reflects the broader realities playing out in the U.S. agricultural markets. Livestock producers, especially in the beef sector, are riding a wave of historically high prices and profitability – fueled by tight domestic supplies, a disease related prohibition on imports from Mexico, and import tariffs that have created favorable

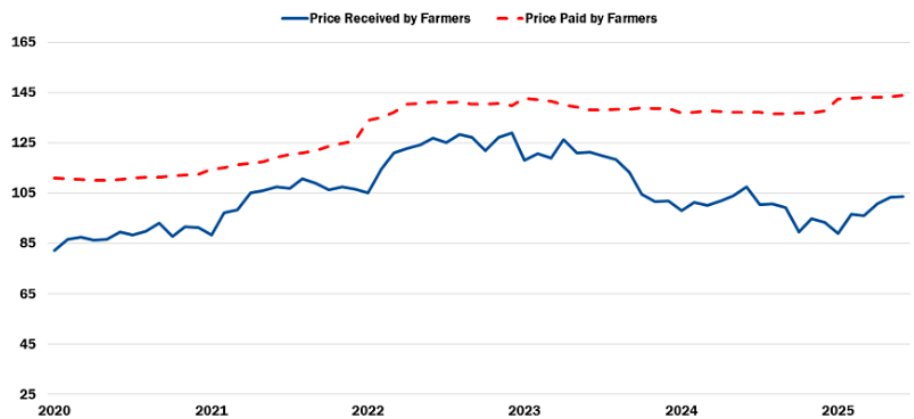
conditions for domestic producers. Meanwhile, the grain sector is under pressure from a combination of inflated because of production costs and crop price weakness.

- **The White House suggested that China could soon restart** purchases of American soybeans following an upcoming meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. However, [federal assistance for struggling farmers](#) remains stalled until the government reopens. Trump told reporters at the White House that he expects pressure on Beijing during their planned sit-down later this month will ease the freeze on U.S. soybean imports, the Associated Press reported. For weeks, the administration has been hinting at an aid package for farmers hurt by the collapse in exports, but Agriculture Secretary Rollins said no relief will be rolled out while the government remains shut. Farm communities, many of which backed Trump in the 2024 election, have been battered by shrinking markets and scaled-back safety-net programs during his second term. China, the world's top soybean importer, has largely replaced U.S. supplies with purchases from Brazil and Argentina, despite a trade truce between Washington and Beijing. Trump has argued that the halt is a negotiating tactic within broader trade disputes. Looking ahead to his meeting with Xi at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, Trump hinted he might consider restricting certain U.S. exports to China if progress stalls. He declined to specify which goods could be affected, saying only that "maybe we'll have to stop" some imports and exports, without elaboration. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick are reviewing the issue.

- As fall harvest season rolls on**, many farmers and ranchers are studying their balance sheets. [Economist Faith Parum of the American Farm Bureau](#), says the difficult ag economy is impacting row crop farmers particularly harshly, "So, our row crop farmers, but really, all of our farmers and producers, are being squeezed by falling prices and really high input costs. We've seen an increase in record-high production costs this year, and that's affecting row crop farmers, our specialty crop farmers, livestock producers, all across the board." Farmers and ranchers are having to devote more and more of their budgets to the cost of production, "Fertilizer is rising again. It's still not to those highs of 2022, but it's going up. Chemicals, fuel and energy. Interest is really becoming a larger and larger expense in farm budgets, as farmers continue to take out operating loans to make it to the next marketing year, due to all of the decreases in commodity prices. Labor is always increasing, as well as some machinery and repairs." Parum says the tough economy is impacting a variety of

PRICE INDEX FOR CROP PRODUCERS

Index where 2011 = 100 | 2020-2025

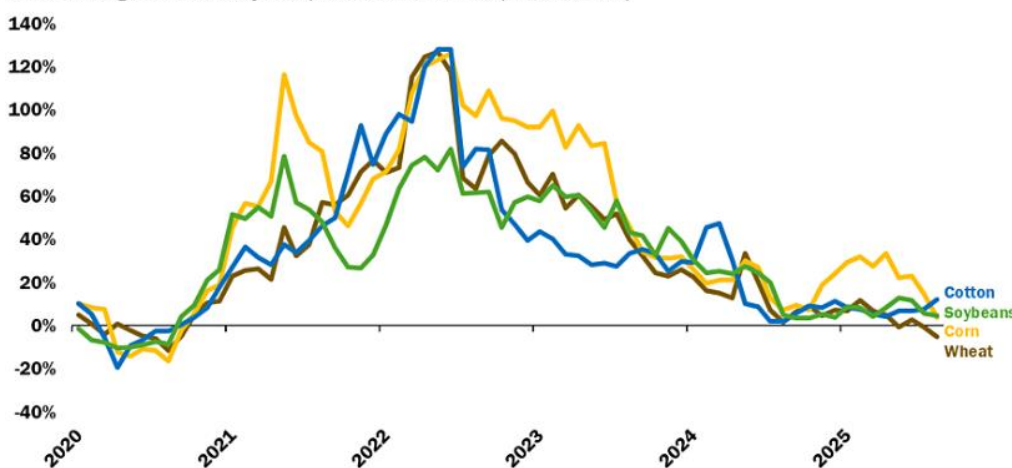


AFB American Farm Bureau Federation

Source: USDA NASS

CROP PRICES HAVE FALLEN SHARPLY SINCE 2022

Percent change in inflation-adjusted prices relative to 2020 (PPI, 2020=100)



AFB American Farm Bureau Federation

Source: BLS

crops, but each one has a different profitability scenario, "Cotton's our largest loss at over \$300 an acre, and so that's going to be pretty high and really hurt their operations. Peanuts are at

\$173 loss, corn at \$169 loss, soybeans at \$114 loss, and rice at \$154 loss. Sorghum and wheat are also operating at a loss, well over \$100. So, all of our row-crop producers are really struggling, and this isn't the first year they've operated at a loss."

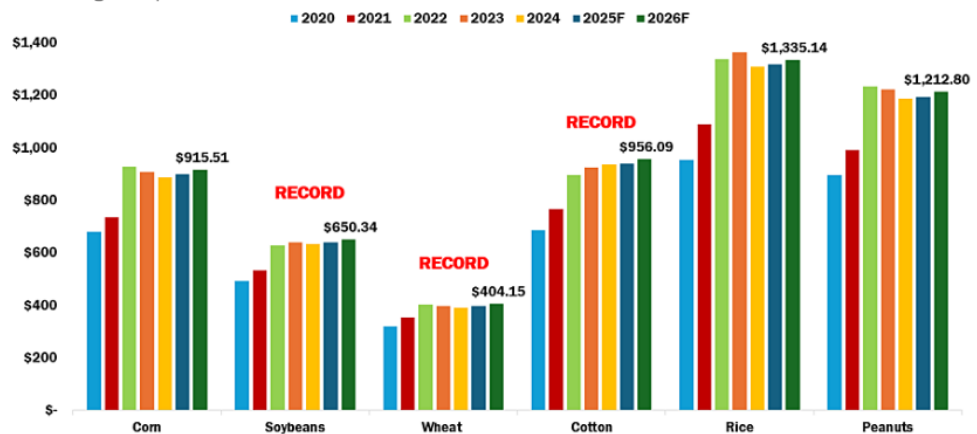
- **Production expenses in 2025** are [projected at record levels](#) of \$467 bil., nearly \$12 bil. higher than 2024 (up 2.6%), \$50 bil. above the previous 5-year average (12%) and \$85 bil. above the previous 10-year average (21%). USDA's Economic Research Service says, each major cost category tells the same story: inputs remain elevated, eroding profitability and making it harder for farmers to reinvest in their operations or build financial reserves.

- ✓ Seed is a critical part of farm production budgets, with U.S. farmers expected to spend \$27.2 bil. in 2025, about 6% of total expenses. Although USDA data show seed costs have remained relatively steady, they are not an expense farmers can easily reduce.
- ✓ Herbicide, fungicide and insecticide programs are also becoming more complex and expensive. Crop protection expenses are projected at \$20.6 bil., or 4% of total costs.
- ✓ Diesel fuel powers planting and harvesting, while propane is critical for drying grain. Fuel and oil are projected at \$15.8 bil. in 2025, about 3% of all costs.
- ✓ Machinery costs are increasing, leading many growers to extend the life of tractors and combines. The tradeoff is higher repair and maintenance bills. Inflation in parts and service has made routine upkeep more costly, pushing total maintenance expenses to \$22.2 bil., about 5% of costs in 2025.

- ✓ Fertilizer is one of the most significant drivers of cost. Although prices have retreated from the 2022 peak, they remain [well above pre-2021 levels](#). U.S. farmers compete with growers overseas

Cost of Production for Major Row Crops

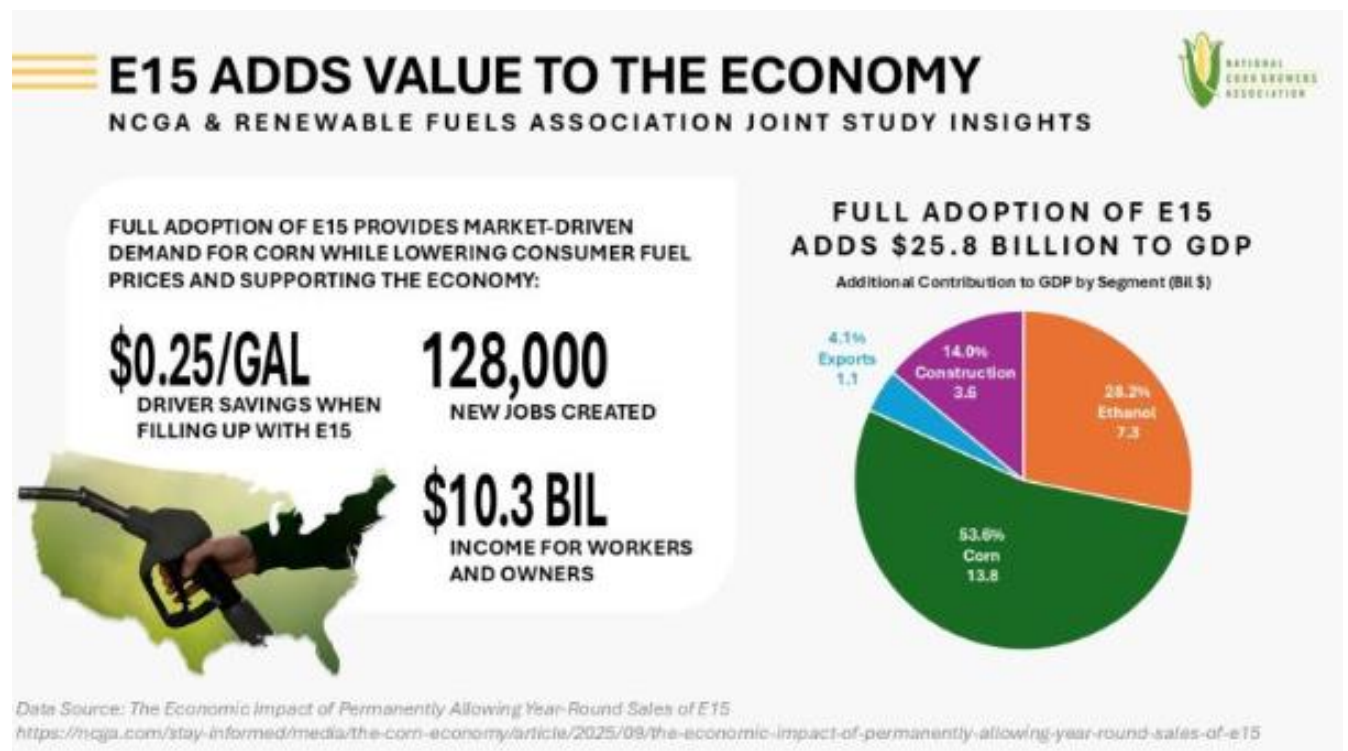
U.S. Average Cost per Acre



who need fertilizer for growing crops like coffee that are not widely grown domestically. Fertilizer is forecast at \$33.5 bil. in 2025, about 7% of all expenses.

- ✓ Cash rents and farmland values are at record highs, with rent projected at \$15.2 bil. in 2025, about 3% of total expenses, making it one of the largest fixed costs.
- ✓ Interest is raising the cost of short-term operating loans needed to cover seasonal input purchases, while also raising the cost of long-term investments in land or equipment. Interest payments are expected to reach \$33.1 bil. in 2025, roughly 7% of all costs.
- ✓ Labor remains essential during planting and harvest. [Skilled workers](#) are increasingly difficult to find and [wages](#) continue to rise in tight rural labor markets. Labor expenses are projected at \$53.7 bil., or 11% of total costs in 2025.

- **The U.S. ethanol industry** supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, contributes tens of billions of dollars to the U.S. economy, and provides opportunities in rural communities across the country, says Krista Swanson, chief economist for the National Corn Growers Assn.. Allowing consumers year-round access to E15 would magnify these benefits to the economy as a whole and expand markets for corn growers at a critical time. [National Corn Growers Association](#) and [Renewable Fuels Association](#) joined forces to [study the economic impact of permanently allowing year-round sales of E15](#). Here's what full implementation of E15 means for the economy:
 - ✓ \$25.8 Bil. to the U.S. GDP
 - ✓ 128,000 new jobs
 - ✓ \$10.3 Bil. in income for workers and owners



The U.S. ethanol industry supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, contributes tens of billions of dollars to the United States economy, and provides opportunities in rural communities across the country. Allowing consumers year-round access to E15, gasoline blended with up to 15% ethanol, would magnify these benefits to the economy as a whole, and notably would expand markets for corn growers at a time when conditions in the sector are challenging. Specifically, passage of the Nationwide Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act (S.593 & H.R.1346) would mean an additional \$25.8 bil to U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) in direct, indirect, and induced economic activity, more than 128,000 full time equivalent jobs, and \$10.3 bil. in income for workers and owners through the full implementation of E15,

Farm Finance and Lending—

- **Whether farms earn enough to repay their debt** affects the viability of the farms themselves and has spillover effects for lenders, agribusinesses and rural communities. The KS St. Univ. [Rural and Farm Finance Policy Analysis Center \(RaFF\)](#) developed an approach to estimate the share of agricultural production loans and farm real estate loans considered as risk for default. [The at-risk estimates account for farm debt](#) extended by commercial banks and Farm Credit institutions, which collectively hold nearly 80% of farm-sector debt.

Estimated share of agricultural production loans considered at-risk by state

(vertical axis presents share of total production loans)



Across states, annual at-risk rates generally averaged less than 1% during the past 2 decades — meaning less than 1% of state loan portfolios were past due, nonaccrual, restructured or charge-offs. In a few instances, these at-risk rates ticked up higher: 2009-10 and 2019 for ag production loans and 2009-11 and 2019-20 for loans secured by farmland. We found farm receipts have majorly contributed to at-risk rates for production loans (i.e., lower receipts lead to higher

Estimated share of loans secured by farmland considered at-risk by state

(vertical axis presents share of total loans secured by farmland)



at-risk rates). For loans secured by farmland, the current year's net farm income and previous

year's net farm income have been notable for shaping at-risk rates (i.e., lower income suggests higher at-risk rates). Note, these estimated at-risk rates account for loans held by a variety of farm operations. Depending on market conditions and other factors, at-risk rates may vary notably by farm type.

Report From the Farm—

- **IL Soybean Assn. leaders were prominent** in the national news this past week, telling the soybean story to the general public. [ISA board member Scott Gaffner](#), (left) who farms at Greenville, was interviewed on the CBS Evening News and reappeared the next morning on the CBS morning news. "Gaffner says farmers like himself, who overwhelmingly voted for President Trump, are caught in the crossfire. "We can't help but feel very anxious of wondering why it's taking so long to get this resolved,"



Gaffner said. Asked whether he's angry, Gaffner responded, "Well, whenever you see the administration meet in Spain and they talk about TikTok instead of farming, when we're getting ready to harvest, our clock is tick-tocking away. And the farther we go into this season, the more we're going to lose. And China should have been buying our beans already and they're not. It's like crickets." →

- **"We'll see the bottom drop out if we don't get a deal with China soon,"** said [former IL Soy Assn. Chairman Ron Kindred](#), (right) who farms 1,700 acres of corn and soybeans in central IL. He told the Wall Street Journal, "There doesn't seem to be any urgency on China's side, and more urgency coming from the farm community in the U.S." Rising costs for equipment and fertilizer, and a glut of corn and soybeans, were already squeezing farmers' balance sheets. Congress in December passed a \$10 bil. bailout for farmers. The Trump administration is considering allocating \$10 bil. to \$14 bil. more to farmers to help mitigate fallout from this year's trade battles, The Wall Street Journal has reported. Looking for ways to reduce U.S. farmers' dependence on China, Kindred traveled to Vietnam and the Philippines to try to convince cattle ranchers to buy more American soybeans. "We can't replace that market overnight," he said. "But we've had some successes in recent years." The 2 largest buyers of U.S. soybeans after China, the European Union and Mexico, account for approximately \$5 bil. in combined annual sales. Countries such as Vietnam, Egypt, and Bangladesh have increased their purchases of U.S. soybeans in recent years, but it's not enough. The recent economic downturn in agriculture is so dire that some are already deciding to quit. Dean Buchholz, a corn and soybean farmer in DeKalb County, IL, said his fertilizer costs have increased 20% to 30% compared to last year. Due to rising costs, low crop prices, and health concerns, this will be his last year of farming, he said. He plans to lease his land next year. "I always thought I'd farm until I died," Buchholz said. "I can't seem to make it work in a way that's practical without spending a fortune and going into even more debt."



Farm Bailout(s)—

- **The Trump administration** is preparing to roll out a new multibillion-dollar aid package for U.S. farmers, drawing from \$13 bil. quietly transferred from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to the Office of Agriculture Secretary as trade tensions with China escalate. The Office of Management and Budget approved the move on Sept. 28, reviving a key funding mechanism used during the president's first term to deliver tariff relief to producers impacted by retaliatory trade measures. The move comes as more than 200 national and state agricultural organizations sent a letter to President Trump urging immediate assistance for farmers facing what they described as "enormously challenging market conditions." The groups noted that while the summer's budget reconciliation bill included "significant" updates to commodity programs, producers will not see resulting payments until October 2026. The coalition encouraged the administration to keep pushing for new export opportunities. The administration's aid announcement results from steep declines in U.S. agricultural exports to China. Beijing has drastically reduced purchases of American soybeans, buying \$2.5 bil. less through July compared to last year, and sorghum exports have plummeted 97%. Treasury Secretary Bessent described the forthcoming assistance as "substantial," calling China's actions "a deliberate act of economic retaliation." Economists project that growers of major row crops could lose as much as \$45 bil. this year before any federal aid is applied. Many producers say they welcome the support but acknowledge it will only offer temporary relief. (IL Fertilizer and Chemical Assn.) →
- **The timeline has been further delayed** because some USDA political appointees have been furloughed during the shutdown. Officials have been weighing [using tariff revenue](#), USDA's [Commodity Credit Corporation fund and other alternative methods](#) to alleviate farmers' financial stress. The administration was expected to announce some form of support for farmers, but that was put on pause due to ongoing shutdown negotiations. Still, some of the people familiar expect that Trump could go rogue and announce next steps on bailouts this week. →
- **The USDA won't move forward on financial assistance** for producers until the government shutdown ends. Successful Farming said that comes directly from Ag Secretary Brooke Rollins. On September 28, the administration transferred \$13 bil. from the Commodity Credit Corporation account to fund the aid package. However, it hasn't announced the terms or the exact size of the package. Rollins said the government needs to be reopened so they can move forward with the assistance. "Once we do that, we'll be able to move out a significant program to help our farmers," Rollins said. The Secretary and President Trump blamed the farm economy on former President Joe Biden, although it has deteriorated rapidly in the past 9 months. Trump recently told reporters that he would address China's lack of soybean purchases when he meets China's President Xi Jinping later this month during a meeting of regional leaders in South Korea but has more recently questioned the need to negotiate with China over tariffs. →

- The details of any bailout are top secret** with USDA, just like its restructuring plan. Details are scarce, decisions aren't final, and the shutdown is slowing a farm aid package the White House is trying to assemble. The White House was putting together the farm aid package that President Trump said October 6th he'd talk about last week. Then the shutdown and furlough of USDA political appointees eliminated any announcement, leaving the timing uncertain. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-IA, said "All we hear from the administration is on \$10 to \$14 bil. so, the final figure hasn't even been agreed upon. And then, there's only \$4 bil. in the CCC." (The same fund that the USDA used during President Trump's first-term trade war with China.) Grassley says he spoke with cabinet officials on how to make up the difference, "And they said there would have to be 2 distributions of funds. Some of it is coming from money available right now, and then the fund would have to be supplemented by the Congress." Also giving lawmakers a chance to boost farm income with authorization of nationwide year-round E15 legislation, "This would generate \$25 bil. in new economic activity, and roughly \$10 bil. of that is directly from increased corn demand. Another thing Congress can do is increase transparency in input markets, and my Fertilizer Research Act would help do that." But Grassley agreed the White House should move faster to stem another farm crisis. That, after it announced an emergency move to use tariff revenue to keep the WIC nutrition program alive during the shutdown. (Berns Bureau)
- Although the Trump Administration is holding farmers at bay**, it has used \$20 bil. to purchase an unannounced quantity of *pesos* to bolster the economy of Argentina, to help the Argentine president. As soybean farmers fight a frustrating battle with South America being China's preferred supplier, [the US treasury has bailed out Argentina's economy](#) by purchasing \$20 bil. worth of near-worthless *pesos*. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent did not specify how many pesos the US had purchased. "The US Treasury is prepared, immediately,



to take whatever exceptional measures are warranted to provide stability to markets," Bessent wrote. The \$20 bil. lifeline framework Bessent announced is known as a "currency swap," which gives Argentina's central bank the ability to exchange pesos for US dollars with the Treasury. Doing so can help stabilize its financial markets by injecting more liquidity. The Argentine *peso* has significantly devalued against other currencies since President Javier Milei, a close ally of President Donald Trump, (left) suffered major defeats in local elections, raising doubts that he'll hold on to his legislative

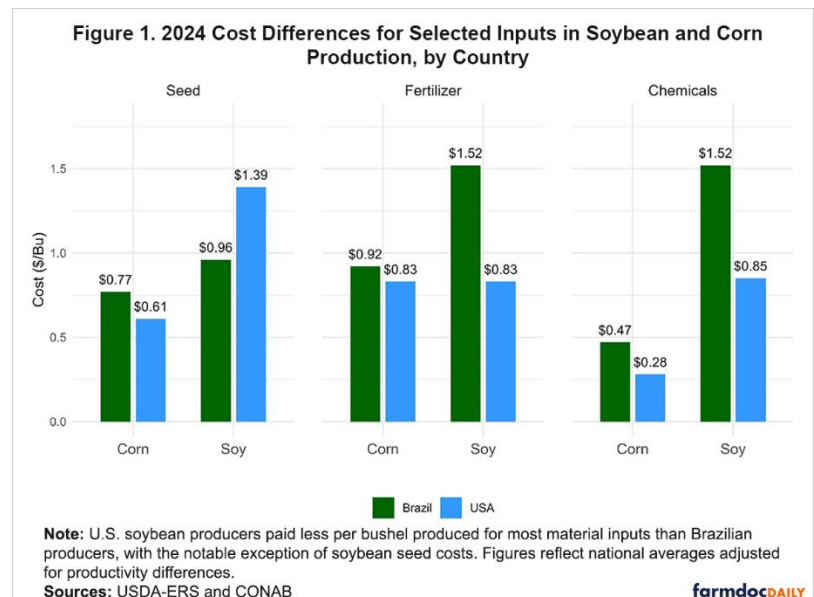
majority in midterm elections later this month.

- **Democrats responded to an announcement** from Ag Secretary Rollins that emergency assistance for farmers won't happen until the government shutdown ends. The Democratic National Committee said U.S. agricultural exports are expected to decline in 2025 and 2026, specifically due to President Trump's "reckless trade war." The Committee did say Rollins got one thing right by saying the "farm economy is in a very uncertain time." Communications Director Rosemary Boeglin said, "The administration says it supports U.S. farmers, but Trump's tariffs have destroyed trade relationships, increased fertilizer and equipment costs, and tanked our rural economy." She also said Trump's rumored bailout of farmers won't solve the problems that he has created. "Farmers do not want handouts," she added. "They want to be able to sell their crops, something Trump's tariffs have made impossible, putting family farms on the brink of bankruptcy while he bails out other countries like Argentina."
- **The director of government relations** with the IL Soybean Association says the organization is concerned that a prolonged government shutdown will make this year even more difficult for producers. [Andrew Larson says](#), "Not having your local FSA office, or local NRCS folks, be able to go into work and do their jobs and help farmers and provide that assistance is a real challenge, because that work gets backlogged and there's less service available for farmers." He says it comes at a time of the year when many farmers are trying to secure Farm Service Agency operating loans. "You have everybody right now, with the financial situation in agriculture, taking an even closer look at what next year is going to look like." He says, "You want to make sure that you have all the tools and information and that you're ready to take advantage of what makes sense for your operation. So, it's another layer and challenge that we're facing in agriculture. 2025 has been a hard year." Larson says a slowdown of data from the USDA and any delays in ongoing trade negotiations caused by the shutdown would also be detrimental for soybean farmers already suffering reduced export demand."
- **In a recent letter to the White House**, a [group of 14 U.S. Senators](#) warned that soybean producers and the broader farm economy are under increasing pressure from both domestic tariffs and foreign competition, as well as concerns about a \$20 billion bailout to Argentina. Lawmakers expressed concern that the Administration's plan to extend \$20 billion in financial assistance to Argentina would exacerbate the competitive disadvantage for U.S. farmers. Producers argue that short-term aid packages at home cannot offset the long-term damage caused by tariff uncertainty and lost export markets. Farmers emphasize that their priority is not temporary relief but fair-trade agreements that restore access to global buyers. With harvest underway, U.S. producers are looking for stability in both policy and markets. The letter underscored that continued tariff policies and foreign subsidies risk deepening the challenges already weighing heavily on rural communities. For many farm families, the call is clear: what is needed is not another aid program, but a stable and reliable framework that supports American competitiveness in the global agricultural economy. Both Sens. Durbin and Duckworth of IL were signatories on the letter.

The Business of Farming—

- **USDA's Chief Economist, Dr. Seth Meyer**, weighed in on an issue bothering many farmers, and [outlined his thoughts for the Univ. of IL Farmdoc readers](#). "U.S. and Brazilian farmers compete directly in global markets for feed, food, fiber, and fuel. Collectively, they supply approximately 58% of the world's corn and 84% of its soybeans ([Trade Data Monitor, 2025](#)). Current discussions on tight producer margins in the United States are putting a strong focus on input costs and use, and the competitiveness of U.S. farmers in a global marketplace. Recent analyses from *farmdoc* and USDA have highlighted cost

competitiveness of U.S. and Brazilian farmers in soybeans and corn. A closer look at cost data, as reported by both governments, however, suggest important cost asymmetries for key material inputs. After controlling for productivity differences, we find that in 2024 U.S. soybean and corn farmers paid less for material inputs than farmers in Brazil, with one important exception: soybean seeds. (left side of graph) In 2024, U.S. farmers, on average



and on a per bu. basis, paid less for fertilizers and chemicals for both soybeans and corn than farmers in Brazil. U.S. farmers paid 10% and 45% less per bu. for corn and soybean fertilizers, respectively, than their Brazilian counterparts, and 40-45% less for pesticides. Brazilian soybean producers pay approximately 1/3 less in seed costs per bu. than U.S. farmers. Brazil's cost advantage for seed does not apply as generally to corn. U.S. corn producers pay roughly 21% less per bu. in corn seed costs than their Brazilian counterparts. Producers in both the U.S. and Brazil have access to high-performing seed genetics for corn and soybeans. Several factors may contribute to Brazil's advantage in soybean seed costs. Large-scale farms in Brazil, for example, may create economies of scale in seed purchases. This advantage may be reflected in CONAB's regional cost estimates for corn seed, where reported costs per bu. are lowest in Mato Grosso, home to Brazil's largest soybean and corn farms. However, in 2024 nearly all Brazilian reporting regions, including in regions where farms are smaller (e.g. in Brazil's southern states) report per-bu. soybean seed costs lower than costs for U.S. farmers. Input-level discrepancies underscore the comparative advantage U.S. farms maintain in fertilizer and chemical costs, particularly for soybeans. However, the seed cost disadvantage in 2024 for U.S. soybean producers warrants closer scrutiny. Understanding the drivers behind this gap, be they differences in government policy or commercial strategy, and identifying opportunities to reduce it, will be critical for maintaining U.S. competitiveness in global soybean markets."

- **In recent years, farms carrying the highest debt loads** have seen their debt servicing costs accelerate at a faster clip relative to grain farms with lower debt burdens, say [Farm Business Farm Management financial analysts](#), who are advising farmers to look deeper at “economic costs” of their farming operation. “Unlike financial costs—which only include cash outlays—economic costs also capture what farmers forgo by using their own resources in the farm business (e.g., owned land, equity capital, and unpaid labor). As a result, economic costs are typically higher than what you would see on an income statement. The analysts classify each grain farm in our sample as having a debt-to-asset ratio that is either *strong* (< 30%), *cautionary* (30-60%), or *vulnerable* (> 60%) over the 2022-2024 period^[1]. We then calculate median per-acre values across 6 economic cost categories:

- ✓ (1) **Crop costs** – fertilizer, seed, and pesticides.
- ✓ (2) **Power costs** – utilities, machinery repairs, machine hire, fuel, machinery depreciation, and light vehicles.
- ✓ (3) **Building costs** – drying, storage, building repair, and building depreciation.
- ✓ (4) **Labor costs** – paid and unpaid labor.
- ✓ (5) **Overhead costs** – veterinary and livestock expenses, insurance, miscellaneous expenses, non-land interest, and general overhead; and
- ✓ (6) **Land costs** – land interest, taxes, cash rent, and share-rent leasing costs.

But there is an interesting twist because farms in the “strong” category reflected several financial issues that were not present in the farms that had financial vulnerability. Grain farms in 2024 with a *strong* debt-to-asset ratio (< 30%) had the highest median total economic costs at \$1,117 per acre. These farms likely have higher economic costs since they own more assets, leading to greater interest charges for land and non-land items. In contrast, farms in the *cautionary* category (30-60%) had the lowest total costs at \$1,097 per acre, while *vulnerable* farms (> 60%) were slightly higher at \$1,115 per acre. A breakdown of expenses reveals that *strong* farms also had the highest labor (\$69/acre) and overhead costs (\$177/acre). Conversely, vulnerable farms reported the highest crop costs at \$371 per acre and the highest land costs at \$292 per acre, which include an economic charge for owned land and rental costs. In summary, although farms in the *vulnerable* group did not have the highest total economic costs in 2024, they did have the highest *crop* and *land* costs. To improve their financial position, *vulnerable* farms should analyze these specific expenses to find potential savings, such as changing crop rotations, capturing early purchase discounts, or letting go of high-cost land (rental or ownership).

- **Today's chaotic economic landscape** reminds me of Mike Tyson's memorable



observation, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face," says farm financial consultant and popular speaker [David Kohl](#). (left) Regardless of your place in the economic cycle, preparing a financial house to weather the punches is critical among trade disputes, tariff shifts, breaking headlines, unpredictable weather, currency fluctuations, and more. In the current environment, grain is struggling while livestock, especially beef and diversified farms, are financially strong. Securing success in this split economy requires essential financial disciplines.

- ✓ **Disciplined Cash Flow.** Cash flow planning is one of the most important litmus tests for mastering finances as cash flow projections are 80 percent of any solid business plan. Plan for production, costs, interest rate changes, debt service, family living withdrawals, income taxes, and capital expenditures. Develop a monthly or quarterly cash flow even if revenue streams are only annual. Support cash flow projections with an operational plan for production, marketing, purchasing, and debt management throughout the year.
- ✓ **But What Ifs.** Naysayers may argue that what is on paper does not work in reality. Decades ago, one of my favorite Cornell professors, George Conneman, taught us to develop assumptions of possible outcomes called "but what ifs," commonly known as financial sensitivity testing. The best, worst, and average cases can be outlined using trend analysis for financial forecasting. Our goal in developing financial sensitivity tests is to be within 5% of estimated parameters at each end of the spectrum, noting that growth or abrupt changes widen the outcomes. The key is not achieving perfection or getting to home base, but the moves you make along the way. Financial sensitivity in the cash flow analysis allows you to call an audible, or a change in play, like famous quarterback Peyton Manning did as he would survey the field and yell out "Omaha."
- ✓ **Omaha.** For a grain operation's marketing and risk management plan, a win may be to break even or minimize losses. However, for a livestock operation, and beef cattle especially in today's red-hot market, a win may be a profit plan that utilizes profits for efficiency, builds reserves for financial liquidity, and avoids excessive debt. Cash flow discipline should extend beyond the business into a personal and family budget. The complexity of multiple generations living off the business or the use of off-farm income must be incorporated into the household management equation.
- ✓ **Financial Liquidity.** Another part of the financial one-two punch is disciplined financial liquidity. In prosperous economic cycles and a chaotic world, building working capital is a requirement. Determine what constitutes true working capital, the time it takes to convert inventory or receivables into cash flow, and account for prepaid expenses and cash conversion timing. Offset current assets with current liabilities over 3, 6, and 12-month periods. Marketing and risk management plans must be grounded in financial liquidity and discipline to execute and monitor objectively, not emotionally. →

- ✓ **Comprehensive Protection Plans.** These plans should include inventory or crops growing in the field, crop insurance protection levels, and marketing opportunities along with a tax management plan. Avoid spending \$1 to save 20¢ on taxes, only to be saddled with debt service for the next 5 years that drains your working capital.
- ✓ **Reality on Paper.** Refinancing operating debt may be necessary for some operations to replenish working capital for 2026 expenses. The key is meshing your cash flow statement with financial liquidity. When generating losses, which is natural for agricultural businesses during some parts of the cycle, determine the time it will take to burn through these refinanced reserves. Apply similar calculations when cash supports other business or personal needs. In this equity-rich, cash-flow-stressed era, determine how many months or years you can survive. Financial liquidity is not just about having money but knowing exactly how long that money will last.
- ✓ **Navigating Challenges & Opportunities.** Whether managing a household or a business, building a foundation requires financial discipline to execute and monitor effectively. This financial one-two punch with cash flow discipline and financial liquidity positions you to navigate challenges and opportunities with balance when it's time to call your own "Omaha" in business and life.
- **Farmers interested in premium prices for specialty soybeans,** will benefit from participation in the [Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance \(SSGA\)](#), which is a leading voice of identity-preserved (IP) agriculture in the U.S. IP soybeans are often food-grade, non-GMO soybeans that exceed the USDA's No. 1 grade quality standards. They feature either specific



varieties or have special traits – such as a higher protein or sugar content, or a certain color or size – and a specific end use, such as natto (a Japanese dish made from fermented soybeans), tofu, miso and soymilk, to name a few, says Bryan Severs, (left) new chairman of the IL Soybean Assn, and also chairman of the SSGA. The Vermilion Co. farmer first

joined the SSGA board in 2024 after hosting a group of foreign buyers at his farm during SSGA's Fork to Farm Day. "This program streamlines the process for obtaining phytosanitary certificates, making it easier for specialty soy exporters to get containers turned around more quickly," Severs said. "It reduces costs for our exporting members and, in turn, helps maintain a strong market for specialty soy growers to earn a premium." Farmers interested in growing specialty soybeans can start by visiting the SSGA website's members page (soyagrainsalliance.org/ssga-members) and finding a processor-exporter in their region. More than 90% of food-grade soybeans are pre-contracted, with companies typically signing up farmers between September and December.

Land Prices and Farmland Issues—

- **Farmers still negotiating 2026 farm leases** with land owners may find help from [IL Farmdoc ag economists](#) who have updated county cash rents, which would allow 2026 rent revisions, given the farm's Productivity Index (PI) and location, where the agricultural reporting district represents the location. [The information you need is here](#). Average county rents follow average productivity, with many central and northern IL counties having average cash rents above the statewide average, while average rents are lower than the statewide average in most southern IL counties. Productivity indexes (PIs) published in Bulletin 811, entitled [Optimal Crop Productivity Ratings for IL Soils](#), are often used to quantify the yield potential of IL soils. This publication gives PIs for different soil types. Higher PIs are typically associated with higher yields of corn and soybeans. Two sets of variables were used to explain the variability in 2025 cash rents. The first is average county PIs. County PIs are the average for a county of the above map. As expected, average county cash rents are highly related to average county PIs. The second set of variables are related to location, as represented by Agricultural Districts (ADs). ADs are specified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and contain counties of roughly similar agricultural characteristics. The 10 ADs are included to capture any difference in rent caused by geographical area. A host of factors could cause rents to vary by region. Weather varies from northern to southern IL, with the northern region experiencing more stable and less variable crop production conditions. Competitive pressures among farmers for rented land may vary across IL. Locations and the number of grain outlets and input suppliers could also influence profits and thus the cash rent that is paid.
- ✓ The desires of the landowner also play a role in determining the cash rent level. Those landowners who place no land use restrictions on the farmer and have fewer concerns about the long-term sustainability of the farmland can expect to receive a higher cash rent. Landowners who desire conservation practices can expect lower cash rents.
- ✓ Cash rents are also influenced by the services offered by the farmer. Some farmers provide a great deal of maintenance to the property, including upkeep of waterways and other conservation structures. Additional services may lower the cash rent.
- ✓ Finally, some landowners are greatly concerned that farmers generate a sufficient income from the property, with a "sufficient" income being somewhat ambiguous. Other landowners are not concerned with the level of return going to the farmer. Those landowners not concerned about the farmer return often receive higher cash rents than those that do care about the farmer return.

Table 1. Example Data for Calculating a Farm's Average Productivity Index

Soil type name	IL Map Symbol	Acres	PI
Ipava silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	43	30	142
Virden silty clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	50	50	135
Average			138

farmdocDAILY

Risk Management—

- **If you are planting wheat, for double-cropping or not,** crop insurance may be one of your risk management tools, and the deadline for planting is “nigh.” The last dates to plant with full coverage (see county-specific dates on map below), range from Oct. 20 to Nov. 5. And if you are planting wheat, you will want to vote in the Oct. 30 election to select directors for the new IL Wheat Development Board. With the passage of the recent referendum, a check-off will be collected to wheat research and promotion. Details on the balloting are in the “Farm Organization” section of this newsletter or [here](#).



- **As if southern US farmers were not getting enough funding** from their USDA ARC and PLC programs, a TX Congressman has introduced legislation to provide added Crop Insurance payments to cotton farmers. The Dallas Express reports that the bill directs the USDA’s Federal Crop Insurance Corporation to create new insurance policies that would give cotton farmers more incentives to harvest after early-season crop losses. Republican leaders say the measure would help keep cotton moving through the supply chain — protecting not just farmers but also gins, warehouses, small businesses, and co-ops that rely on steady production. “We must ensure that both our cotton farmers and supply chain have the support they need to remain viable for future generations.”

Fertilizer, Fuel, and Other Inputs—

- **The latest on fertilizer supply and price trends**, given the potential for sanctions on Russian fertilizer comes from Josh Linville of StoneX.
 - ✓ **UAN:** Focus of the domestic and global UAN market needs to remain on how the U.S. proceeds with sanction threats on Russia. Russia accounts for about half of the U.S. imports. If Russia loses access to the U.S., it will likely need to lower their production/export rate due to lack of destinations. That would further tighten the global UAN S&D which would support price ideas. Fortunately, talk has died down, but it remains the biggest fear. Even if Russian tons continue to flow, the N.A. UAN market is still going to struggle. Globally, supplies continue to suffer. This means that UAN has continued to maintain a very high premium vs other nitrogen forms. This is expected. With the UAN S&D as tight as it is, it is trying to push demand elsewhere to rebalance its S&D. Fortunately, it is starting much earlier in the cycle, which means more time to prepare.
 - ✓ **Urea:** What will China do with their exports past October 15? Today, the expectation is that exports will shut down after the 15th. That has been the government's guidance. If they hold to the October 15 date, it should present some stability/strength to the global market (less tons/less competition). However, domestic prices are heard low and stockpiles/production rates high. This could sway the government to extend the export window. This would allow more tons to arrive globally and create more competition (more bearish). India announced what should be their last urea purchase tender of 2025 last week. Targeting 2 mil. tons once again (would put their 2025 total to just shy of 9.5 mil. tons). Offers are due this week. Domestic urea values in relation to grain prices have improved significantly but are still on the high side.
 - ✓ **Phosphates:** Global/NOLA values have backed off of their high's but still remain very high and unaffordable. The global market continues to suffer from a lack of Chinese exports. Now, today exports are flowing from China due to government allowance. However, the expected cutoff date is October 15. If their flows are allowed to continue through the end of the year, it will help add more bearishness. If their flows are stopped, then it will be another reason for global prices to hold and possibly push higher again. U.S. supplies continue to suffer from multiple blockades on the world's largest exporters. The domestic market continues to forecast widespread demand destruction, but our fear is it will not be as much as folks think. Still, phosphate values remain extremely high priced in the face of the current grain values. →

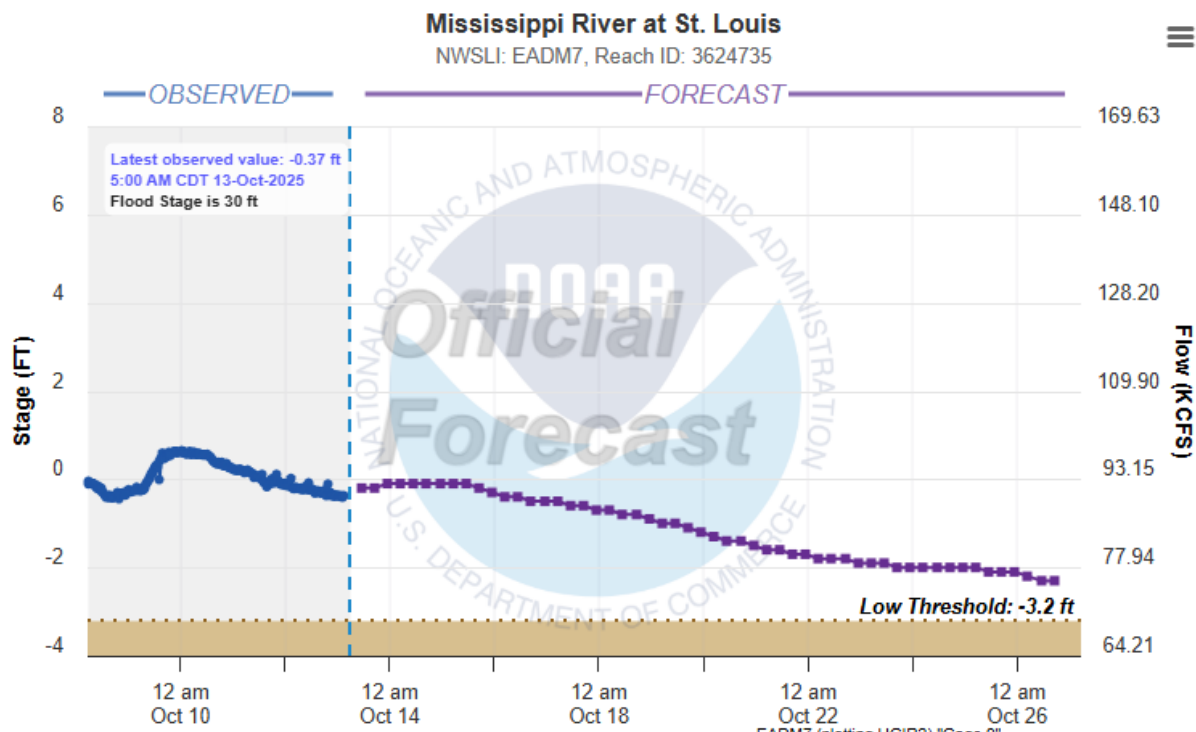
- ✓ **NH3:** Already hearing reports of fall demand/buying being bigger than normal and some saying available supplies left to sell for the fall are getting very tight. Farmers are obviously struggling with tight economics this year. This should push farmers to the cheapest route forward which has been NH3 on a price per pound of actual N. We are also expecting another high nitrogen demand fertilizer year given our 2026 crop mix outlook. This all comes together to point toward an expected large fall application (mother nature dependent). Internationally, values continue to rise on tight supplies. Russian exports remain a shell of their former selves due to the Ukraine invasion. All of this comes together to keep global supplies tight, and prices supported.
- ✓ **Potash:** Still not much to report here as values remain very flat. Fall demand expectations are all over the place. It could be higher due to large yields. It could be higher if farmers reduce phosphate spending and invest it into building potash levels. It could be lower if phosphate causes farmers to wait for spring, taking potash with it. It could be lower if poor farm economics cause farmers to cut back overall spending. Coin flip today, but values are holding showing comfort in current values.
- **The latest fertilizer supply and price trends for IL farmers,** from United Prairie Co-op of Tolono, IL.
 - ✓ **UAN:** UAN pricing and ship windows are unchanged as the focus remains on fall dry product. • UAN imports continue to be light for the beginning of the crop year.
 - ✓ **Urea:** NOLA activity once again limited bringing out softer values. A November barge traded at a \$375/s.t., down \$4 from yesterday's offers. • Interior demand has been slow, yet prices are generally unchanged.
 - ✓ **NH3:** The US market is quiet with widespread showers and cooler temperatures this week, which will help prospect for ammonia application this fall. • Cornbelt spot prices are up slightly as harvest progresses.
 - ✓ **Phosphates:** NOLA DAP and MAP holding steady. • Forward markets are inverted setting up winter fill programs.
 - ✓ **Potash:** The potash barge market saw some activity earlier this week. • Dry weather could support fall applications in coming weeks. • Pre-river-close demand fades, which could potentially pressure prices.
 - ✓ **10-34-0:** Acid pricing for October will remain flat to September. • 10-34-0 markets are stable. Suppliers in the Kansas market are biddable to take advantage of demand in that region. • Itafos acid is now behind in shipping by 2 weeks due to reduction in production rates.

Transportation—

- **If you need a new semi-trailer truck**, the choices may soon be limited because of new 25% Trump tariffs on them, beginning Nov. 1. [The White House announced](#), all medium- and heavy-duty trucks imported into the US will face a 25% tariff rate starting November 1, a significant escalation of his effort to protect U.S. companies from foreign competition. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce earlier urged the Commerce Department not to impose new truck tariffs, noting the top 5 import sources are Mexico, Canada, Japan, Germany, and Finland "all of which are allies or close partners of the United States posing no threat to U.S. national security." Mexico is the largest exporter of medium- and heavy-duty trucks to the US. A study released in January said imports of those larger vehicles from Mexico have tripled since 2019 to around 340,000 today, according to government statistics. Mexico is home to 14 manufacturers and assemblers of buses, trucks, and tractor trucks, and two manufacturers of engines, according to the U.S. International Trade Administration. Tariffs could also affect Chrysler-parent Stellantis which produces heavy-duty Ram trucks and commercial vans in Mexico. Stellantis had been lobbying the White House not to impose steep tariffs on its Mexican-made trucks.
- **Tit for tat** and [China begins charging fees to US ships to dock at Chinese ports](#) in retaliation for the US charging fees for Chinese ships loading or unloading at US ports. China will charge 400 yuan (\$56) per net ton for the U.S. vessels, essentially the same as the \$50 per net ton that the U.S. is imposing on Chinese ships. Beijing also matched the U.S. with plans to increase the fees over time through April 17, 2028, with the same effective dates. In the "short term, this will result in an increase in costs for U.S. consumers, a decrease in profits for shippers, and a small decline in demand for exports to the U.S. in certain categories," said Michael Hart, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in China. The US is penalizing China for its massive fleet of ships, ostensibly to protect US ship makers. The U.S. only accounts for [0.1% of global shipbuilding](#), versus [53.3% for China](#), according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

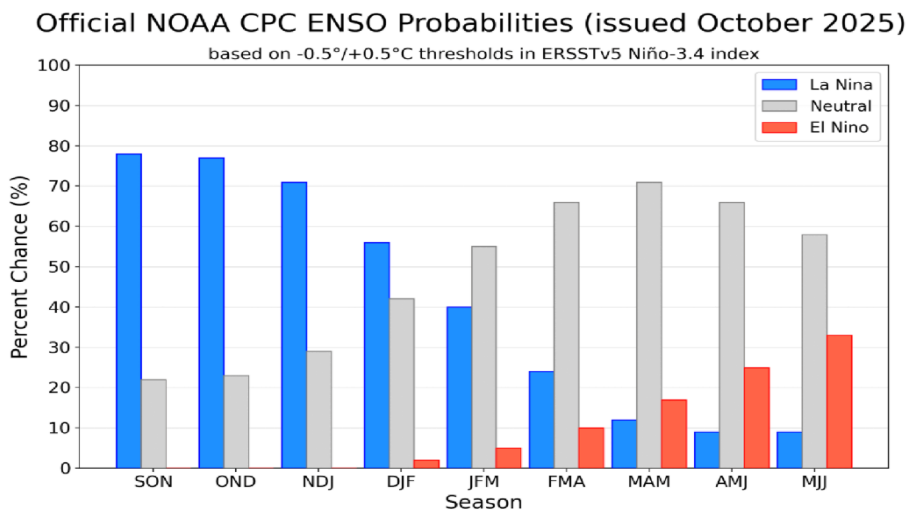


- The Mississippi River remains at low tide.** And it is not getting any help at all from the rainfall on the Missouri River watershed. Although the overall runoff in September was above average in the upper Missouri River Basin, the runoff at the Fort Peck and Garrison reaches continues to be well below average. "Beneficial rainfall occurred over central SD and ND in September, resulting in well-above average runoff into Oahe, Big Bend, Fort Randall, and Gavin's Point," said John Remus, Chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Water Management Division. "The above-average runoff combined with the lower releases from Gavin's Point slightly improves the System storage outlook for the beginning of the 2026 runoff season." September runoff was 1.3 mil. acre-feet, 109% of the average above Sioux City, IA. As of October 1, the total volume of water stored in the system was 50.4-mil.-acre feet, which is 5.7 mil. below the base of the system's flood control zone. System storage will continue to decline through the fall.
- For the 4th straight year,** water levels in the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers will soon be critically low, forcing shippers to light-load grain barges during harvest season. As barge rates get higher, those higher costs are making their way down to the farm level. Gary Williams, director of the Upper Mississippi River Water Association, told Agri-Pulse that between low commodity prices and high shipping costs, "Corn and soybean growers are looking to stash their commodities in every nook and cranny they can find." A Forbes report said this could not come at a worse time for farmers. "This is a peak period when corn and soybeans from the Midwest get shipped downriver to New Orleans for export to the international marketplace." If the lower levels get worse, Mike Steenhoek of the Soy Transportation Coalition said that may mean lost profits for farmers because of an inefficient transportation system."



Weather and Climate—

- **Welcome back, La Niña!** The International Research Institute multi-model predictions favor La Niña through the Northern Hemisphere winter 2025-26. The North American Multi-Model Ensemble is also in agreement, and based on recently observed anomalies, the team favors La

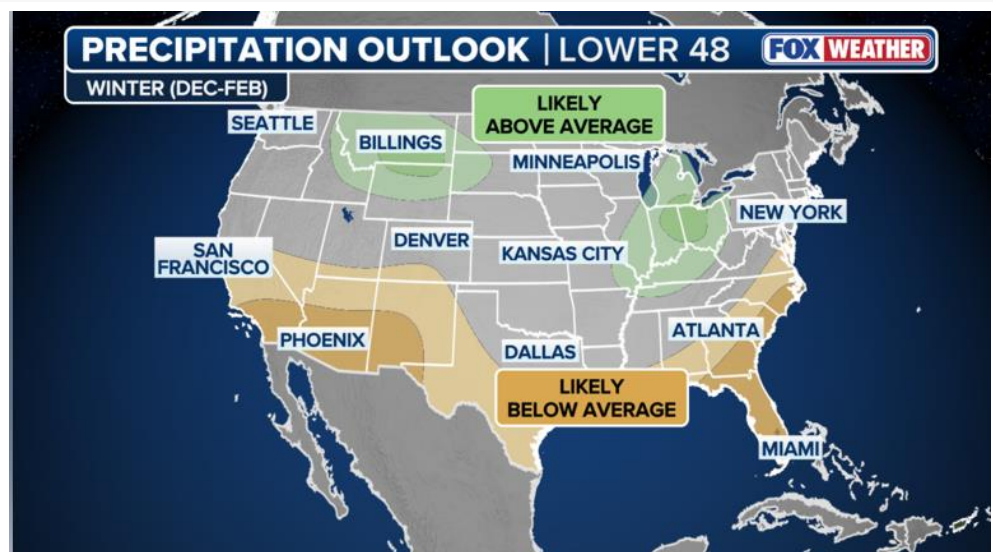


Niña to continue through winter. At this time, La Niña is expected to remain weak (3-month average Niño-3.4 index value at or between -0.5°C and -0.9°C). A weak La Niña would be less likely to result in conventional winter impacts, though predictable signals could

still influence the forecast guidance. In summary, La Niña conditions are present and favored to persist through December 2025 - February 2026, with a transition to ENSO-neutral likely in January-March 2026 (55% chance).

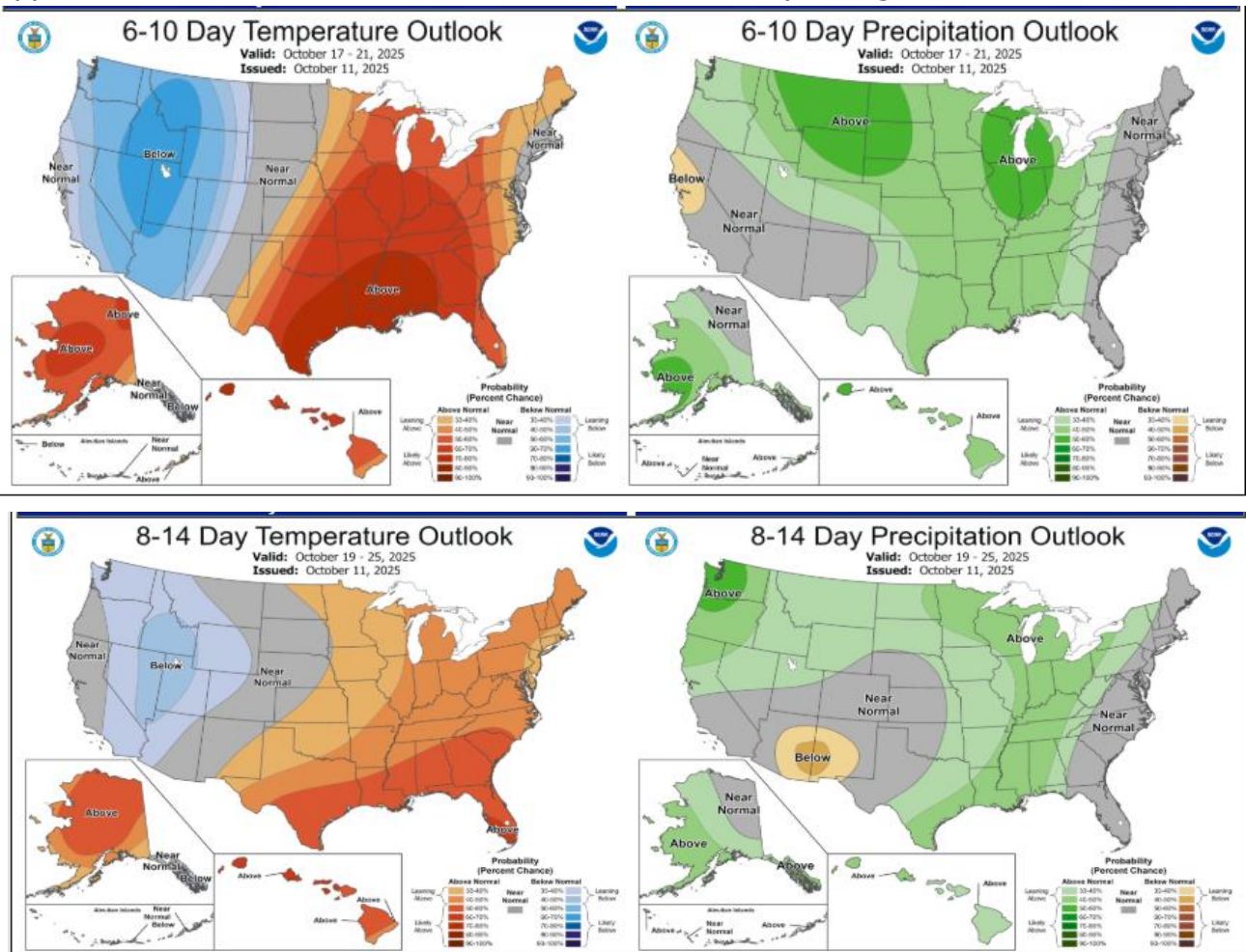
- **Typically, La Niña causes a stronger dip in the Polar Jet Stream** across the northern U.S., with the Pacific Jet Stream aimed toward the West and Northwest coastlines, according to forecasters. The upper Northern Plains are usually in for a colder winter (more than the typical cold) while the Great Lakes region also tends to lean on the wetter side.

The Southeast and deep Southwest into Texas usually end up with a mild and dry winter. It's important to note that while La Niñas amount to a "weighing of the dice" toward these overall trends, other large-scale factors and short-term

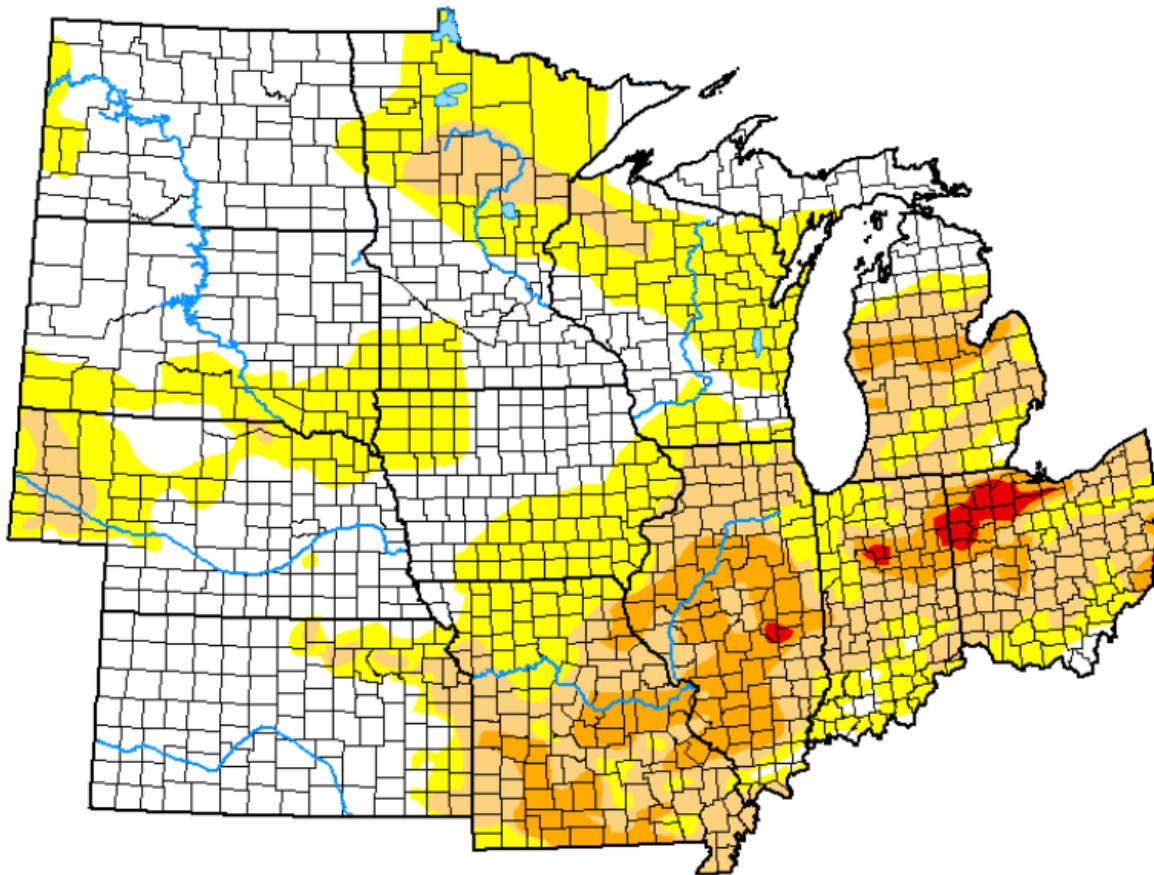


weather patterns can override La Niña's effects. For example, the Northern Plains could still go through a mild stretch or Texas and the South could endure a rainy stretch. In addition, forecasts show La Niña will be relatively short-lived, with a 55% chance ocean waters will warm and return to the ENSO phase to "neutral" by the middle of winter.

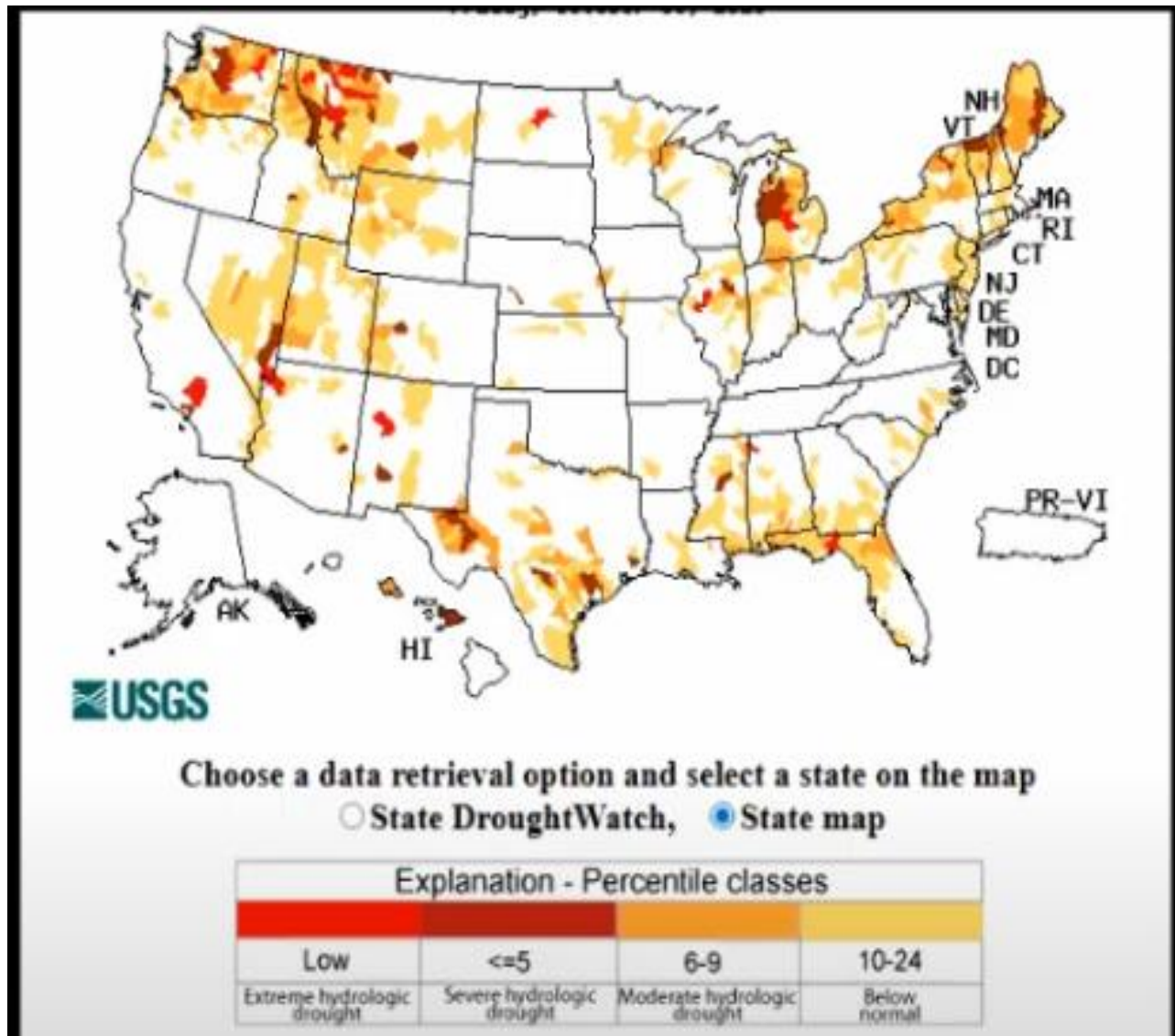
- **La Niña winters have historically brought generally cooler, wetter conditions** to the North and milder and drier conditions to the South. It can keep a drought going in the Southwest while the Pacific [Northwest](#) basks in an above-average mountain snowpack. NOAA's next seasonal forecast updates come on Oct. 16 and may show even more of an expected La Niña influence then. Once this La Niña fades in the winter or spring, NOAA's long-term forecasts indicate neutral conditions will likely persist well into the spring, but ENSO influences begin to fade in the spring in summer patterns in the Continental US."
- **What about the current drought?** Blue Water Outlook says, "The emerging Midwest/Ohio Valley drought is not significantly associated with La Niña. In fact, La Niña could bring above-average precipitation and potential drought relief to parts of this region later in the winter months. This drought originated due to summer's above-normal temperatures and frequent dry spells. It is not conclusive that the drought across the southern tier of the nation is directly associated with La Niña. Still, there could be an increasing correlation later this fall into the winter."
- **Will wet weather interrupt** the completion of harvest or be beneficial to anhydrous application and retention of ammonia in the soil for 2026 planting?



- **With harvest in the short rows for many farmers,** the approach of wetter weather will likely be seen as beneficial. The Cornbelt has been dry, too dry, and that is showing up on the [Drought Monitor](#). "A few swaths of significant rain fell from southwest to central IA, across central Lower MI, and in the Ohio River Valley and MO Bootheel. In far southern parts of OH, IN and IL, western KY and the MO Bootheel, this week's rainfall improved conditions, as soil moisture and streamflow continued to recover and precipitation deficits lessened. As more data regarding the impact of recent rain filters in, more changes to the map may occur in this region in future weeks. Short-term drought, with localized longer-term impacts, continued to intensify this week from southwest Missouri northeast into central and northern IL, northern IN and northwest OH after another mainly dry week. In these areas, precipitation deficits grew while soil moisture and streamflow remained very low. As the intense dryness is occurring during the harvest, visibility restrictions from blowing dust were reported in parts of central IL, causing dangerous driving conditions. Enough rain fell across most of the central Lower Peninsula of MI to prevent further degradation of ongoing moderate and severe drought there. Short-term moderate drought expanded in coverage southeast from northern MN into northwest WI, where recent deficits in rainfall and streamflow worsened. Widespread temperatures from 10-20° above normal occurred across the region, adding extra stress to areas experiencing drought or abnormal dryness.



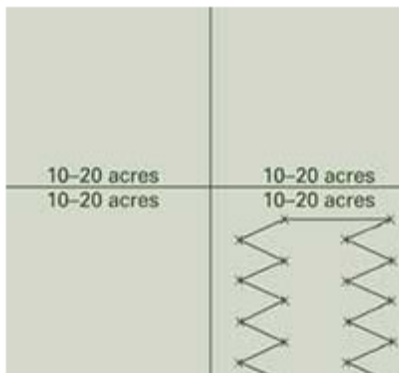
- **Low flow on US streams and rivers** are widespread across the US, according to the US Geological Survey, which updated its chart, reflecting drought conditions. Your local crick may have a very dry bottom. Your field tiles probably are not flowing either!



Agronomy—

- **Are you soil sampling with dry soil?** [IL Soy outreach agronomist Stephanie Porter](#) says farmers in drought-stricken areas should delay fall soil testing, "I'm getting some updates from crop consultants." She says, "They are trying to go to some areas that have gotten some rain, but there's some areas that they are not soil testing just because it's too dry." She says extremely dry soil can lead to some nutrient readings being incorrect. "One of the biggest ones we worry about is potassium." She says, "It just may show higher than normal and just not be correct at all." Porter says even getting a probe into the ground is a challenge in some areas, so she recommends holding off on any planned sampling until after adequate moisture returns to the soil profile. →

- Speaking of soil sampling**, did you pull any samples to determine the extent of your soybean cyst nematode problems? No, you can't find them while scouting, only on your scale tickets that indicate yield deterioration because of heavy infestation. Oct. 6 was National Nematode Day!!! and served as a timely reminder that the most damaging soybean pathogen is often the one you don't see because it is below ground. SCN is a "hidden yield robber" since there may not be any above ground symptoms, just lower than normal yields. Fall harvest is a great time to do some pre-emptive planning for 2026, and one good task is soil sampling, with some soybean roots, and send them to the Univ. of IL Plant Clinic, where the IL Soybean Assn. will provide a complementary analysis. SCN can be managed successfully, with good to better soybean



yields, once you know that pest is there. To participate, please contact freeSCNtesting@illinois.edu for a free testing kit or download our [SCN submission form](#). The form also provides important information on best sampling strategies. Results from the assay typically take 2-3 weeks but can vary depending on number of submissions. Recent years have seen an increase in SCN populations able to overcome the most commonly used form of plant resistance. However, the only way to know if a field has an issue, is by testing. More information about SCN can be found at the [SCN](#)

[Coalition](#) and find Illinois-specific updates on [Field Advisor](#). →

- When you are dismayed that SCN** has cut your soybean yield and your income, it may be time to visit with your soybean seed dealer to change your SCN prevention. IA St. Univ. and nematologist Greg Tylka have released their soybean cyst nematode-resistant soybean variety listing for 2026. He lists 908 SCN-resistant varieties from 25 soybean seed companies representing 35 different brands. Most of the varieties also have 1 or more herbicide resistance/tolerance traits. Although his work is done in IA, many of the same varieties are available to farmers in other states. 196 of these varieties have the Peking source of resistance, compared to the more common PI 88788 source. The complete list is available at: <https://www.thescncoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2025-Iowa-SCN-variety-list-Coalition.pdf>.

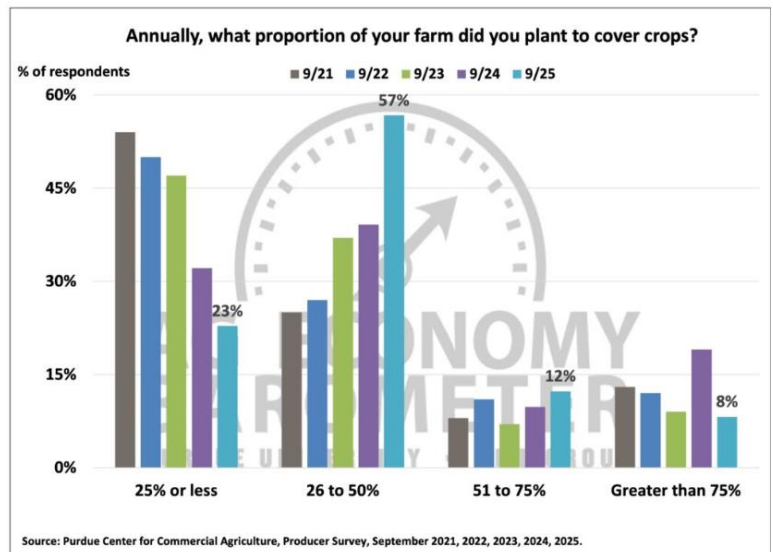
- Weed control remains a problem** in farm fields across the Cornbelt. Much of it has to do with the development of resistance to the chemistries that are now available. Aaron Hager, an extension weed scientist with the Univ. of IL, said new herbicides and new chemistries may hit the market sooner rather than later, "Pretty much. We'll see 1 or 2 new active ingredients probably coming next year, but they'll be new to us; actually, these are fairly old active ingredients from Europe. Diflufenican is 1 active ingredient that Bayer CropScience will bring into the marketplace. The original concept from the company several years ago was to bring it only as a premix product with 1 or 2 different active ingredients, but apparently, that decision has now been changed, and it will be straight Diflufenican. It can be fairly active on the Amaranthus complex, (right) but again, by itself, like so many other examples that we've looked at now for close to 30 years, there are very few active ingredients, especially in the pre-emergence marketplace, that'll take us all the way from planting through the post-application timing." He said the new product will be a corn and soybean herbicide, "It'll actually be both. Not really for sure what the push will be in the first year. It'll be kind of a limited launch, I think, in '26, but more full-scale, I'm sure, on more of the broad acres starting about 2027. It will be another option for farmers. It's not the only option that they have. Several years ago, we started to take another look or a fresh look at Metribuzin in soybeans, simply because that is an active ingredient that allows us to exploit one of the very few weaknesses of the resistance complex that we see in our IL waterhemp populations." He said when they see resistance to the Photosystem II inhibitors, that resistance is almost always non-target site, or a metabolic type of resistance, "By that, we mean the target site remains in a sensitive



formation, but the plant is actively able to metabolize the herbicides before they cause any sort of detrimental effect. So, when you have metabolic triazine resistance, which would render things like Atrazine and Princep ineffective, but Metribuzin, being an asymmetrical triazine, still remains effective. But many people here, you almost have to have a little bit of gray hair to remember how we used to use Metribuzin in soybeans

here in IL back in the '70s and '80s. What we have found is that it can still be one of the most effective soil residual herbicides that we have now on multiple resistant populations. But just like every other product, we must make sure that we get the application rate correct based on the soil texture for the individual field that we're going to be applying it to." (WILL radio)

- **Each September since 2021**, the Purdue [Ag Economy Barometer](#) survey has included several questions focused on cover crop usage by corn and soybean farmers. Over half (53%) of the farmers surveyed this month said they currently use cover crops on at least some of their acreage. That percentage has fluctuated between a low of 52% and a high of 57% over the last 5 years. Among producers who use cover crops, 40% of respondents said they'd been using



them for five or fewer years, while 9% of respondents reported using cover crops for more than 20 years. Reviewing trends in responses over the 5 years of data collected, producers who use cover crops appear to be using them on a higher percentage of their total crop acreage. This year, 57% of respondents who reported using cover crops said they planted cover crops on 26% to 50% of their acreage. That compares with just 25% of respondents in the 2021 survey who said they planted cover crops on more than 25% of their acreage.

- **There is a bounty being offered** for southern IL farmers who double-crop wheat and soybeans. The IL Soybean Assn. is expanding its double-crop research program and is looking for participants to bridge the gap between small-scale university trials, which often lack farmer engagement or broad applicability, and industry trials, which may be biased toward product promotion. "In 2026, we are asking at least 5 farmers in Southern IL to participate in the ISA On-Farm Trial Network double-crop soybean action trial. The goal is to determine optimum planting populations for wheat/double-crop soybeans based on seed cost and yield.
 - ✓ The farmer is responsible for planting and all management applications in the trial.
 - ✓ Plot layout may vary depending on equipment and field dimensions, but each trial must cover at least 40 acres.
 - ✓ Farmers must provide planter information and be able to adjust planting populations or use a variable seeding rate if available.
 - ✓ The same soybean variety will be planted at 3 different populations (180,000; 220,000; and 260,000 seeds/acre) for double-crop soybeans after wheat.
 - ✓ Each trial will include at least 4 replications of each population treatment under the same management, for a total of 12 plots, each with a minimum width of 60 feet.
 - ✓ The combine must have a calibrated yield monitor to ensure accurate post-harvest yield data.
 - ✓ If you have questions about participating in this study, contact Deanna Burkhart at deanna.burkhart@ilsoy.org or 309-307-9366.

- **As farmers harvest this year's corn crop**, it's also time to choose seeds for the 2026 season. Nick Frederking, an agronomist for AgriGold at St. Francisville, IL, recommends diversifying your seed selection to reduce risk and boost profits, "Growers know their operation better than anyone. They know their soils. They know their management. One thing they don't always know is the characteristics of corn hybrids, a big input on their farm every year. So, it's important that growers partner with a trusted seed advisor to help them understand corn hybrids and all those characteristics that will help them minimize the risk and the environmental stresses that we have every year." A farmer's fertility strategy should also factor into seed decisions, "Fertility is super important in high-yielding corn, but not every fertility program is the same. Some growers fertilize on the front end of corn growth, and some spoon-feed or side dress their corn throughout the season.



It's important to recognize that not every corn hybrid responds to all these fertility programs the same. So again, it's important for a grower to partner with their trusted seed advisor, understand the hybrids, and how they respond to these different fertility programs. Some hybrids flex in girth and length, which require early-season fertility, and some hybrids actually fill in kernel depth, making very heavy kernels at the back half of grain fill. Those hybrids might respond better to side dress or spoon-fed fertility applications. So, growers should partner with their seed advisor to best understand how a hybrid will respond to their current fertility program." Disease was a major topic this year. He offers some advice on how farmers can better protect their yields in 2026, "Disease is a big topic every year, whether it's gray leaf spot, northern corn leaf blight, Southern rust or tar spot, we are faced with pathogens every single season, and so it's important for growers to recognize which pathogen is most prevalent in their operation. And from there, they can start consulting with their seed advisor on which hybrids best combat those pathogens with their high genetic tolerance to those diseases." Farmers should also consider late-season intactness when making seed choices, "We've got some hybrids that give everything that they can to that ear, resulting in plants breaking down prematurely and losing some of that late-season integrity at the end of the season. Whereas, we have other hybrids that stand very strong all the way through harvest, maintaining that integrity, and allowing them to dry in the field, let's say to 15%. This is a very important characteristic for a specific market of growers who want their corn plants to dry out in the field. Maintaining bushels requires that these hybrids have good late-season intactness all the way through the end of the season. So, partner with a trusted seed advisor to make sure you're selecting hybrids that fit your program and your harvest capabilities." (AgriGold)

- **Bayer Crop Science DEKALB brand manager Jamie Horton**, said farmers can look forward to some exciting innovations coming down Bayer's corn product pipeline,
 - ✓ "So, these products would include ongoing germplasm improvements from the DEKALB brand to continue to boost that yield potential, but also enhance protection against insect pests, diseases, other agronomic challenges, and one that we're really excited about from our innovation pipeline would be the Preceon Smart Corn System, which offers that short stature corn that's typically around more of that 7-foot tall compared to the traditional corn plant of 9 to 12 feet. And another advantage of this is that it also offers a thicker stalk structure than a traditional plant. So, as we think about increased protection against lodging, green snap from some of the storms we see throughout the summer months, as well as greater application flexibility to continue to help maximize that crop performance."
 - ✓ She said the pipeline will also bring a stronger defense against corn rootworm, "We know corn rootworm is something that we continue to battle in Corn Rootworm 4, which is Bayer's 4th-generation corn rootworm trait, is really going to be the new standard for corn insect control. And so, it'll provide 2 new insecticidal proteins for improved control of high-pressure yield-robbing rootworm populations."
 - ✓ Another piece is the LEP5, which is also in development, which offers new solutions of above-ground pests, including corn earworm, fall armyworm, and Southwestern corn borer.
 - ✓ Asgrow brand manager Brittany Eubank said producers who plant Asgrow-branded soybeans will also benefit from Bayer's pipeline innovations, as we think about the Asgrow portfolio, we have exciting performance with our Asgrow XtendFlex soybeans today. But what we're even more excited about is the launch of Viconic in 2027, which is our new 4th-generation soybean trait package. Viconic is going to change the industry, right? It's going to be the first soybean to have 5 herbicide tolerances to Glyphosate, glufosinate, dicamba, 2-4D and miso. With Viconic, we're seeing performance being extremely positive over our XtendFlex soybeans that we have today, and we're also really looking forward to the opportunity to have a variety of maturities across the U.S."
 - ✓ Eubank said the Bayer pipeline also includes 2 new weed management technologies for soybeans and corn, "We've got Viconic coming out in 2027, but not far behind that is our 5th generation of herbicide tolerance coming out in Asgrow, which will be our HT5 soybeans. That will add an additional tolerance from those 5 that I mentioned earlier, adding in the PPO resistance as well, so 6 herbicide tolerances total. In addition to our soybean portfolio, we have some exciting things coming out in our crop protection portfolio. It's called Convintro, which is a Group 12 herbicide expected to be available next season. It's going to offer a new tool, giving farmers an effective new defense against resistant Palmer and water hemp while maintaining yield potential." (Bayer Crop Science)

Conservation, Environment, Carbon—

- **An interstate CO-2 pipeline westbound from NE cornfields** spurred the head of the [IA Renewable Fuels Assn.](#) to say, "IA is no longer the #1 place to make ethanol." IA has worn the crown," Monte Shaw said. "We have been the world's best place to turn corn into ethanol, and we've held that crown for 25 years and last week we got knocked off. The world's best place to turn corn into ethanol is now the plants hooked up to the Trailblazer Pipeline." That pipeline had been used to transport natural gas through NE but has been converted to collect carbon and ship it to underground storage in Wyoming. Shaw told reporters it's "just Econ 101" that investments will shift to NE if IA officials "slam the door" here on the Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline. "We are asking the IA legislature...to help avert what I personally feel is a pending farm crisis," Shaw said, "...and all we're asking for is to have access to the tools we need, like carbon capture and sequestration." →
- **American Carbon Alliance CEO Tom Buis** was pleased with the first volumes of [CO₂](#) in the new pipeline, and said, "The first CO₂ shipment through the NE Trailblazer pipeline shows that carbon capture and utilization is no longer a future concept, it's happening now. States embracing this technology are building new markets for ethanol, creating jobs, spurring rural economies, and raising corn prices which help farmers stay in business. States that block this progress risk falling behind. If ethanol plants can't meet low-carbon standards, corn prices drop, rural jobs vanish, economic growth shifts elsewhere and farmers suffer the consequences. NE is moving forward. Others must decide whether to lead or get left behind."
- **The World Wildlife Fund is funding** a new study to better understand the true benefits and potential consequences of neonicotinoid seed treatments in corn and soybeans. The project will evaluate agronomic and economic impacts, looking at how these treatments affect both crop yield and beneficial insect populations. Over the next 3 years, 8–10 field trials per year will be conducted, with both replicated and split-field trials accepted. Participants will receive \$1,000–\$1,500 per trial annually, with results shared through field days and partner meetings. If you're interested in participating or learning more, please contact info@aiswcd.org or reach out to Heather Rindler at hrindler@blinc.com. You can also find more information [HERE](#)
- **A federal shutdown effectively freezes** nearly all USDA-funded agricultural conservation work, with 95% of NRCS staff furloughed and program payments paused. Why it matters is that the Natural Resources Conservation Service provides the technical and financial backbone for conservation on American farms. Without it, many projects like wetlands or prairie planting are stalled. Meanwhile, it doesn't impact privately funded or state-run projects, unless they are done in collaboration with federal funding or agencies, and many are. During the shutdown, fewer than 500 staff members are left to cover the entire country. This comes at a time when producers are already facing big challenges, and even short payment interruptions could deepen farmers' economic turmoil. There's no telling how long this will last.

Tariffs, Trade, and Agriculture—

- **U.S. Wheat Associates joined a USDA trade mission** to Japan in early October. The mission provided USW president and CEO Mike Spier and USW Chairman Jim Pellman of ND with an additional opportunity to reaffirm the enduring partnership between U.S. wheat farmers and Japan's government and milling and baking industries. "Japan has been a consistent customer of U.S. wheat from before USW was even officially formed as an organization," Spier said. "We appreciate the opportunity to showcase our long-term success in this market." He also said these missions strengthen cooperation and communication between the 2 nations, maintaining U.S. access to this mature, quality-conscious, and steady buyer.
- **Because American farmers are shut out** of the soybean market in China, the U.S. is pushing other countries throughout Africa and Asia to purchase more American soybeans. As global trade tensions continue, President Trump's trade team is looking for new market opportunities. "We're calling up all our soybean customers around the world as part of our trade negotiations," said Kevin Hassett, director of the National Economic Council. He also said the administration was "getting ready to have really strong policies to support our farmers." With silos full and exports drying up, Beijing, normally a major buyer of American soybeans, has not purchased any this season, diverting its orders to Brazil and Argentina instead. The USDA said more than \$30 bil. worth of American soybean products were exported in fiscal year 2024. China bought about \$12 bil. worth of American soybean products in the last calendar year.

- **Bushels of irony have harvested** with the announcement that Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Pres. Trump agreed to meet in person soon after a friendly video call on Monday, [Brazil's government said](#), boosting prospects for a thaw in bilateral relations that are at their worst in decades. During the leaders' 30-minute call, Lula's office said in a statement that he and Trump discussed their positive impressions of a [brief encounter](#) at the United Nations last month and exchanged phone numbers to open a direct line of communication. [Trump said](#) on social media that the call was "very good," with a focus on the countries' economic and trade relations. "We will be having further discussions and will get together in the not-too-distant future, both in Brazil and the United States," he wrote. Trump had slapped a 40% tariff on all Brazilian goods entering the US after Brazil convicted former president Jair Bolsonaro, a Trump buddy, for corruption, and blaming Lula da Silva for it. Lula da Silva served time in prison during Bolsonaro's term. Coffee prices in the U.S., which has traditionally relied on Brazil for one-third of its supply of coffee beans, have risen sharply due in large part to the tariffs, which have forced roasters to buy more expensive coffee elsewhere.



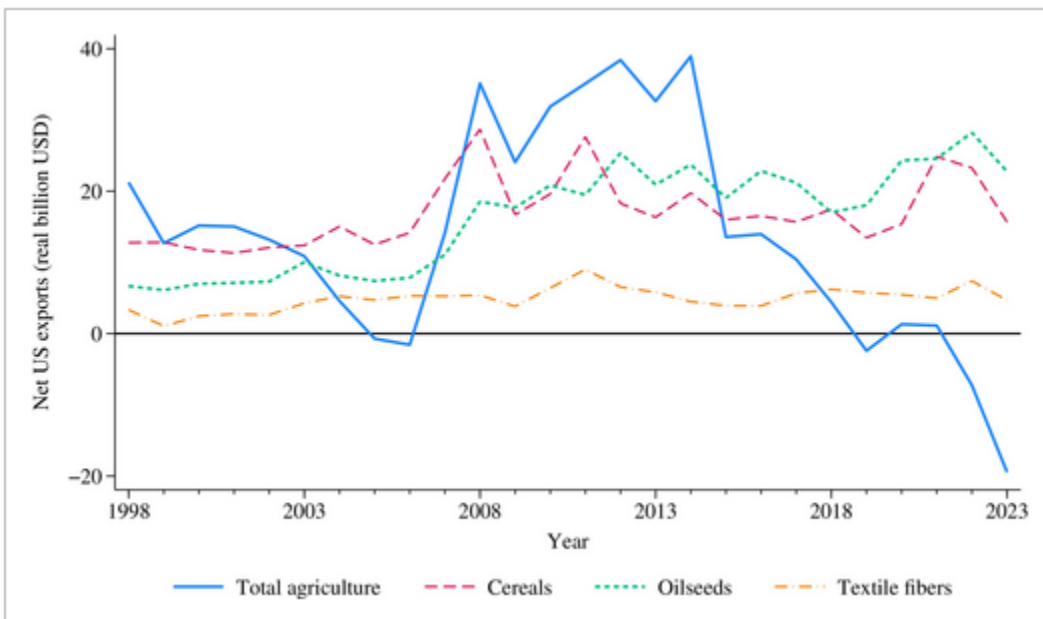
- **The long-term damages of the first trade war** with China are still hard to measure.

That's the opinion of Nick Paulson, (right) an agricultural economist at the Univ. of IL. While there is a push to replace some of the lost soybean trade with China by opening new markets, he said that's a difficult task, "You know, there's a saying in business that it's much harder to get a new customer than it is to keep an existing customer happy. And when we're talking about trade and



commodities, I think that applies very well. I mean, there's a reason why we traded with China. We can trade with other people, but it's going to be more costly because if it weren't, we would have been doing that in the first place. And so, kind of having to reconfigure those supply chains and those trade flows and have it completely offset any losses that we experience with our biggest market for soybeans is just something that I think it would take a lot of mental gymnastics to talk yourself into that we came out of it as good or in a better position than we would have been without the trade war." He said the timing of the first trade war was not ideal, "I think another thing about the timing of the 2018 and 2019 trade disruption was that, so far, similar to what we're experiencing here, our trade with China is very seasonal. South America supplies during their harvest, which offsets our main supply season during our harvest, and as Joe pointed out, we typically see more commitments to buying some of those 2025 crop soybeans. We haven't seen it yet. We still could. I think what that does is it creates a lot of volatility in the market. There is some upside if we can get a trade deal together, but I think there's also some downside if it goes nowhere and completely falls apart and gets worse." IL Ag economist Joe Janzen said the trade war backs up soybeans in the U.S., especially in ND, because many of their soybeans are exported to China, "Obviously, the tremendous basis weakness, that is, low cash prices for harvest delivery in ND, where you have prices \$1.50 under new crop futures. You're talking about a soybean price in the low \$8 range. That's not good, and that ripples out. You know, we're seeing maybe a little bit of weakness along the river, more in the neighborhood of say 20 to 30¢ below normal. We're seeing reasonably decent basis strength around the crush capacity that we have here in the Midwest. So, prices here in central IL are not nearly as far off of what we would think of as typical for this time of year." The basis typically gets more volatile during this time of year, but Janzen said this isn't a typical harvest season, demand. "We're going to really have to see. We tend to get a lot of basis volatility right around harvest, when bids need to adjust to bring grain into the supply chain if necessary, or to hold it back. And so, a lot of those beans up in ND are going to go into storage. They're going to sit there until we figure the situation out. We'll see. I think there's a lot more volatility in what that means for us here in the heart of the Cornbelt, given that we have some alternative options for soybean movement when it comes to harvest, principally that crush demand." That's becoming more and more tied to our biofuels policy and the demand for renewable diesel. (WILL radio)

- **The U.S. has traditionally been an agricultural powerhouse** with a healthy trade surplus. But global dynamics are changing due to a confluence of political and economic factors. U.S. agricultural imports now exceed exports, and the trade deficit is projected to worsen in the coming years. Univ. of IL economist William Ridley and TX Tech colleagues



report "what used to be a persistent surplus has turned into a persistent and growing deficit, where we're importing much more than we export. Current projections

estimate that the agricultural trade deficit will reach \$49 bil. by the end of 2025." [The researchers noted that imports have increased considerably](#), particularly fruits and vegetables, such as avocados from Mexico, and canola oil from Canada. The U.S. continues to be a major producer of agricultural commodities, like corn, oilseeds, and cotton, but exports are stagnant or declining. [In their study](#), the researchers estimate the comparative advantage of major crop producers, taking into account factors such as productivity growth, export and trade infrastructure, and government support for agriculture. They find that while U.S. agricultural productivity has remained stable, other countries have been catching up. For example, Brazil's soybean production has rapidly evolved due to expansions in farmland, dramatic improvements in productivity, and government investments in transportation infrastructure, and they have solidly surpassed the U.S. as the world's leading soybean producer and exporter. Furthermore, China is not only buying from other suppliers; the country is undertaking massive efforts to bolster its self-sufficiency, including major investments in research and development and expanding the use of genetically modified crop varieties. The researchers also highlight other factors influencing agricultural production and exports, including cuts in public funding for university research. "There's a strong link between research funding and productivity, and productivity affects the position of the U.S. agricultural sector globally. That also includes funding of research to mitigate the effects of climate change on the agricultural industry," Ridley said. "Economists view expanded access for our exports as a good thing to strive for if you want to ensure the viability of U.S. agriculture. Negotiating trade agreements isn't an easy thing to do, but it's something we should continue to pursue."

Agri-Politics—

- **It will take Congress to replenish the Commodity Credit Corporation** if that's the course the administration takes to fund emergency farm aid growers need now. But new appropriations were not in the cards, while the government was shut down. House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole, R-OK, (right), "We could do this work and still have time to turn around as the president and our leadership has pointed out, in both chambers, and sit down and talk about these other issues.



But it's hard to do much when the negotiations aren't happening." Senate Ag Appropriations Chair John Hoeven, R-ND, (left) argued stopgap farm aid hangs in the balance amid ongoing trade talks with China, "I've been working along with others, with this administration, on emergency assistance to bridge that gap, while we seek better trade agreements and export sales for our farmers. So, let's get this government back open, so we can continue that hard work." That would include annual USDA

spending nearing completion before the fight over the short-term continuing resolution shut off the lights. Chairman Cole, "When they make the mind that they want the government up and running, believe me, we'll move very quickly, and we'll try to move away quickly from a CR status, to passing bills individually or in small groups...and get folks up and working again, and get the government restored." Doing so would allow functions like farm services to resume, but also emergency aid for farmers in desperate need of help to keep their operations alive. (Berns Bureau, Washington)

- **Sen. Deb Fischer, R-NE, (right) told the Senate** that U.S. growers can't wait much longer for help from Washington, "Time is running out, and we need to turn this around." Fischer said rising input costs and trade uncertainty have driven farm finances to levels reminiscent of the 1980s farm crisis, "Our soybean producers are projected to lose about a \$100 an acre this year. On top of that, storage costs for soybeans and corn have risen steeply." It's happening during one of the largest harvests in memory. Fischer argued for her Nationwide Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act to unlock year-round E15 sales, "Permanent, nationwide access would increase corn demand by 2.5 bil. bu. a year. It would lower gas prices for families. And it would drive new revenue into rural communities." Fischer urged President Trump to lean harder on China to help reverse a looming \$49 bil. Ag trade deficit, "You can help reverse that deficit by holding China accountable and ensuring American-grown soybeans have access to global markets." (Berns Bureau, Washington)



- **The Trump administration has attributed the current farm economy** to the Biden administration, with multiple cabinet members and others daily pointing fingers to the past 4 years. [Chris Clayton of DTN reports](#), "At a Cabinet meeting on Thursday in the White House, President Trump blamed former President Joe Biden for farmers again needing an aid package that could cost \$10 bil. to \$15 bil. Trump recalled the trade agreement he signed with China that committed it to buy \$40 bil. in agricultural goods. Trump said Biden never pressed China to honor the deal. "Every problem the farmer has is because Biden didn't do anything for 4 years," Trump said." Clayton sought out Tom Vilsack, who served as Agriculture Secretary during the Biden administration who replied, "Happy to remind folks of the Biden record for farmers, ranchers and producers; or perhaps I should say records of the Biden administration as in: 1) Record net cash farm income; 2) Record exports of agricultural products including sales of soybeans to China; 3) Record investments in sustainable agriculture commodities, in independent meat and poultry processing capacity, fertilizer production capacity, conservation programs, local and regional food systems, renewable energy and renewable fuel infrastructure resulting in more, new and better markets for our farmers and ranchers."



Farmer Lance Lillibridge and his son Ty on his farm in eastern Iowa. A former president of the Iowa Corn Growers Association, Lillibridge's post on Facebook this week expressing some frustration over markets, the media and USDA has grabbed a lot of attention among producers and others. (Photo courtesy of Lance Lillibridge)

- ✓ Clayton's research indicates "Biden's administration led the country out of the pandemic healthcare and economic crisis. Through that, net farm income hit a record level in 2022 at \$182 bil., as did U.S. farm export value at \$196 bil."
- ✓ Lance Lillibridge, the former president of the IA Corn Growers Association, in his [Facebook post](#), noted he is "going to catch a little flack" but then went on to point out soybean prices are nearly identical to a year ago.
- ✓ Clayton reports, "Corn and soybean prices are remarkably close to what they were last year. A year ago, DTN's National Corn Index listed the cash average at \$3.89 a bu. while soybeans were \$9.55. That compares to \$3.81 and \$9.52 on Thursday. On the CME, the December corn contract was \$4.21 a year ago and closed at \$4.18 on Thursday. November 2024 soybeans were \$10.20, and this year's contract closed at \$10.22 on Thursday." →

- **And now you know...** attendees at a recent Kansas City conference were addressed by [USDA Secretary Rollins](#) who spoke about the farm economy. "The cost of doing business for our farmers has increased drastically, while commodity prices have slumped," she said, pinning blame on the prior administration and its focus on investing in DEI and Green New Deal programs." Nothing was said about tariffs, and the loss of China's soybean purchases, other than to blame the prior administration for not pursuing more Chinese trade.
- **Farmers are at a breaking point**, said American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall in letters to the [White House](#) and [Congressional Leaders](#). "Falling crop prices, skyrocketing expenses and trade disputes are creating conditions that are too much for farm families to bear," he says. "Across the country, farms are disappearing as families close the gates on the farms tended by their parents, grandparents and generations before them," wrote AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "Every farm lost takes with it generations of knowledge, community leadership and the heartbeat of local economies: fewer kids in schools, fewer trucks at the grain elevator, fewer small businesses that keep rural towns alive. As those farms disappear, so too does America's food independence: our ability to feed ourselves without relying on foreign supply chains. In the short term, we urge leaders to authorize bridge payments for farmers before the end of 2025," wrote Duvall. "These payments must be robust enough to address sector-wide gaps and provide meaningful support as the federal government works to recalibrate trade strategies, stabilize prices, and strengthen key market relationships." Farm Bureau renewed its call for several priorities, including:
 - ✓ Fair and enforceable trade agreements.
 - ✓ Policy on biofuels, including year-round sales of E15.
 - ✓ Restoration of whole milk in schools.
 - ✓ Protecting interstate commerce.
 - ✓ Investigating prices for major agricultural supplies.
 - ✓ Enforcing laws and regulations that protect competition, fairness and transparency; and
 - ✓ Prioritizing American-grown fruits and vegetables in federal and institutional purchasing programs.

As the government shutdown continues, its effects will be felt more and more in rural America. In this week's commentary, American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall tells us it could impact next year's crops, "This federal shutdown could not come at a worse time. Our farmers are facing a serious economic storm. Row crop prices are low, production expenses are at record highs, and markets have been severely limited by trade disputes. The shutdown adds more uncertainty for farmers, barely holding on. Without local USDA offices fully open, farmers are left without critical resources—including loans and disaster payments—to help us weather this year and prepare for the next. Farmers want to feed people, and we are doing everything we can to hold on. We need Congress to do its job and reopen the government to ensure our farmers can stay in business for the health and security of our nation. Federal leadership can now prevent a deepening crisis by taking steps to preserve our agricultural infrastructure and ensure the next generation of farmers and ranchers can continue feeding the world," says Duvall. (American Farm Bureau)

- **Rep. Mike Bost, R-IL**, who represents 12 counties in southern IL, has asked the US Supreme Court to [let him sue the state of IL and challenge the vote by mail law](#). The Supreme Court Justices heard oral arguments on the case last week. Bost (right) and others filed a lawsuit in 2022 arguing the IL law harms candidates because campaigns have to spend more resources monitoring the counting of ballots that come in after Election Day. Lower courts ruled Bost did not have standing to sue. Bost has easily won elections to Congress since 2014. IL law allows mail-in ballots to be counted if they arrive up to 14 days after an election, as long as they were postmarked by Election Day. Republicans at both the state and national level embraced mail-in voting in the 2024 election cycle after pushing back against it in recent years. The Supreme Court's ruling will focus on whether Bost, in his role as a political candidate, has legal grounds to sue over the state's election law. It will not decide whether Illinois' mail-in voting law is constitutional. However, a favorable ruling for Bost by the nation's high court would allow his challenge to proceed at a lower level, opening the door for courts to rule on counting mail-in votes after an election. Bost argues he has a right to sue because he suffers financial injury by paying campaign staff for 2 weeks beyond the election to monitor ballot counting. He also argued that his vote total might be diluted if more votes are counted after election night. Winning elections has not been a problem for Bost. He has represented the 12th Congressional District in southern IL since 2015 and was reelected in 2024 with nearly 75% of the vote. Bost is a member of the House Ag Committee.



Illinois Issues--

- **The IL General Assembly** will return to Springfield on Tuesday. It remains unclear whether there will be action taken, says IL Farm Bureau Governmental Affairs. There are ongoing conversations regarding the Omnibus Energy bill, the Transit Bailout legislation, and the newest state finance wrinkle of declining corporate income tax collections. This new topic of declining corporate income tax collections has arisen in the last several days and is causing some buzz in Springfield. The Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (COGFA) is reporting that income tax collections, especially corporate income tax collections, are lower than anticipated. COGFA is estimating that corporate tax collections are \$215 mil. lower than compared to last year during the first quarter of the fiscal year. The state budget projected \$438 mil. in higher corporate income tax collections but, COGFA is now projecting lower corporate income tax collections from changes in the federal budget reconciliation bill and it "may offset much of the anticipate corporate tax revenue growth from state-level reforms." The Governor's budget office is stating an immediate change by the General Assembly to decouple from the new federal "bonus depreciation" law and few of the other provision of the One Big Bill Act. The Governor's budget office has already asked state agencies to identify up to 4% of General Revenue Funds in their budgets to put into reserve to reduce the tax collection shortfalls. →

- **In a related note, the Capitol News Bureau reports** in the coming years, the [governor's office projects deficits will grow even higher](#) as new federal policies require the state to pay more to support social service programs while receiving less federal funding. The deficit is projected to grow to \$2.2 bil. next year. Lawmakers must address that next May. Gov. JB Pritzker also signed an executive order last month directing certain state agencies to reserve 4% of FY26 general fund appropriations and identify other ways to reduce spending or create efficiencies. The state also has a \$100 mil. fund it can tap into to cover gaps this year. The Governor's Office of Management and Budget warns "the ability to fund new programs will be severely limited," sending an early message to advocates and lawmakers seeking new or increased state spending that their requests might not be answered." The report projects FY31 will see a \$5.3 bil. deficit, in part because of federal policy changes that require states to cover a greater portion of social programs. Beginning next October, states will have to cover half of administrative costs for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, rather than 25%, and start covering a portion of benefits in October 2027. States like IL with a higher error rate on SNAP payments will have to cover a greater portion of benefits. The IL current error rate would put it on track to pay \$705 mil. for benefits when the new policy takes effect. Medicaid cuts at the federal level also significantly increase pressure on the IL budget, especially beginning in FY28. The state will see federal Medicaid funding decline by \$2.8 bil. by FY31.

Biofuels News--

- **A bipartisan group of 47 legislators** from both Chambers of Congress petitioned the EPA to finalize its proposal for the Renewable Fuel Standard Program, which includes measures to discourage the use of imports into the U.S. biofuels market. The group sent a letter to Lee Zeldin, the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, asking him to advocate for the proposal. [The legislators say it represents a common-sense approach](#) that puts America's farmers first in line, strengthens U.S. domestic biofuel markets, and delivers tangible economic benefits to rural communities. An EPA proposal in June would change the RFS program to increase the Renewable Volume Obligation, reduce the value of the Renewable Identification Numbers (RINs) for foreign-produced fuels and biofuel components, and reallocate unmet regulatory costs from exempted small refineries to larger ones. The group argued that the RIN reduction measure would provide essential support for the farm economy. The group, led by Sen. Charles Grassley, R-IA, included several IL lawmakers, Sen. Dick Durbin, and Reps. Nikki Budzinski, Mike Bost, Darin LaHood, and Eric Sorenson. Organizations endorsing the letter include the American Soybean Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Oilseed Processors Association and the National Sorghum Producers. Text of the letter can be found [HERE](#).

- **CA has officially become the last state** to approve the sale of E15. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the bill last week. Growth Energy CEO Emily Skor said this is a big win for the state and for agriculture, "The wait is finally over. E15 is now approved for sale in CA, and the biggest winners will ultimately be the state's drivers and their families. E15 is a more affordable fuel option that the vast majority of drivers can take advantage of without having to buy a new vehicle. Its approval in CA will generate more demand for American farmers, boosting our country's agricultural economy, while allowing CA residents to keep more of their hard-earned money." She said a lot of people get credit for getting the legislation across the finish line, "Assembly members David Alvarez, Cottie Petrie-Norris, Heath Flora, the state's Problem Solvers Caucus, and Gov. Newsom all deserve credit for their leadership and for their hard work seeing this bill through to its enactment. We commend them for their commitment to all CA and look forward to connecting retailers to ethanol producers to get this fuel out of drivers' dreams and into their cars right away." (Growth Energy)

- **The Grains and Bioproducts Council** took the biofuel message to Japan with success.



Council President and CEO Ryan LeGrand and USGBC Chairman Mark Wilson, Toulon, IL, (far right) traveled to Japan to participate in a USDA Cooperators and Biofuel Roundtable meeting. Japanese customers were in attendance to discuss U.S. producers' capacity to meet Japan's demand for on-road ethanol and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) in the coming years.

- **U.S. biofuel makers will consume more than half** of all soybean oil produced in the United States next year as a recent flurry of federal policy moves has transformed the sector, including higher blending mandates and curbs on foreign biofuel imports and feedstocks, the [U.S. Department of Agriculture said](#). "In a monthly supply-and-demand report, the USDA sharply raised its outlook for soybean oil use by biofuel producers in the 2025/26 marketing year, which begins October 1, to a record 15.5 bil. pounds, up 11.5% from its forecast a month ago and 26.5% higher than the current marketing year. U.S. soybean exports were seen tumbling to 700 mil. pounds in 2025/26 as more oil is consumed domestically, down from 2.6 bil. pounds in the current season. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency last month proposed to [increase the amount of biofuels](#) that oil refiners must blend into the nation's fuel mix in 2026 and 2027, driven by a surge in biomass-based diesel mandates, along with measures to discourage biofuel imports. The moves were welcomed by the nation's fast-growing biofuels industry after months of policy uncertainty that had [hobbled output of fuels](#) made from vegetable oils like soybean oil, canola oil and used cooking oil." With increased demand for soybean oil for biofuel, the volume of soybean meal increases, and the price drops, which could be more attractive to China, than purchasing soybeans from the US. [China is looking for economic feed for its pork industry](#) and lower-priced soybean meal could be a tariff-breaker and deal maker.

- **Ethanol output jumped to the highest level** in a month last week, while inventories declined modestly, according to data from the Energy Information Administration (EIA). Production of the biofuel rose to an average of 1.071 mil. bbls in the 7 days that ended Oct. 3, the U.S. government agency said in a report yesterday. On its website, the agency said it will continue normal publication of reports and data collection until further notice. That is in contrast to USDA reports that have been put on hold or canceled until the government shutdown ends. In the Midwest, by far the biggest producer of ethanol, production averaged 1.025 mil. barrels a day, up from 940,000 the previous week, the EIA said. That was the lone gainer, as all other regions saw week-to-week declines the agency reported.

Animal Agriculture--

- **Mexico's Agriculture Ministry** said another case of New World Screwworm was reported in Nuevo Leon, which borders the US. Reuters said it's the state's second confirmed case in approximately 2 weeks. None of the other 84 animals in the shipment were found to be infected with the flesh-eating parasite. The screwworm larvae in the detected case were all found dead or dying as a result of mandatory treatments, including the antiparasitic Ivermectin. The US border has remained closed to Mexican cattle, but not screwworm flies.
- **Problems are increasing on the Texas/Mexican border** where imports have been halted to prevent Screwworm issues. According to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, [Mexican cattle imported into the U.S.](#) in 2025 totaled 230,638 head compared to 998,763 head year to date in 2024. The excess cattle building up in Mexico have created challenges of where to send them because of limited slaughter and meat processing facilities, as well as the lack of feedyards as in TX where they normally would have been shipped. The decrease in cattle coming to the U.S. not only affects the TX feedyards but many others in the industry. Those who find themselves out of a job include truckers, employees at the ports of entry and those who help expedite getting the cattle to the border on the Mexican side and to the feedyards on the U.S. side.
- **TN whiskey distiller Jack Daniel's** is terminating a decades-long program that provided the company's corn byproduct "slop" to local cattle farmers at low or no cost, allowing the farmers to inexpensively feed their cattle. According to Moneywise, that slop, a thick, nutrient-rich blend of corn and grain, has been a quiet but vital link between the world's best-selling whiskey and the local farms that surround it. For decades, it kept feed costs low, cattle healthy, and waste out of landfills. The "Cow Feeder Program" is to end March 31, as the company transitions to a new partnership with Michigan-based 3 Rivers Energy, which will convert the waste into renewable fuel and fertilizer. The change has left farmers in and around south-central TN reeling, searching for ways they might continue to earn a living through raising cattle. Livestock makes up 89% of Moore County's farm earnings, due to the free feed, according to the most recent U.S. Census of Agriculture.

- **Animal agriculture continues to make strides in sustainability**, and that is highlighted in a new report. Emily Ellis, with the Animal Agriculture Alliance, says the Alliance has just released a Sustainability Impact Report, "This is an annual report that each year, with support from a lot of our members and partners, we like to update it with any new data information related to, you know, the sustainability efforts happening within the US, animal agriculture community advancements related to animal welfare and also highlighting how meat, dairy, poultry, eggs and seafood play such a critical role in a healthy, balanced diet." Ellis says dairy is one of the industry segments that has a particularly strong health and sustainability record reflected in the report, "It covers a lot of different topics, a lot of different really key issues, and it breaks it down by species, so you can see, this is what dairy specifically is doing to reduce its environmental impact. This is the role that dairy plays in a healthy diet, and eliminating these foods, you're going to have a really hard time meeting your nutrient requirements." The report shows that while agriculture has made tremendous progress, there is still more work to do, "We always like to highlight that even though farmers and ranchers for decades have been implementing sustainability measures and making this great progress. Sustainability is a journey. It's not a destination. So even though we've made a lot of progress, there's still more that we can always do, and there are quite a few different groups, quite a few different industries, within animal ag, that are taking those next steps, they've made commitments to reduce further their environmental impact." (NAFB News Service)
- **Is the U.S. cattle industry about to rebuild the herd?** Industry experts are watching for signs that expansion is underway. Brittney Goodrich, an agricultural economist at the Univ. of IL, offers her thoughts on where the current cattle cycle is at, "We're at what I would say is the end of the previous cattle cycle, but potentially the beginning, or we're almost at the rebuilding stage, or in the expansionary stage of a new cattle cycle. Producers have obviously seen record-setting prices over the last number of months. We've got the lowest cattle herd size since the 1960s. So, there's not a lot of cattle out there, so that's really driving those prices higher." There aren't many signs of expansion yet, We haven't seen any expansion in the cattle herd at this time, and part of that again is because we've seen the drought monitor here in IL, and it looks a lot worse than it did 2 weeks ago. And so, the drought makes those input costs of keeping cattle really high, and so then it looks a lot better to sell those feeder calves off and not expand your herd size. But it is anticipated that eventually, producers will start increasing these herd sizes again, and we will start to see the start of a new cattle cycle that will be probably starting in 2026-ish." A couple of key factors have pushed the inventory level to record lows, "First of all, we've seen drought-like conditions for many years. There was also the 2012 drought, which affected things, and so, that can have a major impact. But then, also, we've had increases in efficiency, in production efficiency, so now we're getting more beef per cow that we're processing, and so that that processing can also play a role." (WILL radio)

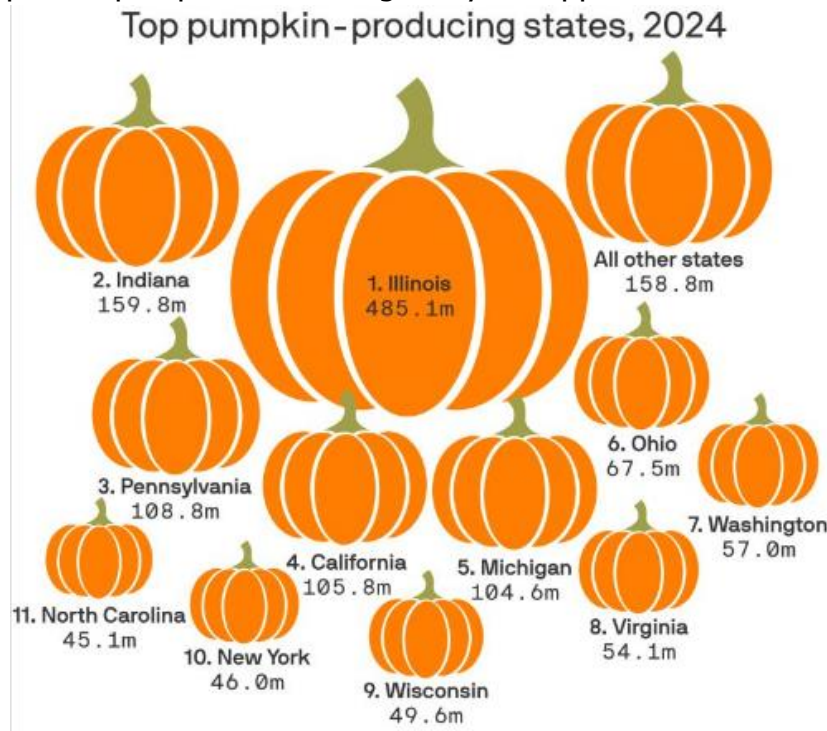
The Farm Labor Dilemma--

- **Farmers knew it**, but the [White House did not want to acknowledge](#) that pulling workers out of farm fields and deporting them would not be beneficial to crop production. But the Labor Dept. has acknowledged immigration action has become a serious labor issue. "[In a document posted to the Federal Register this month](#) amending regulations for certifying temporary foreign agricultural workers, the Department of Labor said the Trump administration's immigration policies could pose "immediate dangers" to the U.S. food supply. The regulations involve changes to the H-2A visa program, which allows companies to bring in foreign nationals to fill agricultural jobs on a temporary or seasonal basis. There are already signs the agricultural industry is struggling with employment. [The Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) reported that agricultural jobs fell to their lowest levels in more than a decade in May, although employment has rebounded slightly in recent months. The Labor Department said poor methodology for setting the Adverse Effect Wage Rate, combined with a current and imminent labor shortage — exacerbated by the near-total cessation of illegal immigration, increased enforcement of existing laws, and global competitiveness pressures — presents a sufficient risk of a supply shock-induced food shortage to justify immediate implementation of updated wages. As the Trump administration removes Medicaid and food assistance benefits from some Americans, Agriculture Secretary Rollins suggested foreign agricultural workers could be replaced by Americans seeking work. "There are 34 mil. able-bodied adults in our Medicaid program. There are plenty of workers in America, but we just have to make sure we're not compromising today," she said. But the Labor Department suggested American citizens are not willing or able to work in these positions. According to government data, demand for H-2A visas increased 36% from 2020 through 2024. During that time, the government approved 97% of applications "based on a lack of qualified, eligible, and interested U.S. workers." For the first 10 months of fiscal 2025, there were 320,700 applications for H-2A visas, with 99% approved.
- **The U.S. Department of Labor has issued a new rule** lowering minimum wages for foreign seasonal farmworkers, arguing that U.S. agriculture can no longer sustain rapidly rising labor costs. The 166-page rule, published Oct. 2 in the Federal Register and effective immediately, redefines how wages are calculated under the H-2A visa program and allows the value of employer-provided housing to count as part of worker compensation. According to the department, the changes are intended to help preserve farm operations and stabilize the nation's food supply amid mounting economic pressures. "Without swift action, agricultural employers will be unable to maintain operations, and the nation's food supply will be at risk," the rule states. The updated formula will use Bureau of Labor Statistics survey data to determine hourly pay rates and introduce lower wage tiers for entry-level workers. It replaces the 2023 Biden administration rule that farm groups said artificially inflated farm wages, and which faced multiple court challenges. The Labor Department said even the older wage-setting system had pushed rates unreasonably high because they included overtime and bonuses. H-2A wages have been rising faster than those in the broader private sector, the department said, leaving many U.S. producers unable to compete with foreign growers. (IFCA)

- **During long planting and harvesting seasons**, sometimes Sunday work is important, and if that is the 7th day of continuous labor it falls under the ODRISA rule of the Dept. of Labor. If you are not familiar with the One Day Rest In Seven Act, you can access it using this link: [820 ILCS 140/ One Day Rest In Seven Act. \(ilga.gov\)](https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs140.htm). If you have a farm that is incorporated, among other things, the ODRISA requires employers to provide 1 day of rest out of 7; however, an exemption of up to 8 weeks can be requested without justification. Should more than 8 weeks be requested, justification must be provided. If a company is asking for 2 different 8 weeks requests for example one in the spring and another in the fall, the IL Dept. of Labor states: "A company may be approved for more than 8 weeks in a calendar year, however in accordance with 820 ILCS 140/8, after 8 weeks they are required to provide a statement along with the application, justifying the business necessity for the request. If you have a family farming operation, not incorporated, the Dept. of Labor says that if you're on the payroll you're under *ODRISA*. Farmers may have the opportunity for the employee to sign a waiver to get you out of this. If you have people who are economically challenged and just needing cash and will work whatever hours they need you can sign a waiver and then get around the 7-Day one day rest law. (Check with your legal counsel, a labor attorney, or a general farm organization which has labor provisions in its policy book.)"
- **Rep. Derrick Van Orden, R-WI**, joined the American Business Immigration Coalition and dairy industry leaders at the World Dairy Expo to address the urgent labor shortages facing America's dairy farmers. Speakers highlighted the essential role of workers in keeping dairy operations safe, efficient, and productive. "If we deport every undocumented person working in the agriculture, hospitality, and construction industries, all of them will shutter at a moment's notice," Van Orden said. "If our farms close, we'll be completely dependent on other countries to feed our people, and that is unacceptable." He called that situation a national security issue. Brian Rexing of Dairy Farmers of America said taking hard-working employees off farms doesn't make communities safer. "We need Congress and the administration to address our broken agricultural visa program," he said. "We don't want shortcuts. We want reform."
- **The 2025 growing season** was a favorable one for many commodities across states; however, the high cost of doing business continues to result in struggles for farmers and growers across the state. Brett Wilder, an ag economist at the Univ. of ID, says not only is labor difficult to find, but it also gets more expensive with each passing year, "Those folks that work within the H-2A program, the adverse Wage Rate, which is what they run that off since 2016, is up 54% nationwide. So, huge increases to what your salaries and expenses are. Machinery and repair costs took a huge bump up post-COVID and have still been very sticky, certainly not any cheaper to have access to those things." Wilder added that for many producers, especially those in the crop sector, 2025 has been painful when it comes to the margins, and he doesn't see that changing dramatically anytime soon.

Farm and Family Matters—

- **With Halloween coming up at the end of the month,** thoughts turn to buying a perfect pumpkin for carving. Do you happen to know which state produces and processes



more pumpkins than anyone else? Nathan Johanning, a Univ. of IL commercial agriculture educator, has the answer, "IL leads that, not only within Jack O'Lanterns, but also within the realm of processing pumpkins. Actually, the majority of the processed pumpkins that you get, to take a can of pumpkins, or your bigger pie, bread, or whatever, are probably IL-grown. I think, as far as the actual different varieties of pumpkins, especially when we get into the small stuff and then all the

different colors and things, there's probably well over 200 different varieties of pumpkins, and that's just a very loose estimate. I haven't taken an account, but there are a lot more varieties than what the average person may realize." He says there are reasons IL is the top pumpkin-producing state, "There are multiple factors, I think. One, on the processing side, a lot of that is driven by where the processing facilities are, so there's some in the Peoria area, there are some areas of processing, so they try to source, obviously, pumpkins fairly close to that due to freight and shipping constraints. However, overall, the reason this area was kind of developed into pumpkin production and many other Midwest states is that we have fairly ideal conditions." The weather is typically very good for growing pumpkins, "We have a balance of the summertime heat. We've had plenty of that this year, but we also have very fertile soils, some of probably the most productive even in the world, some would say, and with balance with the temperate climate that we have that pumpkins appreciate and enjoy." A large part of the yearly pumpkin production heads out of state, "I don't know the numbers, but a large portion of it does go out of state. We have a lot of commercial growers on the Jack O'Lantern side, or I should say, you know, the ornamental side, which are shipping pumpkins all over the United States in the wholesale market and other things. A lot of the pumpkins that go out, and certainly, on the canned pumpkin, at one point, I thought that Illinois raised around 80 % of the nation's pumpkins. So, certainly, a large amount of canned pumpkins go out of state and across the country." (KSIR radio)

- **Ackerman's Pumpkin Farm** is just east of Morton, IL, the pumpkin capital of the US, where the Libby plant turns tons of pumpkins every day into cans of sauce that fill pumpkin pies year-round. For most farmers in the Morton and Peoria area, pumpkins are a commodity. But for Ackerman's Farm [they are also agri-tourism as noted in this video](#), and [also this pumpkin contracting video](#) taken in the fall of 2021. Sadly, the 2025 pumpkin season was to be the retirement season for Ackerman's Pumpkin Farm.
- **Illinois is far and away** [America's pumpkin-growing king](#) notes [Axios](#). But we already know it. [Illinois Manufacturers' Association](#) members [Nestlé](#) and its [Libby's](#) plant in Morton, along with Seneca Foods in Princeton make more than 90% of canned pumpkin sold worldwide. Pumpkin pie was named the official state pie in 2015. Morton hosts an annual Pumpkin Classic Festival with a "pumpkin chuckin'" contest.



Pic—Jamie Ellis

Food and Nutrition News--

- **An important American food aid program** is no longer in danger after funding was found to support it during the government shutdown. Axios said the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC, is relied on heavily by millions of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women and young children. The program provides vouchers for healthy foods and was in danger of running out of funding within weeks amid the government shutdown. The White House said it will transfer funding derived from tariff revenue to keep the program going "for the foreseeable future," according to a White House official, who described the infusion as a temporary fix and declined to say how much money was being sent. The Office of Management and Budget worked to find a creative solution to preserve WIC, which annually has over 6 mil. people benefit from the program.

- **September saw global food commodity prices** drop as declines in the sugar and dairy industries offset a new peak for meat prices. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Food Price Index, which tracks a basket of internationally traded food commodities, averaged 128.8 points in September, down from a revised 129.7 in August. The index was 3.4% higher than the same month last year, though it had fallen about 20% from the record level in March 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Farm Safety and Welfare—

- **This World Mental Health Day**, we want to highlight our farming communities that often get overlooked in these conversations. On this day, thousands of supporters come to celebrate this annual [awareness program](#) to bring attention to mental illness and its major effects on people's lives worldwide. In addition, this day provides an opportunity for mental health professionals to discuss and shed light on their work, making mental health a priority worldwide. According to the National Rural Health Association, farmers are 3.5x more likely to die by suicide than the general population. Farming can take a toll - both physically and mentally. Mental health matters every day, so we want to share a few resources that are accessible every day. We see you. We hear you. We're here for you

FREE & ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES **Illinois Resources**

- | | |
|--|---|
| • IL Ag Mental Health Voucher Program
• 217-333-6205 | • IL 24/7 Farm & Rural Stress Hotline
• 800-691-4336 |
| • Farm Family Resource Initiative - IL
• 1-833-FARM-SOS | • Farm Family Wellness Alliance
• 1-833-999-FARM |
| • NAMI Illinois
• 1-800-950-NAMI | • Illinois Warm Line
• 866-359-7953 |



Agribusiness—

- **Farmers Business Network has a new business strategy.** FBN announced it is separating its businesses. Moving forward [FBN will focus on its digital marketplace](#) for farmers, and the newly launched Global Crop Solutions will be an independent supplier of crop protection products. Diego Casanello, CEO, said, "FBN's core business is a digital commerce and fintech platform. We want farmers to be able to buy, finance, and market everything they need while sitting in their combines. These are technology challenges, so the core competence you need to be successful at FBN is different from managing the supply chain of the crop protection business. The big unlock for GCS is the opportunity to serve the entire retail and co-op industry," Casanello says. "It frees GCS of any channel conflicts and hits the ground running with one of the largest portfolios of products in the industry. Currently, FBN says it has 120,000 farmer members in the U.S. and Canada.
- **Tyson Foods and Cargill** will pay a combined \$87.5 mil. in a settlement reached with the Consumer Indirect Purchaser plaintiffs in a beef price-fixing lawsuit that began in 2019. Filed this week in a MN U.S. District Court, the Consumer IPP class notified the court that Tyson will pay \$55 mil. and Cargill \$32.5 mil. in monetary relief. Both of the companies agreed to cooperate in the case against the two remaining defendants, JBS and National Beef Packing. The class action lawsuit claims that the 4 largest meatpackers, who control 80% of the market, conspired to restrict the supply of cattle and fix beef prices.
- **Equipment orders have dropped sharply, [leading to increased tariff expenses](#).** John Deere anticipates that these costs will reach \$600 mil. this fiscal year, potentially impacting around 12,000 manufacturing jobs. Company officials attribute the decline to seasonal slowdowns and ongoing trade barriers. For instance, the cost of tariffs for Deere is equivalent to the annual payroll of a medium-sized manufacturing plant. The decrease in workforce capacity may disrupt critical spring planting schedules and preparations for the upcoming harvest across the Midwest agricultural heartland. Deere & Company plans to move mid-size tractor production from Dubuque, IA, to an expanded facility in Mexico by 2026, backed by a \$55 mil. investment. This decision aligns with the closure of the Iowa plant and reflects the company's cost-reduction strategy, raising concerns among workers about the future of American manufacturing. Case IH and AGCO are increasing their market presence as Deere reduces operations. In IA, some dealers are expanding their product lines beyond Deere, while others are offering more competitive financing options to attract customers seeking alternatives. With steel and component prices increasing by 15-25%, the company faces a tough decision: absorb the losses or pass the increased costs onto already-struggling farmers. The Moline facility, which previously employed 4,500, has lost over 800 jobs since August 2025. These layoffs signal significant economic challenges for communities that rely on John Deere as a major employer.

- **October is National Co-op Month**, an annual opportunity to raise awareness of a trusted, proven way to do business and build resilient communities. The National Farmers Union is joining with cooperatives and credit unions across rural America to celebrate. During October, the NFU is joining over 65,000 cooperatives across the U.S. in observing National Co-op Month, observed in the U.S. since 1964. The theme for this year is “Cooperatives Build a Better World,” and it was chosen by the National Cooperative Business Association to echo the United Nations declaration of 2025 as the second International Year of Cooperatives. Cooperative enterprise is central to the mission of the Farmers Union, which was founded in 1914 as the “Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America.”

Technology—

- **Just what you need**, a re-do of your farm’s GPS mapping! [Specialists at IA St. Univ.](#) say, “Big changes are coming in 2026 to the geodetic reference systems “datums” behind GPS and if you're using GPS for precision ag, surveying, or construction, these changes may affect your A-B lines, boundaries, and other mapped data. The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) will officially replace two outdated reference frames:
 - ✓ NAD 83 (2011) → will be replaced by NAD 83(2011) for latitude and longitude positioning, because NAD 83 is off by about 2.2 meters from the Earth’s actual center.
 - ✓ NAVD 88 → will be replaced by NAVD 88 for elevational positioning, because NAVD 88 has a tilted vertical bias, off by up to 1 meter in places.

This is part of a modernization of the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS), the framework that underpins how all GPS-based coordinates are calculated in North America. But why is this needed? It is not an effort to sell new GPS systems, but it is like wiping sweat from your forehead, but a bit more complex. The new datums will align better with global positioning systems (like Galileo and GLONASS), providing improved accuracy and reducing discrepancies across different platforms. ([For the full details, check here.](#)) IA St. folks say, “Taking a little time now to understand how your equipment references position data will save you headaches (and potential errors) down the road. Don’t wait.”

- **According to Research Intelio**, the global agricultural drones market size reached \$4.7 bil. in 2024. That demonstrated robust momentum, which is expected to continue. The market is projected to reach a value of \$29.1 bil. by 2033, driven by the escalating adoption of precision farming and the growing demand for advanced agricultural solutions. This growth trajectory is driven by the increasing integration of cutting-edge drone technologies intended for crop monitoring, field mapping, and yield optimization across diverse geographies. The global agricultural drones market is witnessing exponential growth as farmers increasingly adopt advanced technologies to enhance crop productivity and reduce operational costs. Manufacturers are also developing hybrid drones that combine the endurance of fixed-wing models with the agility of multi-rotor drones, making them ideal for large-scale agricultural operations. Unprecedented innovations in battery life and payload capacity have extended flight times, allowing them to cover much larger areas of land.

- **Is your corn yield inside or outside of the GROWMARK envelope?** [GROWMARK's newly launched myFS Agronomy platform](#) utilized data from 4.9 mil. acres of farmland throughout the Midwest in 2025 through remote sensing technology using airplanes, drones, and satellites, to generate corn yield estimates ranging from a high of 255 bu. per acre in Central IA to a low of 193 bu. per acre in Southern IL. At the individual farmer level, the application has achieved results with yields of at least 95% accuracy at key estimate timings in late July and early August. "The myFS Agronomy app allows yield predictions as early as mid-June for enrolled growers, giving farmers a general feel for yield trends earlier in the season, and this will only improve as more acres are added," said Brendan Bachman, FS Agronomy Director.
- **AI, or artificial intelligence**, is making its way into U.S. agriculture. Heather Hampton Knodle (right), president of Knodle Farms, Fillmore, IL, recently spoke on AI at the Rural Economic Outlook Conference at OK St. Univ. She said the technology is already in operation in American agriculture, "One that's exciting on the horizon, and there are some versions of it in the marketplace, but for example, in-barn cameras, where you might have confinement or feeding operations, and say, you have thousands of animals there, there are technologies that can kind of track each animal individually and show signs of maybe illness, or are they going to need an antibiotic, or are they going to need some other form of treatment long before we would notice it with our human eye. It provides that kind of amazing kind of early-warning detection and sometimes even diagnosis." She talked about where producers can start to work with the technology, "Well, one that really comes to mind, especially where people have cash crops, in particular, like a food-based crop, some of these weeding technologies that are being beta tested right now and somewhere on the market, where they have, like the call it, CN spray, type that can help so much to reduce labor and increase your efficiency and also decrease your input costs for the chemical itself. Yes, there is a tech fee attached to it, but it is generally offset by significant savings across the board." Potential hurdles to implementing the technology on American farms include connectivity, "Connectivity. I refer to it as the mesh because it's not only the physical connectivity, either through satellite or cellular, but also the ability to compute. So, we have so much data. It's said that a 140-acre corn field has as much data as the entire Library of Congress. Okay, so if we were to actually take that data in-season and say, what can I add now to this crop? If I can apply sulfur for a quarter an acre, 25¢, and that's going to, at this moment, if I apply it in the next 2 days, that could help me increase my yield by approximately 10 bu. I want to do that. Artificial intelligence allows us to see so much more than what we can with the naked eye." For producers who haven't yet tried AI, Knodle encouraged small steps like using AI tools to summarize farm magazine articles or synthesize research insights that they may not have time to read. (Radio OK Network)

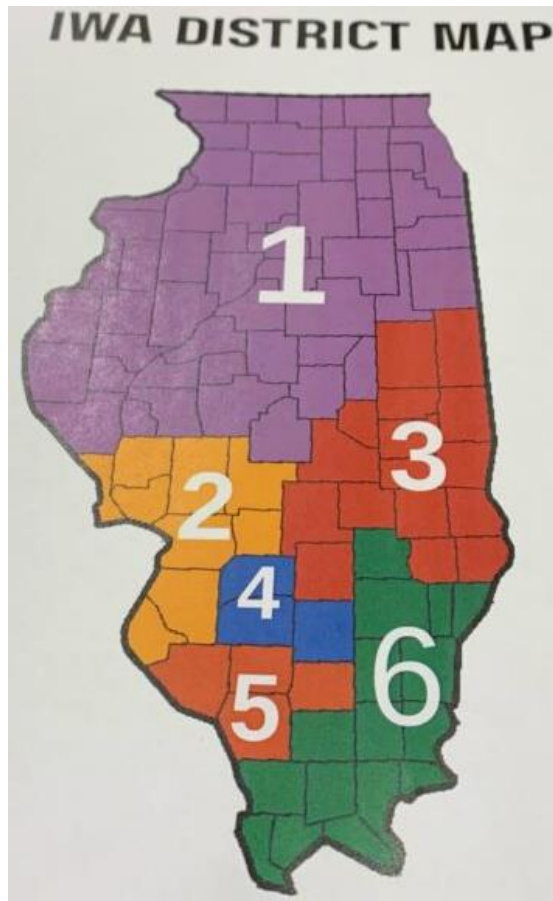


Farm and Check-off Organizations —

- **One of agriculture's biggest annual events** gets underway at the end of the month in Indianapolis. The 98th FFA National Convention and Expo will take place Oct. 29 through Nov. 1 bringing more than 70-thousand young people in blue corduroy jackets to the Hoosier State. Christine White, chief program officer of the National FFA Organization, says it's a highlight of the year for many FFA-ers, "When you look at it from a perspective for some FFA members, it's a pinnacle of their event, and for others, it's a launching point of their FFA career. So, it's an opportunity to hear motivational speakers, hear from our national officers, and compete in competitive events. This year, we will recognize the highest record number of American farmer degrees or American degree recipients than we've had in the past." White says there are plenty of opportunities for personal growth as well, "We will have workshops throughout convention that students can engage in and be able to learn new things and take that back to their home communities. We also have career success tours, so exposing students to agricultural career opportunities in the greater Indianapolis area, so they can go visit different locations, but just to learn a little bit more about those pieces. So, it's about really opening horizons and providing good connection points with real life experiences that they may not get in their local communities." There will also be lots of ways for FFA members to give back to the Indianapolis community, "We will have students that will be going to the food pantries and helping reclaim food that has been donated and helping to distribute some of those components. We are partnering with Indy Humane, and they are working on creating emergency kits and leashes. So, they're using paracord to create leashes to go into those kits for when they're rescuing animals." (NAFB News Service) →
- **And during that event** in Indianapolis, Illinois will be celebrating, because IL FFA will be at the top of the heap at the National FFA convention. IL FFA is approaching its 100th birthday in a couple years, and nothing like this has ever happened. And Mindy Bunselmeyer tells you about it [in this short video](#). She is the executive director of IL FFA.
- **Speaking of FFA**, help honor IL ag educators for their tremendous contributions, which help grow the next generation of agricultural leaders. The Golden Owl Award winner and IL Ag Educator of the Year will receive \$3,000 and 5 additional honorees will win \$500. Submit nominations through Nov. 15, 2025. [Details are here](#). The Golden Owl Award® allows us to also extend our support to agricultural educators who devote countless hours, and often their own resources, to positively impact the lives of their students. The deadline is Nov. 15.



- **Members of the new IL Wheat Development Board** will be elected Oct 30 in a



referendum at county Farm Bureau offices. Jerry Costello II, Director of the IL Dept. of Agriculture, urged wheat producers to vote, saying, "By working together and sharing their perspectives, growers can help ensure continued innovation, market growth, and long-term success for the industry." Candidates for the Wheat Development Board are being elected 1 per district, with 3 additional at-large members. Districts 1 and 5 do not have any candidates on the ballot, and qualified producers interested in serving as an At-Large or District Board member may participate in the October 30, 2025, election as a write-in candidate. Also, there is a seat open for an at large candidate which could be filled by a write-in candidate. Absentee ballots are available to those not available to vote in person by contacting the IL Dept. of Agriculture at 217-524-1083 or by email at agr.marketnews@illinois.gov. [Full details and names of candidates on the ballot are included in this announcement from the IL Dept. of Ag.](#)

- **Sam Kieffer will take over** as CEO of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) on November 1, bringing decades of experience in farming, military service, and ag policy. His leadership comes as U.S. wheat growers face shifting trade dynamics, delayed USDA data, and new export opportunities, particularly with Bangladesh. Kieffer has been head of public policy for the American Farm Bureau.
- **Musical chairs in Washington** returns Dr. John Newton to the American Farm Bureau, to oversee the policy office left by Sam Kieffer and also oversee the farm economics analysis. Newton created Terrain Ag a year ago for the Farm Credit System, after advising the GOP members of the Senate Ag Committee on Farm Bill economics. His high-profile career also included a stint in the Univ. of IL Farmdoc team, after the retirement of Darrell Good. He recently spoke at the Chicago Fed's Midwest Agriculture Conference and [addressed many issues in this short video](#).



- **The U.S. Grains and BioProducts Council (USGBC)**, in partnership with state and national checkoff organizations, recently participated in strategic visits to Canada and Mexico to update member leaders on the Council's international investments and represent the strategic vision of U.S. corn and sorghum growers to customers. "This mission provided a unique opportunity for state leaders to directly engage in U.S. agriculture's largest export markets for corn, barley, distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS) and sorghum, strengthening bonds with global customers and reinforcing the U.S. industry's commitment to reliable grain and ethanol supply," said USGBC Vice President Cary Sifferath. The delegation arrived in Mexico City for a meeting with USDA Foreign Agricultural Service staff based in the country followed by discussions with several feed milling associations and rail transportation stakeholders. After traveling to Ottawa, the group met with a slate of policymakers including leaders from Environment and Climate Change Canada, Natural Resources Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to discuss the strong ethanol trade between the U.S. and Canada.

And now a short break for this message—

- **Look across the plains of midwestern states** this time of year, and you'll see it in action: combines rolling from dawn 'til dusk, gathering the golden bounty of the harvest. On October 12th, we celebrated the incredible people behind that bounty on National Farmer's Day. It's a day to give a much-deserved salute to the men, women, and families who are the backbone of our nation and the stewards of our land.



Thanks guys and gals!

Mark Your Calendar! --

- **If you need ammonia training** ahead of the fall application season, The last in-person Competent Attendant Training of the year will be held on Tuesday, October 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Agricenter in Bloomington, IL This training covers essential safety practices and regulatory requirements for ammonia facilities. Attendees who complete the course will receive a 3-year certification as a competent attendant. **Register here:** https://ifca.com/IFCA_Training
- **MAHA isn't over**—and IL farmers need to understand what's coming next. In this webinar, Callie Eideberg, former Senior Staffer to the Senate Ag Committee and DC policy insider, will reveal how the movement could affect your farm operations. Make sure you're prepared for the policies shaping your farm's future. Sponsored by the IL Soybean Assn, October 21, 10 am. [Register here](#).
- **Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Conf.** will be held Nov. 5. in the I Hotel and Conf. Center in Champaign. Agenda and details will be forthcoming.
- **A workshop for watershed leaders** will be held Nov. 5-7 at Allerton Park and Retreat Center near Monticello. The workshop is an interactive forum on new viewpoints, real questions, and a hands-on approach to learning. Watershed leaders from IL, IA, WI, MO, and MN will be participating. Registration is \$275. INFO: 608-792-5550.
- **NACD, in partnership with NRCS**, has issued a request for proposals for Technical Assistance (TA) Grants. Applications are due by November 6, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. ET and must be submitted through the NACD Application Portal. For more information, to apply, or to register for the informational webinar, visit [NACD's website](#).
- **The IL Beef Foundation** will hold its 2025 Cattlemen's Gala and Fundraiser Nov 21 in Springfield. A dinner, program, auction, and raffle will precede entertainment. [Details and tickets are available here](#).
- **A podcast about conservation funding in IL** is available for viewing. [Eliot Clay](#), executive director of the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and [Andrew Larson](#), director of government relations and strategy at the Illinois Soybean Association, join the Field Advisor podcast to talk about the critical role of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in IL. View [the podcast here](#).



- **Cornbelt Update** is a weekly service of the Illinois Soybean Association and provided to its farmer leadership.
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