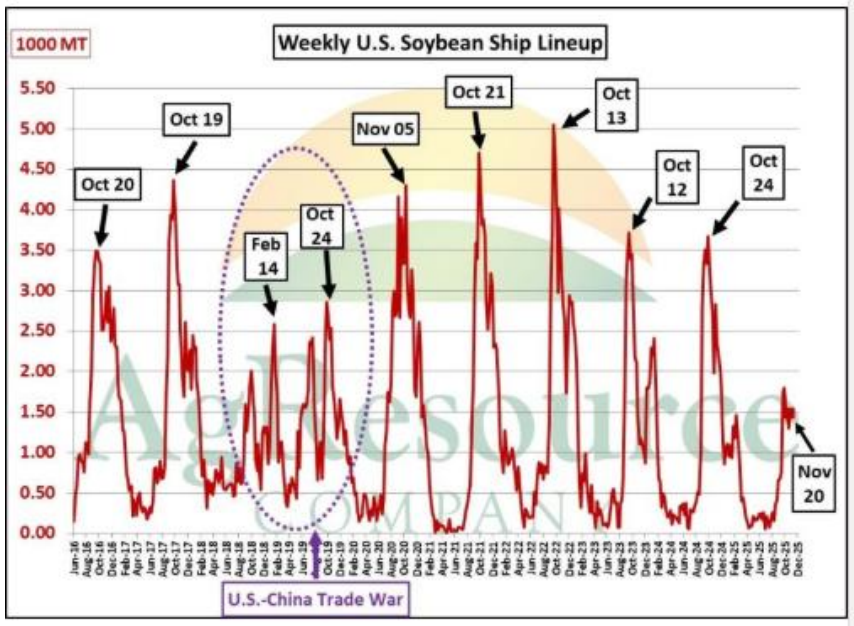
A weekly Cornbelt digest of marketing, economic, agronomic, and management information.

Commodity Market Drivers—

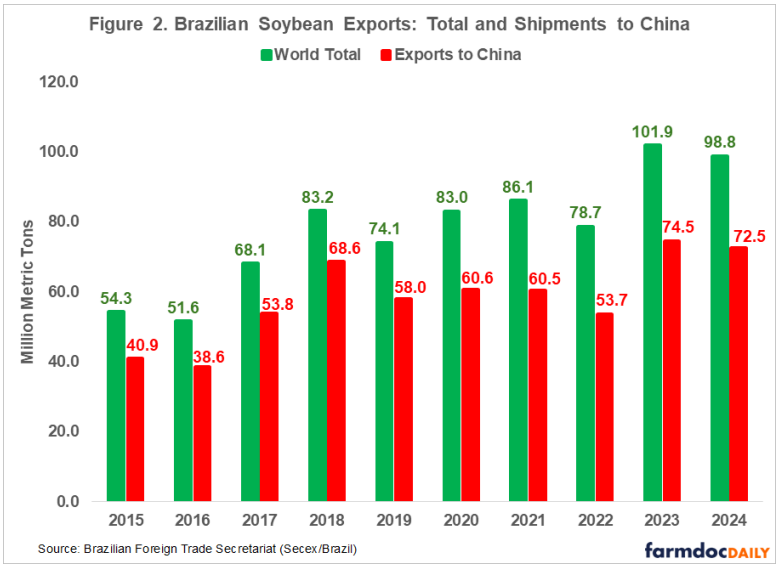
- **Traders with knowledge of the deal** told Reuters that China bought at least 14 cargoes of U.S. soybeans. It's the largest Chinese purchase since early in 2025 and the most significant since a summit between President Donald Trump and President Xi Jinping during October in Busan, South Korea. "China is buying the soybeans to meet the pledges it made to Washington D.C., even though the cargoes are more expensive than the prices Brazil charges for similar shipments," Reuters said. "The bigger round of soybean buys from the US is no longer a goodwill gesture, but manifestation of China's commitment to the Busan, South Korea meeting's terms." China's state-owned grain trader COFCO bought at least 31 mil. bu. for shipment in December and January. During the government shutdown, USDA data showed China bought 8.5 mil. bu. of soybeans, bringing the total to almost 40 mil. bu.
- **"The White House announced a trade agreement** with China in October in which China agreed to purchase at least 440 mil. bu. of U.S. soybeans by the end of 2025, and at least 920 mil. bu. each year through 2028." "Asked what would happen if China does not meet the 440 mil. agreement by the Jan. 1 deadline, a USDA spokesperson wrote that the "farm economy is in a difficult situation' and Trump is 'utilizing all the tools available to ensure farmers have what they need to continue their farming operations. The USDA will 'continue to assess the farm economy and explore the need for further assistance, however, there is nothing new to share at this time," the spokesperson wrote in an email. Even if purchases fall short of the 440 mil. bu. that U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced, the uptick in sales has buoyed crop prices. Some Chinese traders also cashed in after booking long positions when prices slumped, but any American farmers who sold their crop before the Chinese purchase deal was announced did not benefit. →

- **The announcement triggered a flurry of sales by farmers**, like Ryan Frieders (below) of Waterman, IL, who were holding their crop hoping for such an uptick. It remained unclear how quickly China would reach the target that U.S. officials said Beijing has agreed to. The confirmed purchases of nearly 59 mil. bu. in 3 days sent U.S. prices sharply higher to a steep premium over shipments from rival exporter Brazil. That has made U.S. soybeans uncompetitive for other importers like Turkey and Vietnam. It also creates a problem for Beijing, which does not now need more beans after major purchases of South American crops. China must empty some of its national reserves to make space for the U.S. shipments.

- **For the first time in months**, 2 vessels carrying soybeans destined for China have appeared in the U.S. ship departure lineup says AgResouce chief economist Bill Tierney. As of November 20, the U.S. soybean ship lineup is estimated at 54 mil. bu., reflecting a 14% increase from the previous week. This week's soybean export inspections are projected to be 25 mil. bu., which would represent a 43% decrease from last week. There are 10 vessels to be loaded, down 5 from the previous week. The current ship lineup indicates that U.S. November Census exports could reach 156 mil. bu. In the November WASDE report, the USDA reduced their projection for U.S. exports by 50 mil. to 1.635 bil. bu., while the export projection by AgResource is 165 mil. bu. lower. Last year's exports totaled 1.893 bil. bu.. Notably, there were no vessels identified that departed for China this past week, although 2 vessels are currently in the lineup destined for China. It is possible that additional vessels have departed or are heading to China but are listed as unknown. The USDA has maintained their projection of China's imports at 4.1 bil. bu. in the November WASDE, with last year's imports estimated at 3.8 bil. bu.



- **"How does the current soybean deal** compare to previous U.S. export levels to China? And how might this impact the global soybean market in the years to come?" Those are questions that Farmdoc ag economists attempt to answer. "If China fulfills the reported 440 mil. bu. purchase commitment in the last 2 months of the year, U.S. soybean exports to the Chinese market in 2025 would total around 661 mil. bu. – 33% lower than in 2024, when exports to China reached 984 mil. bu. In recent years, after the trade deal in 2020, China has purchased roughly half of all U.S. soybean exports, compared to about 60% before the trade tensions began in 2018. If China purchases at least 920 mil. bu. of U.S. soybeans in each of 2026, 2027, and 2028, that volume would still be 14% lower than the 5-year average of 1.06 bil. bu. of soybean shipments to China from 2020 to 2024. The 10-year average was 992 mil. bu. The announcement that China would resume purchases from the United States supported soybean futures, which had moved slightly higher in recent days, reaching almost $11 per bu. – the highest level in over a year. Still, after the $11 per bu. futures price is adjusted for basis, the resulting cash price is still below the break-even point for many U.S. soybean producers in 2025. The 6-month suspension of U.S. soybean imports by China this year led Brazil to increase its exports to China to levels last seen in 2018. Between January and October, Brazil exported a record 2.9 bil. bu. of soybeans to China, accounting for nearly 80% of its total soybean exports during the period – approximately 3.67 bil. in total, according to Brazil's Foreign Trade Secretariat. The volume exported so far has already surpassed the total for 2024, which was just under 3.64 bil. bu. Argentina, the world's third-largest soybean producer – behind Brazil and the United States – has also benefited this year from China's temporary suspension of U.S. soybean imports. Between January and September, Argentina exported 280 mil. bu. of soybeans, with 90% of that volume destined for China. Given the ongoing uncertainty surrounding Chinese demand in the coming years, U.S. soybean exporters are trying to diversify their sales across markets in East Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Some progress has already been made in countries such as Thailand, Bangladesh, and Morocco. Still, it remains unclear whether these emerging markets can offset weaker demand from China and stabilize U.S. soybean acreage in 2026, preventing corn acreage from exceeding 95 mil. acres again which would add further pressure to corn prices that are already below break-even prices for many producers in the U.S. Midwest. A scenario in which corn acreage is as large as what it was in 2025 would also add to the financial stress corn and soybean producers are currently experiencing."



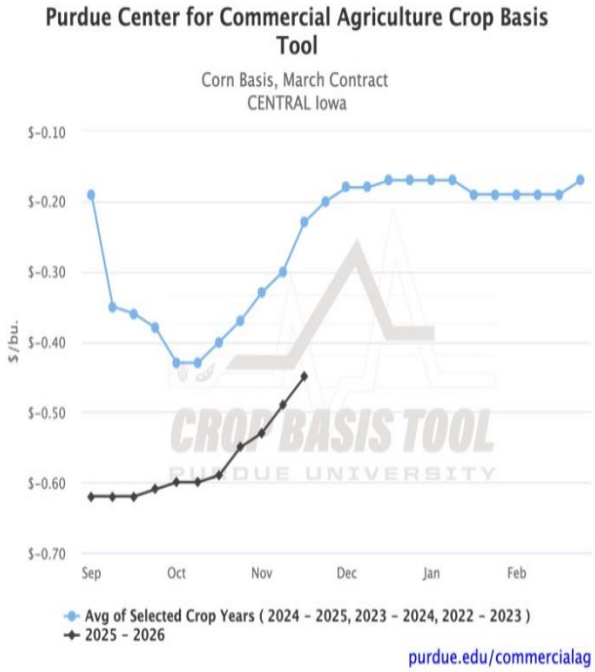
- **Analysts say the renewed buying by China** is a positive sign for growers who have faced soft prices, rising input costs, and uncertainty in global demand. Early reaction from grain traders points to cautious relief as export volumes begin to recover. Even so, China's purchases fall far short of longer-term commitments that U.S. officials have cited. China has not publicly confirmed figures (announced by the US). Recent tariff reductions and the lifting of import bans on several U.S. exporters indicate movement toward improved trade conditions, but overall volumes will need to increase significantly to meet stated goals. Market pressures also remain. U.S. soybeans are currently priced above Brazilian supplies at a time when Brazil is preparing for what could be another record harvest. Brazilian industry estimates now project a crop of more than 6.5 bil. bu., which would strengthen the country's position as the world's most competitive soybean supplier. Traders are closely watching weather conditions in South America as planting accelerates. The latest U.S. purchases help strengthen near-term export demand, but they come amid plentiful global stockpiles and intense competition. Grain companies note that scheduling and logistics challenges will require adjustments as the industry works soybeans back into shipping programs that have leaned more heavily on corn in recent months. For U.S. producers, the renewed activity is welcome, but the broader outlook still hinges on whether China continues buying at a scale that can meaningfully support prices heading into 2026.
- **As the end of 2025 approaches**, it's time to start looking ahead to the new year. Naomi Blohm, the senior market advisor with Total Farm Marketing, said, "Right now, in the United States, we had record corn acres planted this past year, and for the most part, we had pretty decent weather all the way up until August. And then, on the August USDA report, the USDA felt that corn yield was going to be this record amount of 188 bu., and that was just astounding to the market and led to the perception that we would have corn everywhere, and we were looking at $4 corn futures. But then, something happened in IA and portions of MO with Southern Rust." Southern Rust had never shown up in IA, a major corn-producing state, and took corn farmers by surprise at harvest, "My clients in IA have never really dealt with Southern Rust before, and so it was a new thing. They sprayed once. Not twice. Not 3 times, and so, at harvest, they were a little surprised by the dramatic yield reduction. I only had one client in IA who had, for him, better than last year's yields. Everyone else in IA that I work with was literally 20 bu. below last year. This is IA, so this has the potential to become a big deal." Blohm still expects further lowering of the U.S. corn yield early in 2026, "I think, in the future, you're going to see the corn yield number come down, and that shows up on the January WASDE. Now that's critical for the corn market. That's the cornerstone piece that we need for 2026. Now here's the deal. Corn demand is the bright spot in this whole marketplace. Corn demand for ethanol, solid, you know, closer to 5.5 bil. bu., so a third of what we grow goes right to ethanol. We're having record corn exports this year of 3 bil. bu. Fantastic." (NAFB News Service)

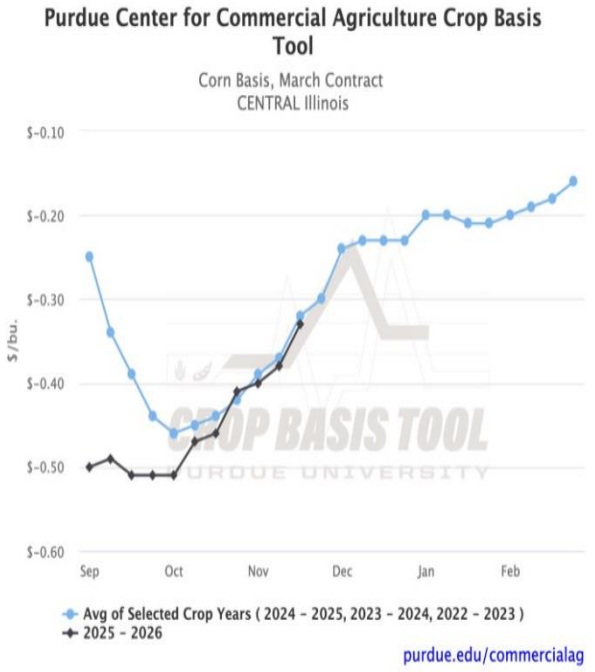
- **USDA reports that the 2025 U.S. harvest** is nearing completion, with 91% of the country's corn crop and 95% of soybeans harvested as of Nov. 16 in the top 18 producing states. Corn harvesting lags the 5-year ave. of 94% and trails last year's progress when 98% was already completed. Soybean harvests are just one point behind the 5-year pace of 96% and 3 points behind 2024's 98% finish. Farmers in IA report essentially wrapping up operations, with only about 3% of corn and 1% of soybeans left to harvest. Weather disruptions earlier in the season, including rain and frost, help explain the slower pace in some regions.
- **The Nov. 14 WASDE report** is still drawing critical analysis from the grain trade. "(The) WASDE Report provided both production changes as well as demand changes, but they may have been disappointing for some who were hoping for good news. Rich Nelson of Allendale says the corn number were disappointing, "For our corn side of things, we saw yield declines in this case just 0.7 bu., 186 bu. per acre across the board, so a smaller than expected yield decline. In this case, stocks about 2.15 (bil. bu.) so in terms of an adequate stock number, this is certainly it. USDA made no changes for South America production or China as well. So, corn a little disappointing." USDA lowered soybean production slightly by half a bu. per acre, but it was the export numbers that were unexpected, "Now maybe surprising the sum, but we did see USD lower exports by 50 mil. bu. Keep in mind, even with the China trade deal, is probably not yet enough to justify that viewpoint." Nelson says this WASDE, the first report issued by USDA since the government shutdown began in September, was a letdown across the board for crop farmers, "Number 1, exports were not raised here for the US side. Number 2, and a little more disappointing, they really raised a lot of foreign competitors. In fact, foreign competition up 11 mil. metric tons just on this report alone. So, disappointing all around for corn, soybeans and wheat." (OK Farm Report)
- **Mother Nature has been kind to grain production**, and there will be more of it this year. That is the analysis of the International Grains Council (IGC) which forecast record grain production in the 2025-26 season. The IGC's latest Grain Market Report, released on Nov. 20, projected output for total grains (wheat and coarse grains) to increase by 5% over the previous year, with year-on-year increases for all grains. "The larger global harvest will more than compensate for the tightest opening stocks in 10 seasons, boosting overall supply by 3%, to an all-time peak (92.3 bil. bu.)," the IGC said. The increase will be needed as the Council sees total grains consumption rising by 2% in 2025-26, to a new high of 91 bil. bu. due to higher food, feed and industrial uses. While the forecast for global maize (corn) production increased only slightly (39 mil. bu.) month on month, a 5% year-on-year increase to a record 51 bil. bu. is anticipated by the IGC. Conversely, global soybean output was revised lower by 79 mil. bu. in the November report. Production is seen dropping by 118 mil. bu. year on year to 16.7 bil. bu. However, the IGC noted that the projected figure is "well ahead of the recent average, including a potentially record outturn in Brazil." "With consumption seen at a new peak (16.9 bil. bu.), on gains in Asia and the Americas in particular, inventories could tighten by around 200 mil. bu. year on year," the IGC said.

- **Grain Market details from** General Manager Kevin Walker and staff at Legacy Grain.
  - ✓ **Soybean market drivers**: Soybeans turned higher to close the Friday session, as contracts were up 1 to 2½¢ in the front months. January managed to post a ½¢ gain on the week, despite closing 44½¢ off this week's high. The CmdtyView national average Cash Bean price was up 2¾¢ at $10.52¾. Soymeal futures were up $1 to $2.30 on the day, with December dropping $7.40 on the week. Soy Oil futures were 33 to 40 points lower as Dec posted an 11-point gain from last Friday. Commitment of Traders data showed soybean speculators at a net short position of 353 contracts as of 10/7. That was a 38,359-contract reduction in the net short position during that week. USDA's monthly Fats & Oils report showed a total of 198 mil. bu. of soybeans crushed in August. That was a record for the month and 18.19% above last year, but down 3.48% from the July total. Soybean oil stocks were tallied at 1.79 bil. lbs., which was down 4.62% from the end of July but 9.71% above the year prior. Jan 26 Soybeans closed at $11.25, up 2½¢¢, Nearby Cash was $10.52¾, up 2¾¢.

- ✓ **Corn drivers**: Corn futures held onto the losses across the front months on Friday, as contracts were fractionally to a penny lower. December was down 4¾¢ this week as the contract's options expired today. The CmdtyView national average Cash Corn price was down 1¢ at $3.87¼. USDA's delayed Grain Crushing report showed a total of 463.44 mil. bu. of corn used in ethanol production during August. That was a 1.2% increase from July but down 3.36% from the year prior. CFTC data from the week of October 7 showed managed money with a net short position of 141,966 contracts in corn futures and options. That was an addition of 6,656 contracts as of that week. Dec 25 Corn closed at $4.25½, down 1¢, Nearby Cash was $3.87¼, down 1¢.

- **Is the basis your marketing game?** Many farmers can forecast it nearly to the penny because they have played the game for many years. But could 2025-2026 marketing year be different. Ag economists in the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture say, "Stop assuming the basis will simply follow the historical average. Across the Eastern Cornbelt, corn and soybean basis have moved noticeably higher as harvest wraps up. Central OH corn basis to March futures is about $0.30/bu above trend, and west central IN soybean basis has climbed roughly $0.46/bu in the past 4 weeks. IA, meanwhile, continues to lag, with several locations still near 7-year lows. As we head into winter, historical patterns point to slower movement — but this year's deviations highlight the importance of tracking your local basis rather than relying solely on seasonal norms. The Purdue economists have created a "crop basis tool," and say, "In contrast to the substantial basis increase in the easternmost states monitored in the Crop Basis Tool, IA has experienced a more gradual post-harvest improvement. While basis has increased across much of the state, a weak start



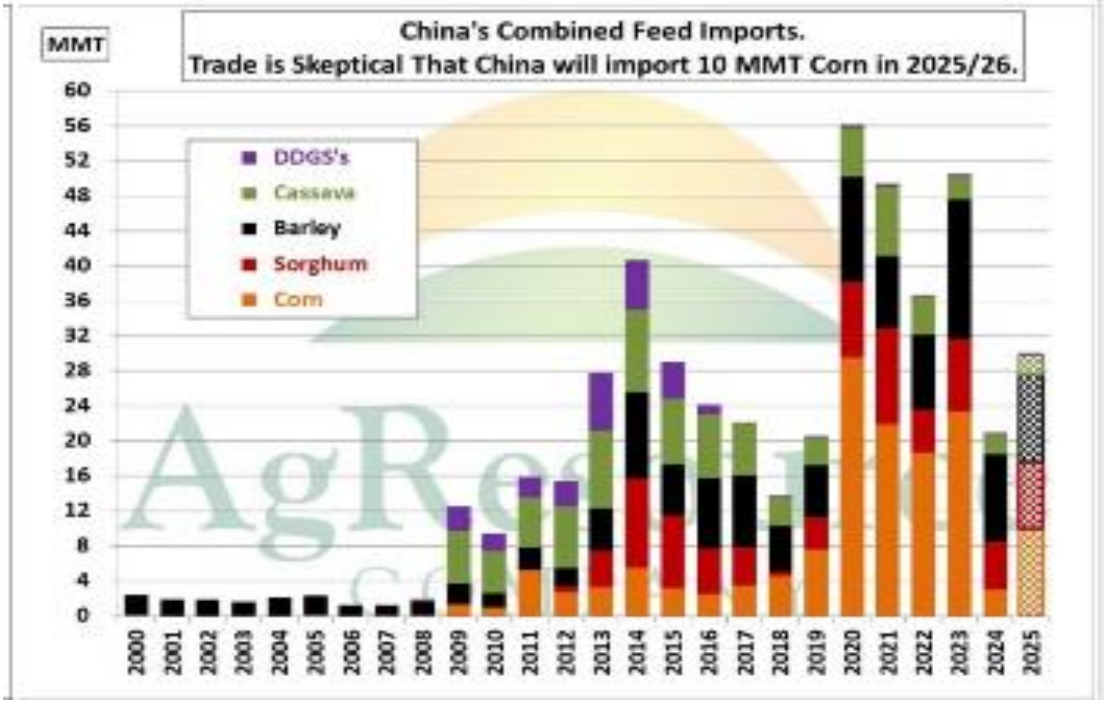


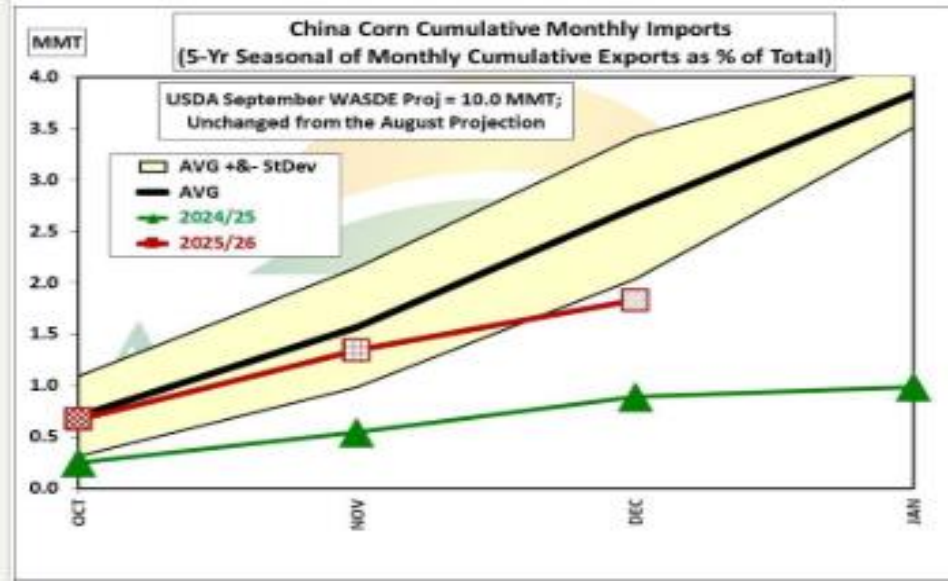
to the marketing year has kept several locations at 7-year lows. Figure 3 (left) provides an example using the central IA corn basis to March futures. Although the basis for the third week of November is a marketing year high, it is still $0.22/bu below the 3-year average. In IL, we observe a transition from the below-trend basis in IA to the above-trend basis in IN. The basis is below the historical average in the southwestern part of the state and above it in the southeastern part. In the rest of the state, both corn and soybean basis are within a few cents of the historical trend. For example, corn basis in central IL has been within $0.02/bu of the historical average since the second week of October (Figure 4, right). When we look at Figures 3 and 4 together, we see that the historical corn basis to March futures in central IA and central IL are very similar. In fact, the IA historical trend is slightly higher than the IL, further highlighting this year's relative weakness in IA.

- **Why did soybean oil suddenly tumble late last week?** Many commodity analysts weighed in on their ideas. And many were similar to this analysis from STAG International Group, which posted, "In the past week, soybean oil futures fell amid news that the Trump administration is weighing a 1-to-2-year delay to its proposed cuts in incentives for imported biofuels, reflecting pressure from refiners concerned about higher costs and tighter fuel supplies. While a postponement would ease burdens on the oil sector—especially in bio-based diesel—it risks alienating farmers and producers who depend on stable credit values. The EPA is now evaluating whether implementation should slip to 2027 or 2028. Apart from the soybean oil news, no major fundamental event was released to explain the price action. US weekly ethanol production came in line with market expectation (1.091 mb/d), but still far from trending towards 565 mil. bu. year-over-year a growth that the US Department of Agriculture analysts are forecasting. It is likely that USDA will still trim yields and use the supply side to argue that the demand side should be also adjusted, that is, or the December or January WASDE may bring lower corn ethanol use. Soybean futures hardly will have any upside factor, as China has no reason to purchase more than 12 mil. tons while Brazil's crop is currently developing without major issues. Even with crush surprisingly up, the export side will still weigh in the CBOT soybean price formation. In the next weeks, with a clear view over Argentina's weather prospects, it will be possible to evaluate any shock for the soymeal or soybean oil coming from the Argentinean weather market."

- **Where do US corn exports really go?** The United States remains the world's leading corn exporter, with total exports reaching $13.7 bil. in 2024 (USDA). But who are the main buyers of American corn? Mexico alone accounts for 40% of total U.S. corn exports, reflecting strong trade ties and regional integration. Japan and Colombia follow, highlighting the importance of both Asia and Latin America in global corn flows. Despite geopolitical and trade tensions, China still ranks in the top 10 buyers. The diversity of buyers (from North America to Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America) shows how U.S. corn is a truly global commodity.

- **USDA projects a large increase** in China's feed imports in 2025/26 (below). USDA is projecting that China's corn imports this year will be 390 mil. bu. In 2024/25 imports were just 72 mil. bu., the smallest corn imports since 2010/11. Over the last 10 years, corn has been the largest feed imported about half the time. USDA is also projecting large imports of barley and sorghum. However, "pace analysis" suggests that 2025/26 corn annual imports will be 263 mil. bu. vs USDA's Sep projection of 390 mil. bu. (left). Our projections of China's corn IMPORTS for Oct-Nov are based on corn EXPORTS to China that occurred in Sep and Oct. Our projection for China's Dec corn imports is based on ship lineups at major corn exporting countries as of Oct 31.



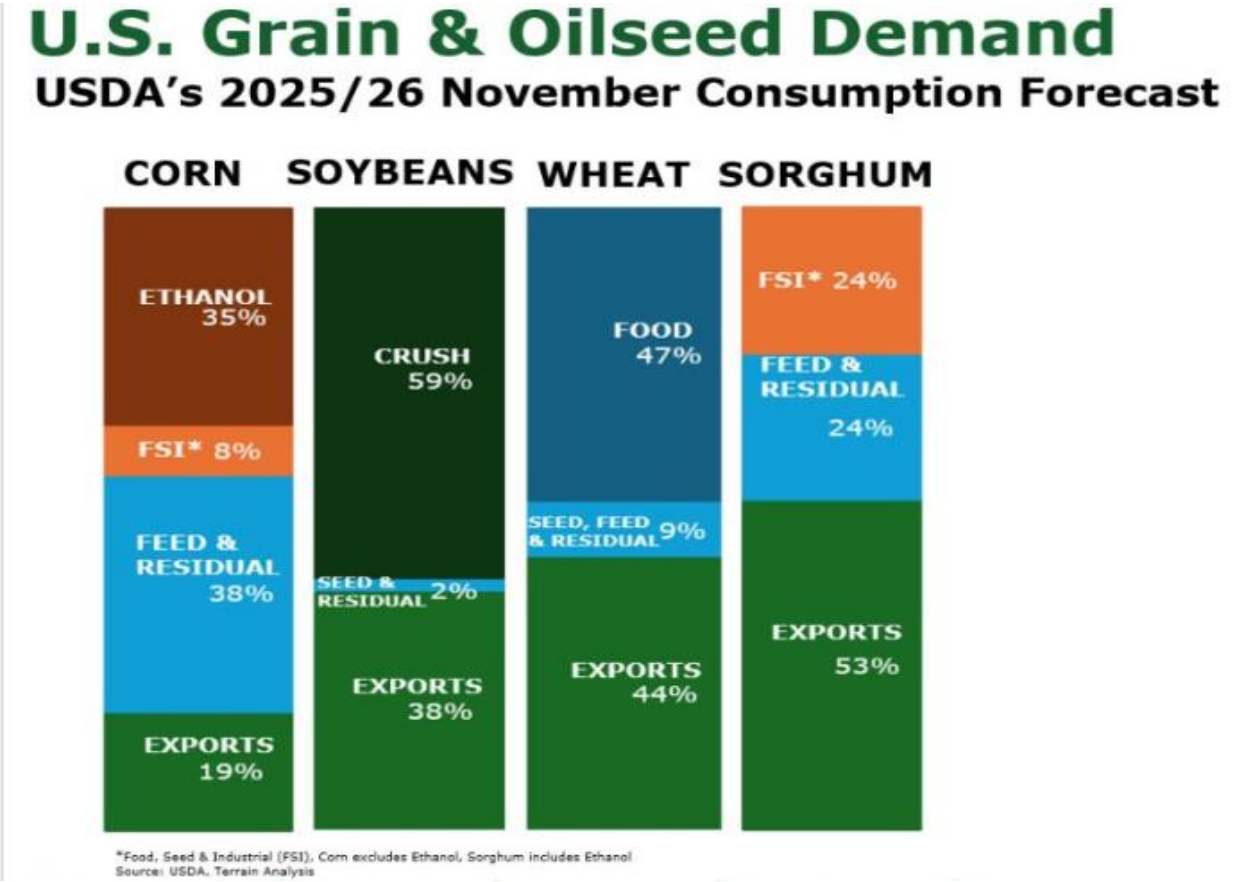


- **Corn exports are good.** Livestock are consuming an expected volume. Ethanol is doing well. But corn processors could do better. John Bode, President and CEO of the Corn Refiners Association says, "Corn processing has gotten headlines from the MAHA commission which are not entirely accurate. And in this short video he says the industry needs some better headlines to help the corn economy."

- **There is optimism surrounding a recent drop** in the strength of the U.S. dollar. Mike Zuzolo, president of Global Commodity Analytics, said many are hoping that the drop opens some more export opportunities for U.S. commodities, "Yeah. And one of the things that's happened here in the last 10–15 days has been a very big correction in Bitcoin futures. I'm waiting to see for the Federal Reserve and other macro issues that are impacting these currencies, and is kind of giving the commodities as a whole a risk-off look, whether it's crude oil, unleaded gas, feeder cattle, or soybeans, everything is down pretty good on Wednesday, and so, you see that macro play there. But the big thing to be watching, I think again, goes back to the dollar trend. It doesn't become a safe haven again and a buy again, and I think that would be signaled if gold did what the bitcoin is doing right now. If the market gives up on the inflationary bias and the trade war fears of the gold rally that we've seen to new record highs in 2025, I will take note of that." He said South American weather may have a quicker-than-average. impact on the markets at the end of 2025, "It really has. And I think this goes back to one of the biggest things that I think we can take away from 2025 is the market, when it comes to corn, beans, and wheat, has traded U.S. supply-demand fundamentals, not global supply-demand fundamentals, and I think that puts more spotlight on the crude oil, on the dollar, and also the wheat. But I think that's part of the reason, along with the fact that I think we've seen the South American weather market pulled forward by about 2 to 3 weeks here. We usually start that weather market after Thanksgiving, closer to Christmas, at least in my mind. That's when we usually start talking about it more and pricing it into the trade. But it seems to me, with that trade deal signed, maybe the weather has become a much more important feature. That would make sense, because my bias is very simple. I don't think China is going to be pressured into anything from the United States, especially when it comes to ag commodities. And if that's the case, why would they buy unless South America had weather problems?" Zuzolo also said, "I think the big thing that I see in 2026, as we get ready to change years, is what we're seeing in Wednesday's trade, where we've got a very good bid in the U.S. dollar at this point, and we've got a very strong break to the downside in the energy markets. I think this is going to be one of the keys to 2026 as far as corn and beans, and wheat, especially, being able to hold any kind of gains. Otherwise, we're probably going to continue to trade more of a weather and supply-driven market. What we're all looking for, I think, is a demand low, and I think that starts with the crude oil, and it starts with the crude oil going higher and the dollar going lower." Is there an oversupply next year, "The problem is that the funds and the commodity markets, in general, I think, are seeing 2026 as oversupplied right now, with wheat and crude oil as the leaders. And so those are the 2 commodities that I'll be putting my key focus on as we get ready for the end of the year, to see if we do indeed go lower, if that signals a low in the market, and then we can look to maybe the wheat, the corn and the beans, all finding some demand off of that." (American Ag Network)

- **It might be more than the demand for grain** that is driving market prices. It could be political business forces. That is the thinking in new ag economic research at ND St. Univ. where ag economist William Wilson says, "This is a new study that was recently published in Applied Economics Perspectives and Policy, where we're taking a fresh look at the competitive and global grain trade. This industry has changed radically. We use very microeconomic data on shipping and sales, and found the market is really not dominated by a handful of companies as traditionally thought. Instead, there's really no dominant player, and in fact, the industry would be considered fiercely competitive." The last study in 2012 said 4 companies control 73% of the global grain trade. Wilson said his study showed those 4 companies controlled only about 30% of the market. Instead, some new players are shaking up the grain trade, it's not inconsequential that since about 2014, we've seen the growth of state-backed trading entities. One is by the name of COFCO, which is Chinese. And then in Russia, there are a group of firms that control the industry, that are backed by the Kremlin. More recently, a trading company was bought by SALIC, which is a Saudi Arabia Sovereign Investment Fund, and Louis Dreyfus was invested by an Abu Dhabi Investment Fund. We have a growth in state-backed entities, which is changing the structure of the industry quite sharply." He talks about how these findings will affect people participating in the industry during the years ahead, "Competition is thought to be good, or I kind of take the view of the reason why there are big firms is because they're small firms. The reason why they're small firms is because there are big firms. But at the end of the day, the competition is more intense than previously thought. As a result of that, margins become more compressed, and the competitors seek to be better competitors, providing more differentiation and a wider range of options and flexibility. So ultimately, it's good for consumers, or in this case, farmers, predominantly from North America." Based on his extensive research, Wilson said the industry should continue to remain fiercely competitive, By definition, because of the large number of firms we have, we indicated that there are 38 firms in the competitive fringe, so you got 4 dominant players and 38 on the competitor fringe, plus half a dozen state-backed entities that are fiercely, fiercely competitive. Will that continue in the future? I suspect that it will, at least in the next 5 to 10 years, driven by a number of things, but partly food security, which fosters the development of state-backed trading companies, but also the events around climate and deforestation and all of these point to a more ruinously competitive environment during that time period." (NAFB News Service)
- **CONAB, the Brazilian national supply co.,** says it is monitoring adverse weather in some regions. It is monitoring weather events in Paraná, the irregularity of rainfall in Mato Grosso and the delay in precipitation in Goiás. Total grain harvest of corn, soybeans, and other grains is estimated at 354.8 million tonnes, up slightly from the 351.9 million tonnes produced in 2024-25, according to a Nov. 13 report from Conab, its second monthly forecast for 2025-26. Soybean planting in the current cycle is within the average of the last 5 years, but behind schedule when compared to the percentage recorded in a similar period of the previous season.

- **A new Reuters poll** said soybean processors likely crushed a record number of soybeans in September as new facilities ramp up operations. That poll took place as market watchers continued relying on private estimates during the government shutdown. According to a note to clients from CoBank, the crush totaled 205.4 mil. bu. in September. If that's accurate, that would be a 10% month-over-month increase, and the highest on record for the month. On a daily basis, the poll said crush likely rose 7.8% to 6.847 mil. bu. a day. USDA's Fats and Oilseeds Report, which is usually released monthly, has been nonexistent for the past 2 months due to the government shutdown. The National Oilseeds Processors Association said earlier this month that it estimated the September crush at 197.9 mil. bu. during the month, up almost 12% year over year and a record for the month.
- **U.S. soybean exports might be getting all the media attention**, but the year-round domestic demand for U.S. grain and oilseeds is also worthy of headlines, says Terrain Ag commodity economist Bree Baatz. She says, "Corn feed, ethanol, and industrial consumption account for over 80% of the U.S. demand balance sheet. The soybean crush is nearly 60% of overall consumption of U.S. soybeans, surpassing exports. Despite the focus on exports to China, we need biofuel policy at home to support the continued record crush pace. Wheat and sorghum aren't just export stories. They are feed and food staples too. These lesser told datapoints in agriculture are just as important to U.S. farmers' marketing strategies as the news headlines. For more key grain and oilseed insights following the November WASDE report.



- **It's been an interesting time in the soybean market.** Jim McCormick, the chief operating officer of AgMarket.net, was pleased to hear that the U.S. and China had struck a trade framework that included Chinese soybean purchases from the U.S. However, he had some questions about the agreement, "I must admit, there were some strange aspects to it. You came here a couple of weeks ago, and the bean market rallied on the anticipation that Scott Bessent was going to cut a deal with the Chinese. Coming out of the weekend. Scott Bessent said, 'We have a deal,' and the bean market rallied. A few days later, President Trump came out and said, "We have a deal,' and the bean market rallied. And then here recently, the Chinese actually fulfilled part of the deal, a very small portion of it. They did start buying beans, and the bean market rallied again. So, I've been doing this for 30 years. I can tell you; I've never seen a market where you bought the rumor 3 times, and then you turned around and bought the fact." McCormick shared his thoughts on the soybean market during a presentation at the 2025 NAFB National Convention in Kansas City. He said the U.S. and China don't technically have a signed agreement yet, "So now, where we're going to see, folks, is what actually does pertain, because what's interesting is we still don't have a deal with the Chinese. We essentially have a framework, and as we know, these frameworks can fall apart. Now, we did see some big bean purchases from China earlier this week. It was announced there were a few more boatloads that were sold last night, which is very good to see, but you're still, I think, calculating they've maybe bought about ten % of the 12 mil. metric tons that Scott Bessent or President Trump has said they've committed to do. The thing that we have to be cautious about in this marketplace right now is the Chinese, as far as I know, have not made any commitment to what they've actually agreed to." McCormick is trying to remain optimistic despite his remaining questions about the agreement, Now, I'm taking it as an optimistic viewpoint that the fact that they are buying beans right now, while these final negotiations are going on, that they are going to follow through on their commitment. But I am a little bit skeptical also, because you have to remember, at the beginning of the year, we were thinking China was going to buy around 25 mil. metric tons of beans. That's roughly what they've been buying on ave. for the last couple of years. This deal is only 12 mil. metric tons for this marketing year, which is what it sounds like. So, the sales are only going to be half of what we thought they were going to be. And if you look at it economically, because there are still tariffs going on in China, there's no economic reason for China to be buying our beans. This is a political buy, plain and simple. The people that are buying it are the Chinese government as a reserve buy to essentially fulfill their end of the trade agreement. So, we'll see. I'm a little bit skeptical about where it's at. It's just that they have been known to not fulfill their promises." (NAFB News Service)
- **Southern IL farmer Ken Hartman** of Waterloo, has just concluded a year as President of the National Corn Growers Assn. He says the past year held more surprises and events than anyone might have imagined. He recounted many of those events and looked forward to what is facing corn growers in 2026 in this short video.

- **"Buy the rumor, sell the fact.**" say authors of the Brock Report. "The difficulty now is to differentiate between what is rumor and what is fact. I'm not sure any of us know. The most extreme examples of the 'buy the rumor sell the fact' this year are probably already top of your mind. The August Crop report added 1 million harvest corn acres and increased yield 7.8 bushels per acre. Futures traded lower that day but have been trending higher ever since. The other example is the soybean price action recently. Futures rallied like a banshee on the potential that China would be buying soybeans from us. As confirmation of some purchases hit the market this week, futures faded. Some markets are relatively easy; some are very difficult. I think the corn and soybean market was relatively easy from the summer of 2022 until this August. The market was very overpriced. Grain prices fall from their own weight. Decisions needed to be made on selling and not buying. Since August, that has changed. As human beings, we feel that it is important to seem to be right, whether we are or not. This is dangerous thinking, especially when we become so blindly convinced of being right that it is difficult for us to acknowledge contradictory data and even more difficult to recognize and admit when we are wrong. It is important not to fight a market. The market is always going to win. All markets are going to go through transition phases where the fundamentals are not clear, and technical signals can be misleading. At times like this, it's sometimes best to take a breather and try not to make any major decisions. From a pure technical perspective, what would concern us on the intermediate term trend in soybeans would be a close in March soybeans below $11.26, which was the low established on November 17, and was an outside day up. That would have technical significance if the market closes below that level. On Friday, futures traded below this level but did not find additional selling, rebounding to end the week essentially unchanged. In the case of corn, the concern would be a close below $4.35 in March futures. If that happens, that would signal a reason to be making perhaps a small cash sale, and certainly a small hedge position. At this stage, we do not believe the signals are strong enough, or the changes in the fundamentals are strong enough, to justify making aggressive sales. But it is hard to be wrong when making a 5% to 10% sale here and there, particularly after the sharp increase in prices since mid-October in soybeans. This is also a good example why we all need to have a marketing plan and not put all our eggs in one basket. Normally we are more heavily sold at this stage than we are today. Strict cash marketers based on our recommendations are 35% priced on this year's corn crop with nothing sold for next year and in soybeans are 45% on this year's crop, with nothing for next year. In volatile markets only make small decisions. For producers who have done a poor job of marketing in the last 3 years, the odds of overreacting and making big decisions when they shouldn't increases. There is so much fear and regret from having missed out on higher prices, when they start to see slightly higher prices, they sell too much before the rally has run its course. It's very difficult making decisions when one is stressed out. Many people in both agriculture and non-agriculture right now fall into that category. "For the full article and graphics head to http://www.brockreport.com/

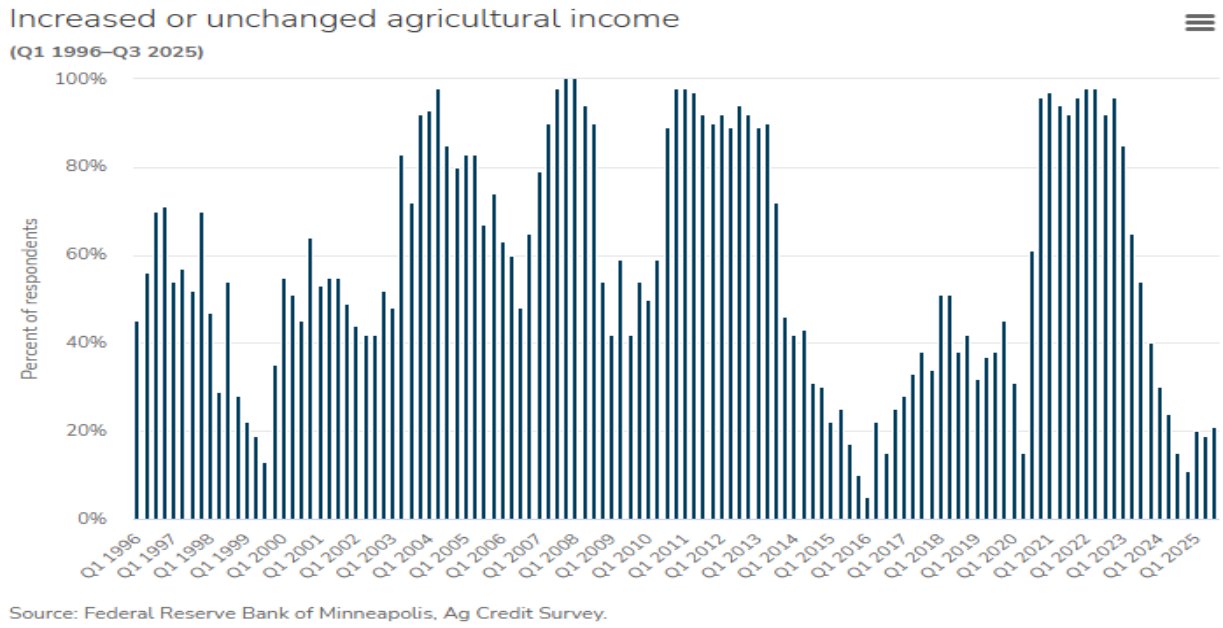
- **Marketing.** "The corn and bean markets came out of the gate rallying on Monday but gave most or all of those gains back by the end of the week." -- Matt Bennett.
  - ✓ **Corn—futures**. December '25 corn came out of the gate on Monday firing on all cylinders after a bearish USDA report last Friday. Dec settled at $4.25½, down 1¢. This was 2¼¢ off the high and 1½¢ off the low. Dec lost 4¾¢ for the week. While the early-week enthusiasm gave us a boost, there was no follow-through buying to show up and corn sold off for the rest of the week.
  - ✓ **Corn—cash and basis**. Basis was steady. At St. Louis, the river basis was 15¢ over Dec (no change). Basis was steady in most places, so the drop on the board was reflected in many areas on cash price. It's been noted, however, that some areas are seeing a strong push for corn.
  - ✓ **Corn—marketing strategy**. As a grower, I would make sure the places I'm dealing with know what I have on hand and what kind of bid I want. I remain interested in corn ownership given an incredible demand pace so far in this marketing year. If price action doesn't improve, that demand is unlikely to back off. So, if a person sells some corn and wants to re-own, it can be accomplished until next summer quite reasonably.
  - ✓ **Corn—2026 crop.** December 2026 corn ended the week at $4.60, down 6½¢. Dec26 dropping down to a dime under the '25 spring insurance price doesn't excite me at all. Given SX26 traded above $11 all week, I'd have to think we'll see the ratio (currently 2.42/1) narrow by the time February rolls around.
  - ✓ **Beans—futures.** Beans rallied sharply to start the week but gave back most of the gains by Friday's close. January beans settled up 2½¢ at $11.25. This was 2½¢ off the high and 11¾¢ off the low. Beans rallied ½¢ on the week. Dec meal settled $7.40 lower on the week at $315.10, while soy oil ended the week at 50.26¢, up .11¢.
  - ✓ **Beans—cash and basis**. Basis was mixed/improving. The St. Louis River basis was 8¢ over the Jan (6¢ improved). While basis popped on the river, most interior bids were stagnant. The river improving was likely due to increased interest in Chinese purchases as several cargoes were booked.
  - ✓ **Beans—marketing strategy**. For these old crop beans, we must remember from where we've rallied. I'd be tempted to incrementally sell some beans here and there given we're $1.50 off the fall harvest lows in many places. Can we go another $1 or more higher? Of course, but that will certainly be dependent on the issues we've already discussed, particularly weather in South America.
  - ✓ **Beans--2026 crop**. Nov 2026 beans settled at $11.12, down 3¢ on the week. With this '26 bean market, the high for the week was $11.31½, which is the highest price we've seen since the summer of 2024 for this contract. While I'd like to reward this rally, I'd keep some flex in the plan, especially if you get aggressive with your sales.
  - ✓ **Price ratio—2026 crop**. 2.41/1, beans to corn, based on fall futures, +3¢/week.

- **Market advisor thoughts/concerns**: Matt Bennett. "Talk of the EPA possibly delaying the rollback of tax credits for imported energy wasn't well-received by the market. South American weather is a mixed bag with Argentina dry and Brazil is solid shape overall. While corn demand is excellent, there appears to be plenty of corn if a person fully believes the report last week. I think 186 is still too high of a yield, but the market is certainly going to trade whatever yield the USDA gives us until there is an update that proves otherwise. I have clients in various areas that had pushes of 10-20¢ over posted bids to get corn delivered in the next couple of weeks. It's clear that some end-users didn't originate the corn they assumed they would at harvest. I know in northern Indiana there was a posted bid of 20¢ over that was pushed to 40¢ over for 50k or more bushels. While it takes quantity to get a big push sometimes, a person doesn't know if they don't ask. I must think Dec 26 needs to be above $4.70 to keep acreage high enough to have a shot at satisfying demand. Much can happen with South American weather or spring weather in the US, so I'm going to stay patient for now while looking for opportunities to get some worst-case scenarios locked in. As always, my goal is to lock in worst-case scenarios with some flex to participate in a rally should it occur….. The bean market seemed to shrug off the lower move from last Friday when we came out of the gate on Monday. With talk of Chinese soybean purchases, we saw a 30¢+ gain on Monday. However, talk that imported used cooking oil may still receive the maximum tax benefit for another year or two was not well-received by the market. Hopefully, the idea we need domestic consumption to continue growing will be a message the administration doesn't ignore. Given the growth in South America, particularly Brazil, our place in the world export market for soybeans is unlikely to see growth anytime soon, if ever again. The bean market could rally sharply IF we see enough weather issues in South America. Without a weather issue, I'd expect rallies will be a little harder to come by. Most, if not all, of the beans (destined for China) would likely go out of the gulf, so it appears buyers might have been attempting to get some beans bought for that reason. This past fall we saw a carry in the market of 65¢ at times. If you were able to roll at 50-60¢, we'd be getting our board-based price fairly close to $12. A hedge like this would certainly be best suited to the bushels stored at home, so keep that in mind. A person can also enter a 3-way floor, which would give us a put close to the market while giving up some upside if we'd happen to rally sharply. Regardless, I want to lock in some worst-case scenarios on this rally. We can do it several different ways, but in my opinion, ignoring a $1+ rally doesn't seem wise.……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—

- **The Farmer Mac survey of over 450 agricultural lenders** indicates, "approximately 52% of agricultural borrowers to remain profitable this year, down from 57% in the previous year. While these responses suggest most farm borrowers will remain profitable this year, the proportion has fallen drastically over the past several years. In 2022, lenders anticipated that more than 80% of borrowers would be profitable. Unfortunately, lenders do not expect profitability to improve over the coming year. Survey responses show lenders project slightly less than half of borrowers will remain profitable in 2026. If realized, this would be the lowest proportion of profitable farmers since 2020, according to lenders."
  - ✓ Profitability expectations – The outlook for farm sector profitability declined among ag lenders in the 2025 survey. While lenders expect the majority of producers to remain profitable this year, the proportion is expected to dip below 50% over the coming year for the first time since 2020.
  - ✓ Top lender concerns for producers – Lenders remain fixated on farm income and working capital as their two most pressing concerns for borrowers in 2025. Inflationary pressures inched closer to the top spot this year, though, perhaps reflecting persistently high input costs for farmers.
  - ✓ Top overall concerns for lenders – The No. 1 concern facing lending institutions in 2025 was credit quality and agricultural loan deterioration. Lender competition and interest rate volatility were the second and third-greatest overall concerns, respectively.
  - ✓ Sector concerns – Concerns continued to mount for grain and cotton producers beset by lower prices and elevated input costs. Meanwhile, concerns for the livestock sector dropped to the lowest levels in the history of the survey, highlighting the dichotomy in the agricultural sector in 2025.
  - ✓ Credit quality – Survey respondents reported that ag loan delinquencies and charge-off rates largely remained stable in 2025, but deteriorated somewhat from the prior year. Lenders expect credit quality to deteriorate further over the next 12 months, as farmers might face a more challenging environment in the year ahead. Thus, a higher share of lenders plan to tighten underwriting standards and loan terms for agricultural credit.
  - ✓ Loan demand – According to the diffusion index, demand for loans secured by farmland and agricultural production loans rose in 2025. Respondents anticipate that loan demand for both categories will increase further over the next 12 months.
  - ✓ Land value and cash rent expectations – Farmland value growth slowed in 2025, inching closer to a plateau in many regions. Lenders expect that an increase in farmland for sale over the next year will put downward pressure on prices and cause a modest decline in the national average cropland value.
  - ✓ Loan approval rate – Lenders reported an average agricultural loan application approval rate of 84% for new loans in the 12 months leading up to August 2025 and expect the approval rate for renewal requests to be 88% in the following 12 months.

- **Third quarter financials** continue to reflect the bleak picture in farm country this year. Joe Mahon, Regional Outreach Director at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, said their third quarter survey of agricultural bankers in the Fed's Ninth District show cash flow is down, "Lenders told us that farm incomes decreased relative to a year ago. Capital expenditures, which is purchases of equipment and buildings and other capital by farm operations, was also down quite a bit, and this is sort of a recent change from trend. Household spending was flat overall, even over the last few years, as we've seen incomes falling and falling capital. Falling capital spending, the consumer spending by farm households, has continued to stay pretty strong. That's a change in the results of the survey." Mahon notes farm loans rates are moving up, "Obviously, given the tighter cash picture, higher loan demand, and the rates of repayment on loans are down. I mentioned earlier that we're seeing continued growth in land values. We do ask the lenders about the price of an acre of land in their region, and we make a year-over-year comparison. Land values are up. Cash rents on an acre of land are down, and the outlook for the rest of this



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Ag Credit Survey.

year is rather negative." The outlook for agriculture over the remainder of 2025 was mostly pessimistic. Roughly 83 percent of respondents expected that farm incomes will decrease in the fourth quarter of 2025 compared with the fourth quarter of 2024, and 11 percent expected incomes will increase. Lender expectations for farm capital spending were also contractionary, and household spending was expected to fall given persistently lower incomes for several years. More than half of lenders expected loan demand to increase, while 62 percent of respondents expected the rate of repayment to decrease further. Still only a few anticipated referring any loans to credit agencies. While the longer-term outlook heavily depends on international and market developments, a MN lender offered a foreboding assessment: "If conditions continue to deteriorate on the price side there will be producers unable to farm next year." Similar findings were reported last week by Federal Reserve ag economists in Chicago and Kansas City. (NAFB News Service)

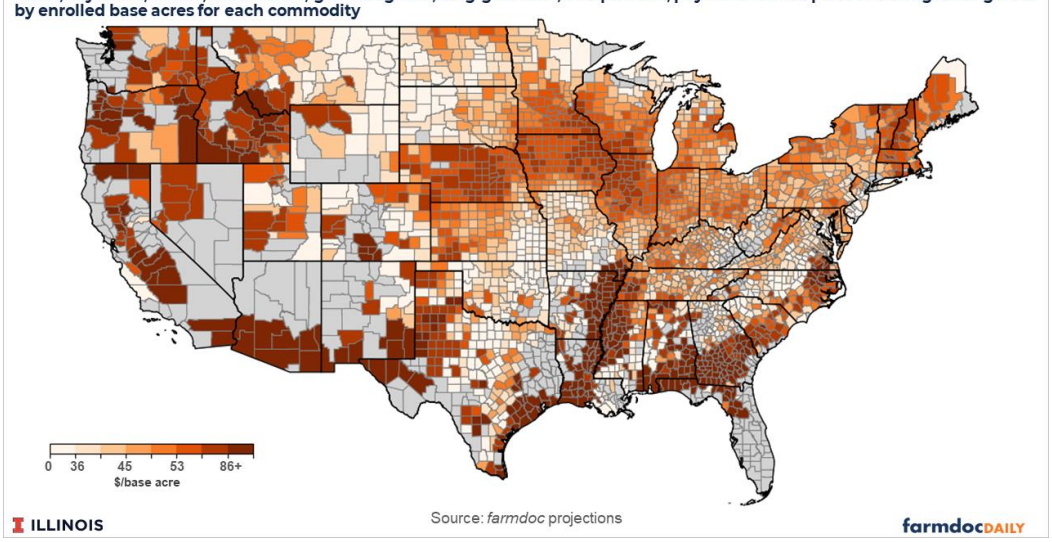
- **Rising tensions between the United States and China** are deepening financial and emotional strain across farm country, as growers confront falling crop prices, high operating costs and a wave of bankruptcies, according to a new report by the South China Morning Post. AR farmer Randal Shelby, who borrowed more than $1 mil. to expand his soybean and rice operation, said he expects to declare bankruptcy within weeks as tariffs, weak prices and high interest rates erase profits. Farmers interviewed said promised Chinese soybean purchases touted by President Trump fall far short of the volumes once relied upon. The United States now supplies about 440 mil. bu. of China's annual soybean imports, far below the billion bu. levels before Brazil and Argentina increased their market share. Farm bankruptcies nearly doubled in the second quarter, and mental-health advocates report rising suicides. Many farmers say they are uncertain what to plant next season — or whether they can keep farming at all.
- **Within the Compeer Farm Credit region**, the farm economy is quite diverse, extending from east central IL to northern MN at the Canadian border. Megan Roberts is the chief economist and says farmers should know their financial ratios about solvency, liquidity and others before visiting with their lender this spring for 2026 financing. Her advice is in this short video.
- **Terrain Ag economist Matt Clark** says the farm economy is a blend of 2 stories, and we are in a typical ag economic cycle. Cattle versus grain. Corn has strong exports, but not soybeans. He says government payments will help farmers with working capital. But what should farmers do to make their lender happy? In this short video, he says, "Control what they can control!"

Mailbox Money and Farm Programs—

- **If trade negotiations are successful,** farmers should expect less in any federal bailout. That was last week's projection from Deputy Secretary Vaden (right) when speaking to media about any assistance payments to farmers. "'Most notably, the President successfully negotiated trade deals almost everywhere the man went,' he stressed," according to Brownfield. "'Whether we're talking about China, but I equally want to pay attention to Southeast Asia, Pakistan, and Japan. Those have resulted in major commitments to buy American commodities.' He says USDA will be considering its influence on commodity markets into the new year before any decisions are made about additional relief."

- **$13.5 bil. will be going to hundreds of thousands of mailboxes,** but what about yours? IL Farmdoc ag economists re-emphasize that ARC and PLC money for 2025 crops will not arrive for another 11 months. They say, "(The summer legislation) increases the likelihood and potential size of payments in 2025 and future years. Projected marketing year average (MYA) prices for 2025/26 used to arrive at the payment estimates are based on USDA projections in the latest WASDE report and ARC/PLC program data provided by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), both of which were updated and released on November 14th, 2025. Corn is projected to receive nearly $66 per base acre with grain sorghum and wheat projected to receive just under $50 per base acre. Payments to soybeans are projected at just over $22 per base acre for 2025. Figure 2 illustrates the variability in county-level payment rates averaged across the 7 commodities. Payment rates exceeding $50 per base acre are prevalent in counties in NE, IA, the northern half of IL and the southern regions of MN and WI – areas of the Midwest with mostly corn and soybean base acres. The ARC and PLC programs resulting from the passage of reconciliation bill provides the potential for large support payments. This is particularly true for 2025 with farmers" receiving the larger payment from the programs regardless of their enrollment decisions made in March. The latest price projections from USDA suggest ARC and PLC payments could exceed $13.5 bil. for 2025. Projected payment rates per base acre range from just over $22 per base acre for soybeans. While the need for support for many farm operations is both real and immediate, caution should be taken by policymakers in determining how any additional assistance should be allocated over the next few months. Safety net payments for the 2024 crop year began with some crop insurance payments being made and Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) payments being authorized at the end of 2024 and are still ongoing with 2024 ARC/PLC payments and additional disaster assistance being processed this fall. The length of time over which support payments are made for a specific crop year creates significant challenges in determining need and providing support in a targeted and timely manner to producers. Significant additional ad hoc support could lead to higher costs, or at least reduced pressures to lower costs, and a continuing cycle of calls for additional support in future crop years."

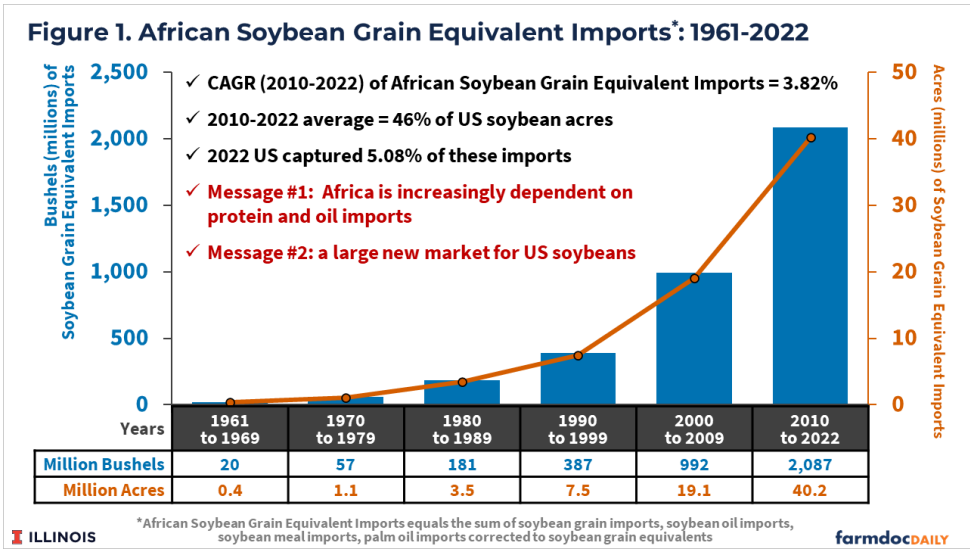
Figure 2. Projected 2025 ARC/PLC Payment Rates for Major Commodities*
*Corn, soybeans, wheat, seed cotton, grain sorghum, long-grain rice, and peanuts; payment rates represent averages weighted by enrolled base acres for each commodity



- **But when will those "deals" bear fruit?** The New York Times reported that "for months farmers have pleaded for government aid to soften the blow of trade wars and another unprofitable harvest. But even with the Trump administration receptive to the idea and the government again open, most farmers and bankers have concluded that any aid will be too little and too late to rescue the next planting season. The federal government reopened after 43 days, which Trump administration officials had said was necessary before they could finish any farmer aid plan. But even if they work on it expeditiously, it could still take months before farmers receive any checks. That would be well after the crucial winter period when farmers talk to their bankers and make decisions about the next year. With so much uncertainty, a lot of farmers are in for difficult conversations with their bankers."
- **U.S. farm safety net programs** are projected to deliver more than $13.5 bil. in payments for the 2025 crop year, though farmers will not receive the funds until October 2026. The payments come through the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, which were modified under the One Big Bill reconciliation package signed into law July 4. The changes, relative to the 2018 Farm Bill, are expected to increase both the likelihood and potential size of ARC and PLC payments in 2025 and future years. Farmers who enrolled in 2025 will receive whichever payment — ARC or PLC — is higher, while enrollment choices will again influence payments starting in 2026. Estimates rely on USDA projections from the latest World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report and data from the Farm Service Agency. Payment rates are calculated using county-level base acres, non-irrigated yields where relevant, and program simulation models, providing detailed projections ahead of next year's disbursements.
- **Farmers across the Midwest** are preparing for another year of tight margins as federal assistance remains tangled in delays and uncertainty. Despite months of calls for support following trade disruptions and another unprofitable harvest, producers and lenders are concluding that any new aid will arrive long after crucial winter planning meetings with banks. While the administration has discussed an assistance package in the range of $10 to $15 bil., there is no clear timeline for when checks will reach producers. Past experience offers little comfort. Payments from the American Relief Act (finalized in January) took nearly 9 months to reach farmers, well after planting decisions had been made. USDA continues to signal that there are no firm details to share. The delays come at a time when the farm bill remains unresolved and the outlook for corn and soybean demand depends on pending decisions around ethanol and sustainable aviation fuel. Producers say even quick action would take time to influence markets. Until then, many will face tough conversations with their bankers. Lenders are already preparing to assume that no federal payments will materialize. With commodity prices below the cost of production and multiple years of debt rolling forward, bankers say the ability to refinance hinges on whether a producer can cash flow under current conditions. Land values remain relatively strong, giving farmers some equity to work with, but many may need to refinance or tap that equity to secure operating loans. For many, a bailout would help narrow losses but would not solve the underlying issue. Bankers say the real shift will have to come from market conditions that strengthen demand or tighten supply.

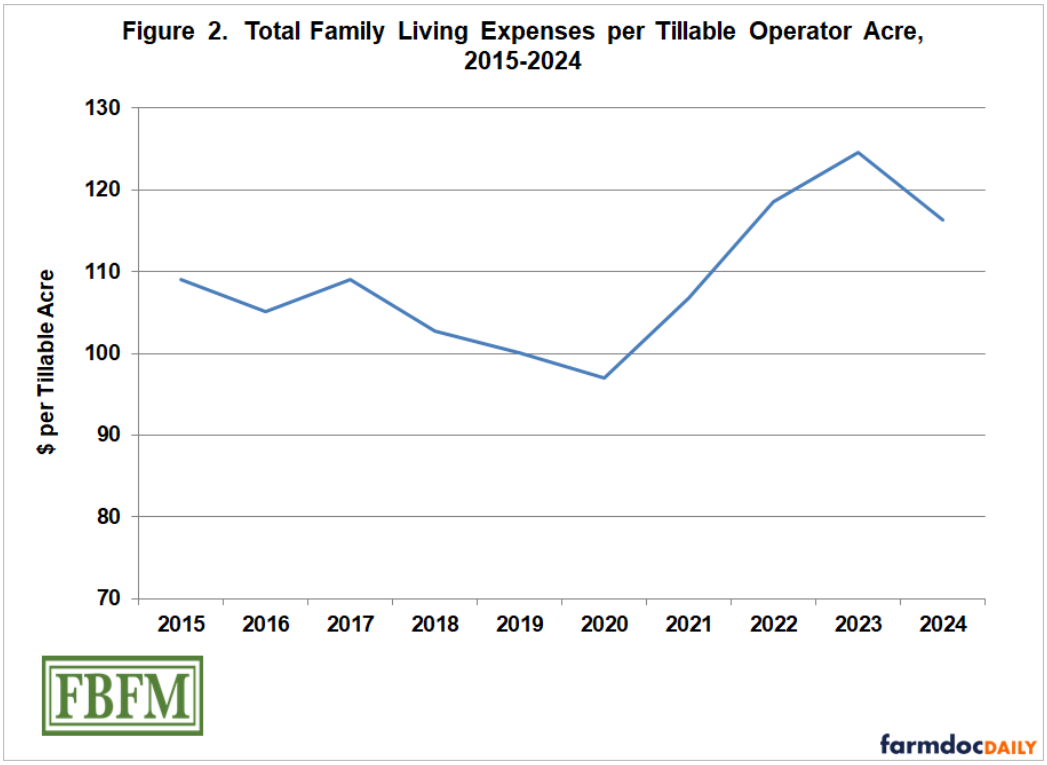
An African Market for Soybeans?—

- **The Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL)** introduces readers to the question whether Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) presents a new market opportunity for US soybean growers. Over the next 3 weeks SIL and farmdoc will deliver three articles on the topic of Africa as a potential export market for US soybeans. The African market presents a very complex landscape. While it is large, diverse, and growing rapidly, there exists great uncertainty, significant business risks, and demand for soybean and associated products are just beginning to emerge. Is SSA soy import demand significant, or at least potentially significant? The answer is yes. Soy product demand is potentially very significant. Using the soybean equivalent import metric, Africa imported a soybean equivalent of 2.1 bil. bu. on average per year for the period 2010-2022. That equals the production of about 40 mil. acres, about 47% of US plantings. Most of that value results from palm oil imports (64%). Soybean oil, meal, and grain imports amount to 21%, 8%, and 7%, respectively. These imports grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.82% between 2010 and 2022. Soybean grain imports lead the group growing at a CAGR of 8.04%. While growing rapidly, Africa will remain far from being self- sufficient in the future and require significant imports. For example, forecasts to 2050 show Africa would still only be able to supply 35% of its current soybean equivalent import demand, even assuming the current soybean production growth rate. Most recently, processors are 40-60% overcapacity relative to domestic supply and import about 200 mil. bu. of soybeans to keep their factories operating. Demand for soybean grain imports since 2010 has been quite fast with a compound annual growth rate of just over 8%. (The Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL) at the Univ. of IL is the world's leading organization focused on establishing soybean as the feed, oil, industrial materials, and biofuels standard in Sub Sharan Africa (SSA). SIL's strong network across 31 countries, experienced team, track record of success, and partners on the ground support clients looking to serve the fastest growing and potentially large new soy market.) Additionally, SIL Director Pete Goldsmith says, "the Gates Foundation has invested in the Soybean Innovation Lab's (SIL) Pan African Trial (PAT) platform. The Gates award will allow SIL to scale the PAT platform bringing new varieties to the seed industry in the 28 countries of the SADC and COMESA regional economic communities."



The Business of Farming—

- **Farmers need new tools periodically**, and farm families need new dishes periodically, and the financial liabilities and taxes need to be addressed, says IL Farm Business Farm, Management, which says that is 50¢ per bu. "In 2024, the total noncapital living expenses (car, furniture, groceries, etc.) averaged about $8,000 per month, down about 1% from 2023. Income and social security tax payments decreased 1.2 percent in 2024 compared to the year before. The amount of income taxes paid in 2024 averaged $37,279 compared to $37,673 in 2023. Net non-farm income increased, averaging $64,881 in 2024. Net non-farm income has increased $24,219, or 60% in the last 10 years. Figure 2 shows total family living expenses (expendables plus capital) divided by tillable operator acres from 2015 to 2025. In 2015, family living costs averaged about $110 per acre. This fell to $97 per acre in 2020, then rose to $125 per acre in 2023 before easing to $116 in 2024. The 10-year average was $109 per acre. Over the same period, the 10-year average net farm income was $154 per acre, meaning family living expenses accounted for 71% of the net farm income per acre. The average year-to-year change in family living costs per acre over the past decade was 0.21% while the 5-year annual change was higher at 3.3%. To put this in context for crop budgeting, the 2024 family living costs of $116 per acre is equivalent to 50¢ per bu. on 230 bu. per acre corn. After subtracting net non-farm income from total family living expenses, the amount that must be covered by farm income was $43 per acre in 2024, compared with a 5-year average of $48 per acre. In addition, farm income must also cover Social Security and income taxes, which amounted to $42 per acre in 2024 (5-year average: $36 per acre). In pricing terms, the 2024 family costs per acre that must be covered by farm income is equal to 19¢ per bu. on 230 bu. per acre. When taxes not covered by non-farm income are added, the requirement increases to 37¢ per bu." (More fascinating data right here.)

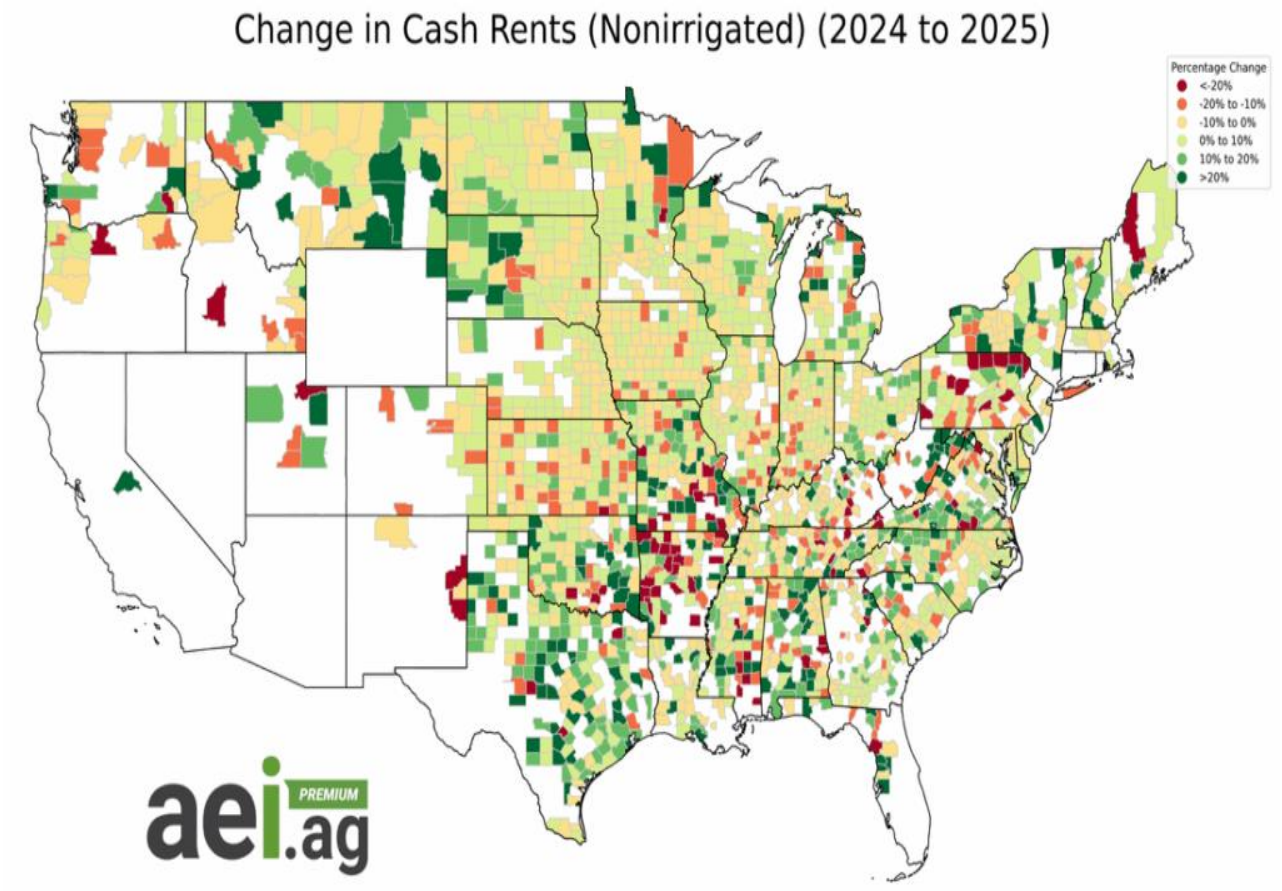


- **This is the time of year for farmers to begin preparing** for an operating line of credit for 2026. Austin Peiffer, an associate attorney with Ag and Business Legal Strategies in Cedar Rapids, IA, says lenders will want to see, among other things, a cash flow projection for next year, "What are you going to plant, how much it's going to cost to put in, how much do you expect to make taking it out. They want to see that you have a good margin in that you're not just barely scraping by, but you've got enough profit so that there's some protection for the bank if things turn south." Peiffer says your banker will also need to see your up-to-date balance sheet, "They want to see that you've got more than enough money to meet your short-term obligations with short term assets. in general, they'll want to see that you're solvent, too. They've got ratios. They're looking for that their regs and policies provide for that say, okay, when these numbers are in this range, the loan is probably going to be good." As always, you should consult a CPA or tax attorney for further assistance. (NAFB News Service)
- **Farmers will have money coming in** and going out, but how does economist David Widmar suggest that it be balanced. He's with Agricultural Economic Insights and suggests that farmers make a plan for use of the mailbox money before it arrives. And what does he think lenders will be looking for when farmers seek financing for 2026? His answer is in this short video.

Land Prices and Farmland Issues—

- **Farmland prices are going in every direction,** but what can potential buyers and sellers trust? That is the question for Randy Dickhut, former head of Farmers National, and more recently with Agriculture Economic Insights. What does he foresee moving ahead? And does he really agree with the Chicago Federal Reserve that land prices have risen 3% in the past 3 months? The conversation is in this short video.
- **South central IL farmland owners** may have thought the Grain Belt Express was destined for history, instead of operation, but they are finding the controversial power line still has a spark of life. The project initially was proposed to convey direct current electricity from KS windfarms to a substation near Mt. Vernon, IN, just across the IL border. It would have crossed farms in over a dozen IL counties. The most recent action occurred in the IL Supreme Court where attorneys argued whether the project had sufficient funds to start and finish the project, after a nearly $5 bil. federal loan was cancelled in July when federal energy officials said the wind power was not needed. The project has been opposed by IL landowners and landowner groups, including IL Farm Bureau, due to the construction that would interrupt crop production and cross hundreds of farms. The legalities of the project in IL include whether the IL Commerce Commission had the authority to approve the project of a non-public utility, as well as other courtesies provided by the IL General Assembly even though none of the energy would reach any IL customers.

- **Cash rents are likely finalized for next year**, possibly with the only exception of how to meet the financial obligation. But what are the likely changes from 2025 cash rent levels, which the rhetorical question of David Widmar of Agriculture Economic Insights. There is a mixed bag of results. Take IA, for example. Most counties have seen rents adjusted downward by 0% to -10%. However, a few counties have seen bigger adjustments (-10% to -20%) while a handful of other counties reported higher rents. There are two things to keep in mind. First, yield or revenue bonuses can serve as a natural adjustment to cash rent, especially in year-over-year measures. This is to say that some of the variation observed across the Cornbelt could be bonuses being triggered (or not). Second, these data highlight the importance of local-level data. Across the state, IA cash rents were mostly unchanged (-0.7%), but county-level data reveal considerable variation. Cash rents fell the most throughout MO and AR. But cash rents were higher across SD, ND, and MN.



Farmland is often the residual claimant on profits in the farming sector. This means that producers tend to bid up cash rents and farmland values when profits are high. It also means that weak (or negative) profits mean producers will bid less to rent or pay for the land. Cash rents in 2025 were considerably higher than in 2020. Considering IA again, most counties have rents 15% to 30% higher than they were 5 years ago. Note there are pockets (such as in ND) and individual counties where rents are 30% higher than 5 years ago.

Fertilizer, Fuel, and Other Inputs—

- **United Prairie Co-op of Tolono, IL,** distributed this advisory to its clientele:

On November 14 US President Trump announced the removal of most fertilizers from the tariffs imposed on April 4th. Removal of these tariffs by Executive Order goes into effect on November 13. Some markets were quick to react to this news while others are not impacted. The removal of these tariffs will normalize trade flows and allow the resumption of free trade. Here is a synopsis for each product line as we understand implications. Tariff policies are rapidly evolving and information provided here is subject to change.

- ✓ **Urea:** (High impact) Russia and Canada, exempt from tariffs, have dominated (>50%) imports this crop year. Other countries' imports were limited mostly fulfilling prior contract commitments rather than spot supply. • The Executive Order is expected to shift trade flows back to normal in Q1. This will increase shipments from the Middle East. Additional flow from Russia is also anticipated. • In response to tariff news NOLA values have pushed lower. While physical trade has been limited, derivatives have shown a drop of $20-25/s. t from previous settlements. January paper is currently referenced at $365/s. t. NOLA will keep a strong discount on world values through the remainder of the year before seeing that spread narrow into Q1 as the US market ramps up imports for spring season.
- ✓ **NH3**: (Low impact) The Executive Order did not name ammonia. It was put on a list of potentially eligible exemptions that will be decided on a case-by-case basis of each country. As of today, reports emerged that Trinidadian ammonia will no longer be subject to a tariff on tons shipped to the US.
- ✓ **Phosphates**: (High impact) The combination of countervailing duties (CVD), which are still in effect, and baseline tariffs has severely impacted imports leading to the US market being a significant global price premium. We estimate April-November imports will be 378k mt versus 1.15 mil. metric tons. the previous period. • Asimport supply builds in Q1 we anticipate prices will weaken yet still maintain a global premium due to the CVD. DAP/MAP prices will come closer to parity as imports will mostly be DAP. • The global S&D is unchanged with China out of the export market and producer's costs incrementally moving higher each month. This trend will continue to be supportive into Q1. • There has been minimal response to this tariff news in the barge market. Prompt offers are unchanged with the forward discount of $25/s. t.
- ✓ **UAN**: (No impact) Trinidad was the only major importer that had a tariff, representing ~20% of the imports. Even with the tariff, Trinidad was still importing some tons. Russia and Canada were exempt already. It will have minimal direct impact on the amount of UAN arriving to the US. →

- **The White House announced that many fertilizers** U.S. farmers rely on will be exempt from reciprocal tariffs. The Fertilizer Institute said it's extremely good news for the industry. "The Fertilizer Institute appreciates the administration's continued recognition of the importance of fertilizers to America's food security, national security, well-being, and health," said TFI President and CEO Corey Rosenbusch. "While the U.S. has robust domestic fertilizer manufacturing and production, it's a net fertilizer importer and relies on both domestic production and imports during the busy spring planting and fall application periods." He also said the fertilizer market is highly competitive and characterized by a complex web of global supply and demand factors. "Without farmers, there would be no fertilizer industry, and as farmers continue to face economic challenges, the focus of the industry remains promoting a stable industry that supports U.S. agriculture and ensures affordable food prices for American families," Rosenbusch added. Fertilizer costs could come down after an Executive Order to remove import duties on potash and ammonia phosphates DAP and MAP. The American Soybean Association says the action will "reduce the cost" of key fertilizers. ASA President Caleb Ragland recommended the move, among others, at a Senate Judiciary hearing in October, "Remove White House tariffs on critical inputs, machinery and parts, which will immediately lower cost of production for farmers." IEEPA, the 1977 International Economic Emergency Powers Act that Trump has used freely to impose tariffs, is now challenged before the Supreme Court. Ragland argued targeted farm assistance is desperately needed to offset trade-related losses. Judiciary Chair Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-IA, earlier won a tariff exemption for potash from Canada, "I also joined some of my colleagues in a letter to Secretary Burgum, asking that potash and phosphate be added to the list of critical minerals." The action exempted them from the president's broader tariffs. Fertilizers continue to be largely imported from Canada, China, Mexico and elsewhere. Fertilizer Institute CEO Corey Rosenbusch told Senators nitrogen production facilities can cost as much as $5 bil. while a potash or phosphate mine can take 10 years to develop. (Berns Bureau, Washington)
- **Average retail fertilizer prices** continued to be mostly higher during the second week of November 2025, according to sellers surveyed by DTN. Prices for 6 fertilizers were higher once again, while prices for the other two were slightly lower. No fertilizer had a sizeable price move. The 6 nutrients that were higher in price: DAP, which had an average price of $929/ton; potash $490/ton; urea $597/ton; 10-34-0 $667/ton; anhydrous $857/ton; and UAN28 $416/ton. 2 fertilizers were slightly lower looking back to the prior month. MAP had an average price of $930/ton, and UAN32 was $465/ton. On a price per pound of nitrogen basis, the average urea price was $0.65/lb. N, anhydrous $0.52/lb. N, UAN28 $0.74/lb. N and UAN32 $0.73/lb. N. All 8 fertilizers are now higher in price compared to a year earlier: 10-34-0 by 10%; potash 11%; MAP 15%; urea 20%; anhydrous 21%; DAP 26%; UAN32 28%; and UAN28 up 29%.

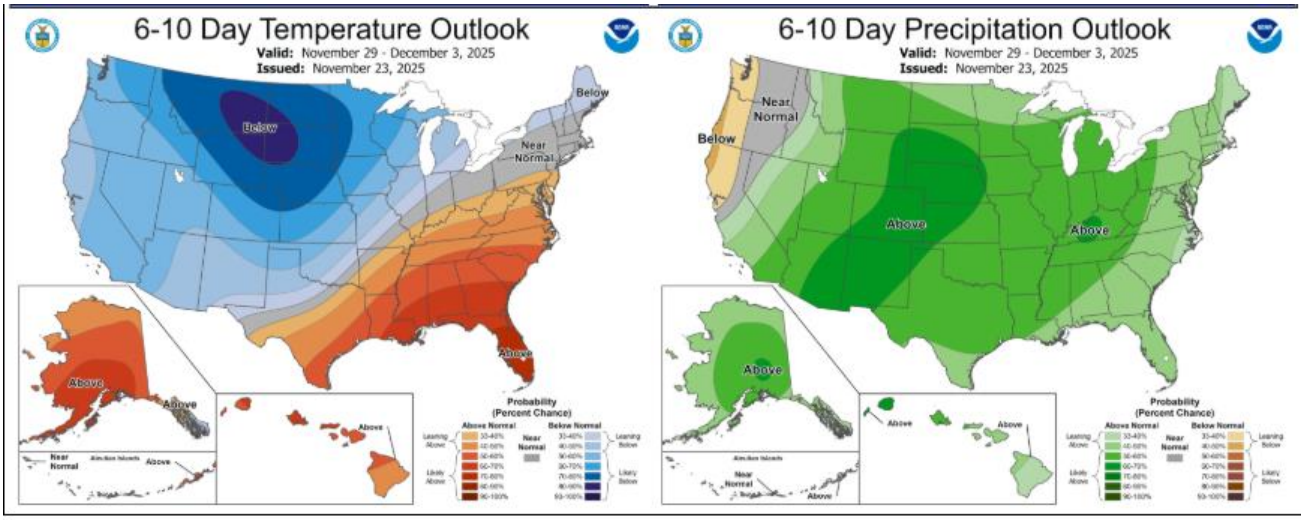
Transportation—

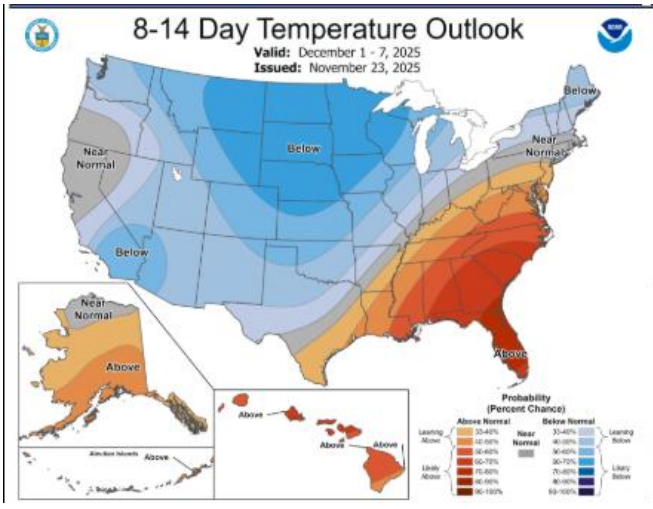
- **No surprise,** but grain shippers called more on railroads than barge lines for transportation to Gulf grain terminals. Transportation analyst Susan Olson says, "There was a 129 mil. bu. increase in grain exports from NOLA in mid-year 2025, however from her firm's proprietary data, barge movements decreased. While September and October usually usher in higher barge volumes due to grain harvest in the Cornbelt, this year did not see as high of a peak for traffic into New Orleans. (The river was under drought stress.) "Patterns changed this year. The numbers are lower and aren't the peak of October last year. It is a little less than 1 million metric tons lower this fall into NOLA," Olson. "Outbound north from NOLA volume is up 1 million metric tons. Also, notable, we are very slowly increasing trends in liquid tows moving in and out of NOLA." Increased backhauls is being attributed to another trend emerging this year – longer turn times for dry bulk tows. In 2024, turn times for dry bulks tows averaged 4.8 days but it's up to 5.6 days in 2025. Olson points out backhauls usually carry fertilizer, metals, minerals, salt, etc. To date in 2025, grain barge freight rates have remained high, averaging 500% to 600% of tariff compared to 400% tariff in 2024. Converted to dollars per ton, the first quarter of 2024 averaged $18.71/ton, and the first quarter of 2025 averaged $25.20/ton. Delays and wait times also rose with higher barge wait times in 2025 due to lock delays and high-water levels. In Cairo, IL., this year saw an average of 1,000 barges waiting compared to 800 in 2024. The first half of 2025 had high water levels and lock delays, which contributed to the waits, whereas the second has been plagued with lower water levels and slower turn times. In September, the Coast Guard issued low water restrictions on barge drafts and configurations, which are still in place on the lower Mississippi River. Earlier this week, the Coast Guard issued an update to deep water tows to leave the St. Louis area, and all vessels to travel at slow speed because of narrow channel width. For marketing year 2024, corn was 32% of the exports out of New Orleans (216 mil. bu.), and in 2025, corn is 48% (299 mil. bu.).
- **For the week ending November 15**, barged grain movements totaled 778,850 tons. This was 4% less than the previous week and unchanged from the same period last year. For the week ending November 15, 531 grain barges moved down river—14 more than last week. There were 775 grain barges unloaded in the New Orleans region, 2% fewer than last week.
- **Grain trains are cutting their rail rates for corn**, say USDA's transportation economists. Both BNSF Railway (BNSF) and Union Pacific Railroad (UP) lowered their shuttle train tariff rates for corn. Although BNSF kept rates to Pacific Northwest (PNW) export terminals the same, the railroad significantly reduced rates to Hereford, TX, feedlots and Mexico for shipments originating in NE. For example, from Edison, NE, the rate to Hereford fell $540 per car, and the rate to Mexico fell $340 per car. For elevators in MN, ND, and SD, rates to Hereford fell $200 per car, and rates to Mexico did not change. UP reduced most corn tariff rates by $150 per car—both for domestic destinations and Mexico. For example, corn tariff rates from Group 3 elevators in NE to the Fresno, CA, region fell from $6,165 to $6,015 per car. Similarly, the corn tariff rate from Sterling, IL, to the Eagle Pass, TX, border crossing fell from $4,805 per car to $4,655 per car.

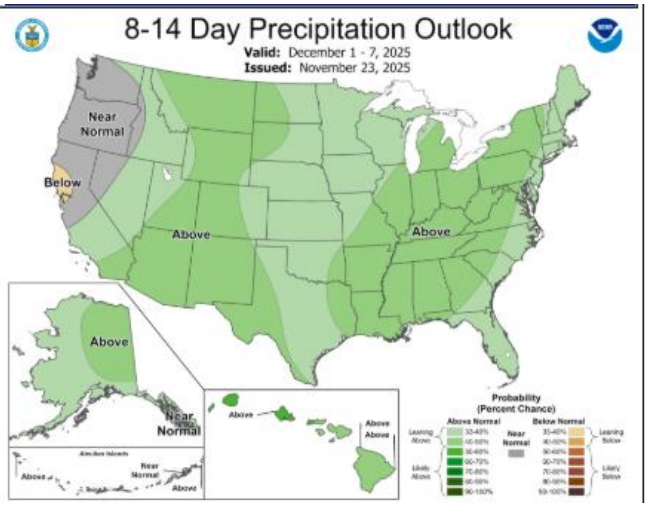
Weather and Climate—

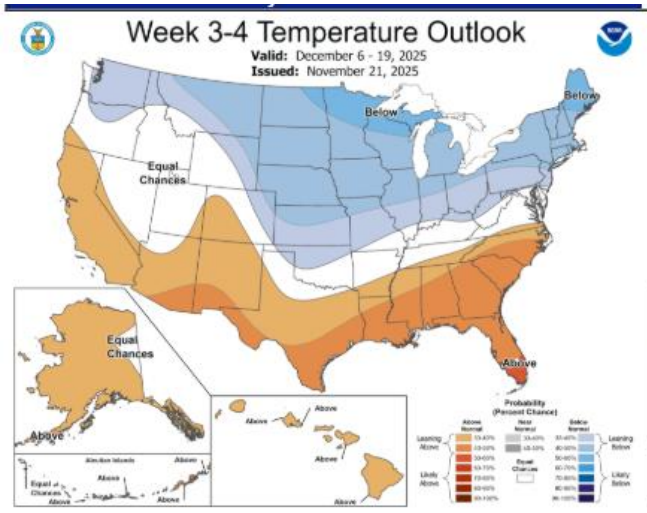
- **"This week was a bit more like mid-fall than late fall**," says IL State Climatologist Trent Ford, who says, "With average temperatures ranging from the mid-40°s to the low 50°s, between 2° and 7° above average. Many places saw high temperatures reach into the upper 70°s, including 79° in Jacksonville and 78° in Charleston. November temperatures to date have been 1° to 3° warmer than normal statewide. The fall season to date has been a top 10 warmest on record in much of the state, including the 7th warmest fall in Champaign-Urbana and the 10th warmest in Peoria. A series of weaker systems moved through IL this week, bringing rain to most of the state. 7-day totals ranged from virtually 0 in far southern IL to over 2 in. in south-central IL. Even with the rain, most of the northern 2/3 of the state has been 6 to 10 in. drier than normal going back to late August, making this fall season to date a top 10 driest on record in many parts of central and northern IL. Some of this week's storms also brought a taste of November severe weather, including large hail in parts of central and south-central IL. These included 2.5" hail in Jasper County and Clark County. Looking forward, the clouds will split and allow for a partly sunny weekend with high temperatures in the 50°s statewide. However, temperatures are forecasted to drop quickly right around Thanksgiving, with forecasted highs in the 30°s and low 40°s around the state on turkey day. Next week will also be quite wet for southern IL, with forecast totals exceeding 1 in. everywhere south of interstate 70. It does look like we'll mostly avoid snow on Thanksgiving weekend, but outlooks into the first week of December hint at more active weather ahead. Speaking of outlooks, the most recent ones for the final month of the year show highest chances of colder and wetter than normal weather. December, and maybe July, are the only months of the year where a cooler, wetter outlook is popular."
- **The dry summer and fall could be more frequent** if new climate projections are valid. Researchers at the Univ. of CA and Stanford "used satellite data and climate models to figure out how much of our rainfall comes from moisture recycled from land versus how much comes from the oceans. They detailed their findings in a study first published in the journal Nature Sustainability. They found that regions that receive substantial rainfall from the recycled moisture from land were more susceptible to drought. This includes locations such as the American Midwest. In simple terms, this means that drier soil leads to less evaporation, which in turn leads to less rainfall. Researchers discovered that areas where more than 36% of rainfall comes from land tend to have more problems with dry spells during the main growing season. Crops in these areas can be more sensitive to changes in weather, meaning they produce less food in drier years and face a higher risk of drought. "For farmers in areas that rely heavily on land-originating moisture, like parts of the Midwest or eastern Africa, local water availability becomes the deciding factor for crop success. " Rising global temperatures are making droughts worse by increasing evaporation, which can dry out soils and vegetation. Warmer temperatures can also disrupt weather patterns, increasing severe weather in some locations while prolonging droughts in others. In regions like the Midwest, the increased evaporation and reduced rainfall can greatly impact the water supply available to the agriculture industry."

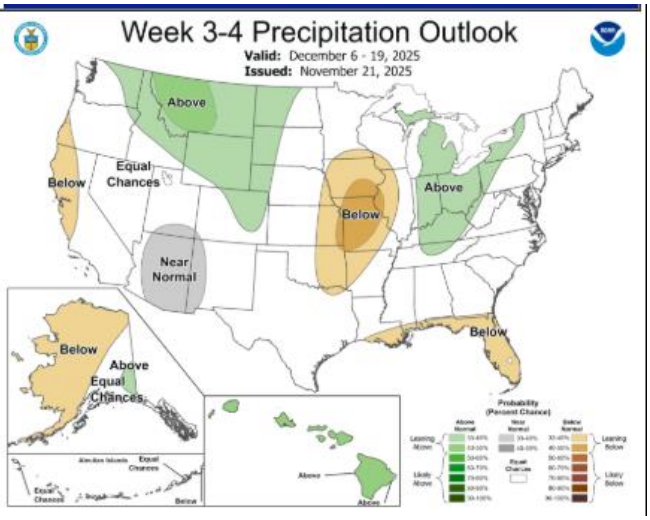
- **You may be out of the field,** but never out of the weather. So, here are the outlooks. Apparently winter is approaching, and bringing the moisture that it held back since July. There is nothing more beneficial than a good soil moisture recharge after a dry fall. Get your soil samples when possible to ensure you really need all of that expensive P&K.



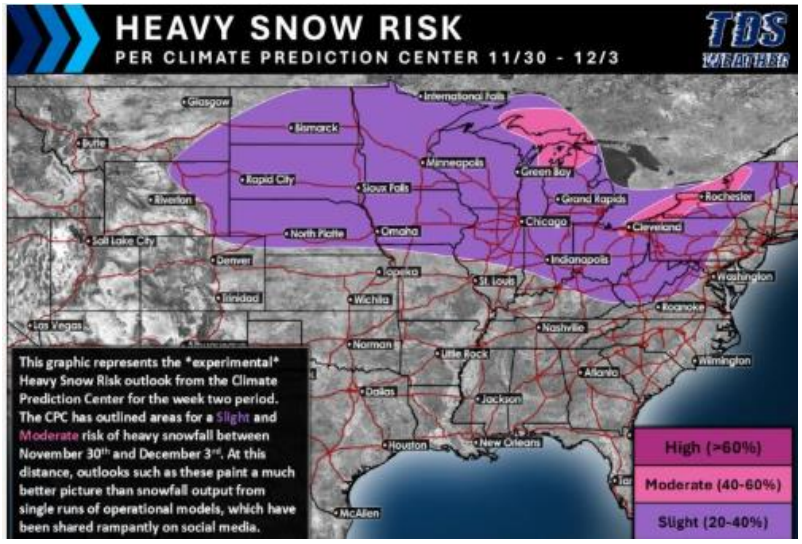








- **NOAA's Climate Prediction Center Friday** updated its latest forecast saying "the upcoming atmospheric pattern support a setup that is likely to drive winter-like weather across large portions of the United States.
  - ✓ Below normal temperatures are favored for the Northern and Central U.S., with the cold signal stretching to the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic coasts. This pattern is expected to be most widespread during the Nov 27-Dec 1 period and may start as early as Nov 25.
  - ✓ Cooler temperatures are forecast to persist into early December over the Northern Tier. Milder temperatures over the West Nov 27-Dec 1 are forecast to drop below normal.
  - ✓ Moderate snow risks are expected for the Upper Great Lakes and the Interior Northeast, driven by the potential for lake-effect snow (Nov 29-30). Broader slight risks cover the corridor from the North Central U.S. to northern New England (Nov 29-Dec 2).
  - ✓ Cooler temperatures may persist into at least mid-Dec over the northern tier. Review Winter Weather Safety resources at https://www.weather.gov/safety/winter.
- **What about potential snowfall in the Cornbelt?** Beth Carpenter at Thermodynamic Solutions, says, "The Climate Prediction Center has issued a Slight Risk for Heavy Snow for the areas highlighted in purple, and a MODERATE RISK for areas in pink for the week of November 30th through December 3rd. What this means: The potential for snowfall is on the rise as we head into early December, with colder temperatures and an active pattern expected. What we don't know: Exactly where this snowfall will set up, aside from higher potential in lake effect areas. Ignore the single model output maps calling for high snowfall totals or widespread snow in the south- those are just clickbait at this point and contain NO meaningful information!"



- **More than 300 representatives** of large food and agricultural organizations are attending COP30 global climate talks in Brazil. The number, a 14% rise from last year's summit, includes representatives from animal agriculture, commodity grains, pesticides and biofuels. About 77 of these lobbyists are part of official country delegations, and 6 have elevated access to core UN negotiations. Major corporations represented include JBS, Bayer, Nestlé, Cargill and McDonald's. The presence of agribusiness interests at the climate negotiation table signals how agriculture is increasingly intertwined with climate policy, land use, and trade. Critics warn this could undermine climate action: they say industrial agriculture is responsible for up to 1/3 of global emissions, and its dominant presence may shape policies in ways that favor corporate interests over environmental integrity.

Agronomy—

- **Such a deal the IL Soybean Assn. has for farmers!** ISA has embarked on an ambitious research program to help members and other soybean growers with production challenges. The focus is expanding university research in small plots to farm field scale research around IL. ISA research and production director Abigail Peterson outlines the plans for the on-farm trials in this short video and invites farmers to discuss projects and expectations.
- **2025 has been anything but typical.** Commodity prices are at 5-year lows, fertilizer prices are continuing to trend upwards, a trade war directly affecting sales, and overall storage space is taking place, and one of the most challenging economies within the past decade. Add all that together, there's a lot of uncertainty heading into the 2026 season. Blake Miller, Syngenta Service Representative in western IL, suggested farmers should be thinking about their weed control strategies, especially as it relates to fertilizer investment, "The dynamics right now, financially at the farm gate, are a little challenging, so the utility of those fertilizer dollars is ultimately very important. When we think about that, fertilizer is relatively high right now. That investment, typically, for a corn acre, could be over $200 an acre, and that's from some Univ. of IL work from agricultural economists over there, so just rough numbers, right, but it's a bit higher than we want it to be relative to commodity prices. So, what we know from that is we need to protect that investment. What's that mean? That the weeds aren't consuming the fertilizer, and that's the real key piece that we want everyone to think about as we move through that." He talked about strengthening weed control as a way to help save on fertilizer investments, "There's been a lot of work done, studies with multiple locations looking at various weed species, densities, and how much N, P, and K they're consuming. When you look at fertilizer prices today, 2-to-4-inch weeds might cost you something around $16 an acre. So, you know current commodity prices, that's a couple bu. of corn when you want to put it in that kind of perspective. So, it's really important that the fertilizer dollars go into the crop and not to feed the weeds." Miller said fertilizer is worth the investment and talked about his recommended herbicides to help manage fertilizer and yield-robbing weeds, "I think, for a period of time now, there's been some studies done where we're probably not replenishing the soil with the N, P and K. Let's back up with P and K based on the yields that we're getting today. So yes, fertilizer is worth the investment to fuel this crop. That's really, really important from that standpoint." Again, he said that by eliminating early-season weed competition, you'll discover more ROI potential. (Syngenta)
- **GROWMARK has created a new carbon program** to pull payments from multinational companies and channel those payments to farmers for reimbursement for their agronomic expenses. Market Development Director Lance Ruppert outlines the program and explains how farmers are compensated for changes they make in their production practices. His comments are in this short video.

Conservation, Environment, Carbon—

- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on November 20th released the proposed rule revising the definition of "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) applicable to all Clean Water Act (CWA) programs, reports the IL Farm Bureau governmental relations staff. Specifically, the proposed rule would:
  - ✓ Define "relatively permanent" as waters that are standing or continuously flowing year-round or at least during the "wet season." This would be applicable to the tributaries and lakes and ponds categories.
  - ✓ Define "tributary" to ensure only those relatively permanent bodies of water that meet specific be considered jurisdictional.
  - ✓ Define "continuous surface connection" to require wetlands to meet a new two-part test to be jurisdictional. They must abut a jurisdictional water, and they must have surface water at least during the wet season.
  - ✓ Remove interstate waters from the categories of jurisdictional waters to make clear that such waters no longer gain jurisdiction by simply crossing state lines.
  - ✓ Clarify what constitutes "excluded ditches" through a proposed definition of ditch to distinguish these features from other types of waters and exclude those ditches constructed or excavated in dry land.
  - ✓ Also, the proposed rule would revise two existing exclusions associated with the definition of WOTUS, delivering clarity to the agricultural community:
    - "Excluded prior converted cropland:" The proposal provides clarity of a definition and allows EPA and USACE to identify prior converted cropland and to ensure that prior converted cropland only loses its designation when it has been abandoned and reverts to wetlands. The definition provides additional context on abandonment to ensure agricultural producers do not inappropriately lose the exclusion under the act for doing good work on their lands.
    - "Excluded waste treatment systems:" The proposal clarifies direction as to the breadth of systems that meet the exclusion.
  - ✓ In addition, the proposed rule would reintroduce the exclusion for groundwater, including groundwater drained through subsurface drainage systems, such as tile drains from agriculture.
  - ✓ This proposed rule would not change the exemptions under CWA section 404(f), which relieve farmers and ranchers of the need for authorization for many routine types of agricultural discharges into waters of the United States.

- **In the analysis of the American Farm Bureau**, "The new WOTUS rule could provide needed clarity for America's farmers, "Farmers and ranchers depend on clean water, so protecting natural resources is a top priority. We're pleased that the new proposed Waters of the U.S. rule safeguards waterways while respecting the conservation efforts of America's farmers. The Supreme Court ruled several years ago that the government overreached in its interpretation of what fell under federal guidelines. We're still reviewing the rule, but it appears to recognize the legal boundaries set forth by the Supreme Court and restores the balance Congress intended when it enacted legislation governing water more than 50 years ago. Farmers need regulations they can understand. We look forward to working with the EPA to ensure there are clear rules for clean water." (American Farm Bureau)
- **Happy with WOTUS** is the National Cattlemen's Beef Assn. Chief legal counsel, Mary-Thomas Hart, said, "I think the most important thing that we see in this rule is an attempt or an effort to make sure that any landowner, not just a technical expert, not just an attorney, or not just a wetland specialist, can go out look at water features on their property and at least make a preliminary determination about whether that feature is going to be subject to federal permitting. And they do that by requiring a 2-part test, or having a 2-part test, for potentially jurisdictional waters." It better defines what constitutes a water body under federal jurisdiction, "Any jurisdictional water will not only have a relatively permanent flow, but will also have physical features, like beds and banks, to indicate that it carries enough water to actually kind of make a mark on the land, right? So, we want to make sure that we're not regulating every trickle, but we also want to make sure that we're regulating water that's flowing fairly continuously, and I think with this rule, we're going to see every ephemeral out and most intermittent features out. So, a water body has to be carrying water at least seasonally to be federally jurisdictional." (NAFB News Service)
- **But there is still a big problem with WOTUS.** The attorney who argued the Sackett WOTUS case before the Supreme Court now argues there's a big loophole in the Trump proposed rule intended to comply with the Sackett ruling. Damien Schiff with the Pacific Legal Foundation argued before the Supreme Court in 2023 that a regulated wetland must be 'wet', "It's an easy-to-administer test. Ordinary citizens can use their own eyes to reliably determine whether or not their land is regulated." But Schiff says in a Washington Post opinion piece, the new Trump EPA rule doesn't go far enough in ending WOTUS uncertainty. The high court said a US water must have a "continuous surface-water connection" to relatively permanent water bodies with just 2 exceptions—drought and low tides. Yet, the Trump EPA proposal excepts "wet seasons," suggesting surface water might be absent for months at a time. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-IA, worried early on, "My suspicion is that EPA, just like regulators in almost any department, is going to take any wiggle room that's in a law or Supreme Court decision and try to regulate to the fullest extent possible." Schiff urges the Trump EPA to "finish the job" and ensure that "continuous" means "continuous" and "wet season" has no place in defining federal power. (Berns News Bureau)

- **The EPA said in a release** that its latest proposed WOTUS rule would give farmers, ranchers, and others "predictability, consistency, and clarity," a point EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin made to lawmakers, "It is important that, when you're going back to your home state, and you're speaking to your farmers, that you are able to, with confidence, be able to explain to them that the federal government is doing our part, so that they can define what "Waters of the U.S." are, without having to go hire an attorney or someone else, and pay a lot of money to ensure compliance." WOTUS definitions have changed repeatedly through years of legal wrangling, through the Obama, Biden, and the first Trump administrations. Chief Legal Counsel Mary Thomas Hart of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, "You've now dealt with 14 different regulatory iterations of a WOTUS definition. That is no way to manage a business. That is not a tool that anyone can use to effectively plan future land management decisions." But environmental groups see the EPA's new rule as a rollback of Clean Water Act protections and vow further legal fights if needed. The rule now faces a 45-day comment period." ((Berns Bureau, Washington)
- **Last week, the American Carbon Alliance** submitted a formal letter of support for the bipartisan SPEED Act — legislation designed to bring long-overdue clarity, accountability, and timeliness to federal environmental reviews. The bill establishes firm review deadlines, streamlines agency coordination, and prevents the kind of regulatory delay that regularly stalls energy, carbon-capture, biofuels, and rural-infrastructure projects. For ethanol producers, rural communities, and carbon capture developers, predictable permitting isn't a luxury — it's essential. Investments stall when timelines slip, and rural economies lose opportunities when critical infrastructure gets caught in bureaucratic gridlock. The SPEED Act is a major step toward ensuring the U.S. can actually build the projects needed for lower emissions, stronger energy security, and new economic growth across the Midwest. As of Friday morning, the SPEED Act passed committee markup with a bipartisan vote.
- **PepsiCo is ramping up its global push into regenerative agriculture**, reaffirming its target to implement regenerative or restorative farming practices across 10 mil. acres by 2030. Company officials say the effort is central to PepsiCo's Positive Agriculture strategy, which focuses on improving soil health, boosting biodiversity, reducing emissions and strengthening long-term food system resilience. The company is relying on regional partnerships to scale adoption. In IA, PepsiCo is working with Cargill and Practical Farmers of IA to expand cover cropping, reduced tillage and other regenerative practices across roughly 240,000 acres by 2030. In Canada, the company plans to nearly double its regenerative footprint, adding 240,000 acres in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and bringing its total regenerative acreage there to more than 500,000 by year's end. PepsiCo says financial incentives, agronomic training and peer ne2rks are helping farmers adopt practices that support productivity, profitability and climate goals through carbon sequestration and lower-input systems.

- **The Trump administration has proposed a sweeping set of changes** to the Endangered Species Act, setting up a fight with conservation groups that say the revisions would sharply weaken protections for imperiled wildlife. The draft rules would allow economic considerations to factor into decisions about safeguarding habitat and species. The proposal would also eliminate automatic protections for newly listed threatened species, instead requiring case-by-case regulations, and reduce the role of future climate-related threats in listing decisions. Environmental groups warn the administration is trying to narrow what qualifies as "harm" under the law by excluding many forms of habitat modification. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum said the changes will protect species while "respecting the livelihoods of Americans who depend on our land and resources." Officials say the changes are aimed at improving efficiency and transparency. The proposal is expected to draw significant legal challenges and could reshape how the federal government manages wildlife recovery for years. →
  - ✓ **Reaction to the proposals to change the Endangered Species Act** came from Pres. Zippy Duvall of the American Farm Bureau. He said, "Farm Bureau appreciates the Trump administration's efforts to improve implementation of the Endangered Species Act. Farmers and ranchers take seriously the responsibility of protecting the environment, and these proposals will provide them with more certainty as they manage the land they both live and work on. We are committed to working with the administration and Congress to advance the larger goal of modernizing the Endangered Species Act to protect wildlife and promote voluntary efforts to preserve at-risk species."
  - ✓ As the EPA moves toward new rules for the protection of endangered species, several organizations have created a video series to help understand what is at stake for the species that live with US production agriculture. CropLife America, the Ag Retailers Association, and the Council of Producers and Distributors of Agrotechnology have produced four short videos in the series *Adapting to ESA*, narrated by Stanley Culpepper. Each video runs between 5 and 9 minutes and focuses on a key aspect of the ESA, including background information and new mitigation requirements.

USDA—

- **In a move that sought to ease frustration among producers,** the USDA reopened approximately 2,100 Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices. Each reopened office is staffed with 2 employees, operating 5 days a week, to provide limited but essential services such as disaster aid, crop-insurance sign-up, farm loans and safety-net program assistance. USDA emphasized that reopening these offices is a critical step toward delivering on earlier commitments to farmers, including billions in disaster relief. The limited staffing underscores the tension between disrupted government operations and the urgent needs of rural America during a challenging harvest season. Farmers and ranchers have welcomed the reopening, but advocacy groups warn that the constrained capacity and lack of full funding could slow long-term recovery efforts. Still, for many producers, the resumption of in-person services offers much-needed hope and a path forward to access economic support during a deeply uncertain period.

- **USDA has begun signups** for the second round of disaster payments covering 2023 and '24, as the department readies its much-awaited tariff relief package expected out in December. The Farm Service Agency will accept applications for Supplemental Disaster Relief and other loss programs from now through next April 30th. Farm Production and Conservation Under Secretary Richard Fordyce, "SDRP 1 and 2, the Milk Loss Program, the On-Farm Stored Commodity Loss Program." Fordyce says the programs cover a wide range of disasters, "like wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornados, winter storms, freezes, smoke exposure and other related conditions that occurred, again, in that calendar year 2023 and 2024." The second round of aid adds to the more than $9.3 bil. USDA issued earlier this year as part of the Emergency Commodity Assistance Program or 'ECAP', plus over $700 mil. for Emergency Livestock Relief. Additionally, USDA will announce long-awaited tariff relief the first week of December, $3 bil. in CCC funds, that we will move out under the current plans. But that is not the plan under the China compromising our soybean farmers' access." December aid is still warranted despite China's renewing soybean buys but may not make farmers whole. Early estimates put the new help at $10-14 bil. The future Stage 2 rollout is expected to cover shallow or uninsured losses, broadening access to those who did not receive full compensation previously. USDA officials say the program is designed to minimize overlap with other disaster assistance payments and to deliver funds efficiently. Despite the massive size of the relief effort, farmers have voiced concerns about how quickly the money will reach their accounts, particularly given lingering operational disruptions from the shutdown. (Berns News Bureau)
- **Undersecretary Richard Fordyce issued** some tips to farmers about what to expect:
  - ✓ He adds that the stage 2 program is specifically geared toward losses that fell through the cracks of traditional programs.
  - ✓ If you are in an area that had a weather disaster in 2023 and 2024, if you're a producer, you think back, did I have a severe weather event, right? Hurricane, wildfire, derecho, freeze, drought, whatever, and it impacted my crop, then you're probably eligible."
  - ✓ And then, contact that local FSA county office, go to the website. There are resources on that website as well and be thinking about documentation that could prove that loss.
  - ✓ "What we think will be crops that will probably have a higher subscription rate through this program are going to be specialty crops. So, it'll be again what you think of as conventional specialty crops, you know, grapes, so it's trees, vines, bushes would be probably more of those crops that would be included."
  - ✓ Unlike Stage 1, USDA is not mailing pre-filled applications. Producers must go to their FSA county office and work through the application with staff. USDA has created a clear and concise checklist to help.
  - ✓ USDA has published a detailed checklist at FSA.usda.gov/SDRP, and Fordyce encourages producers not to wait.
  - ✓ SDRP Stage 2 is part of the $30 bil. Congress appropriated back in December. The first $10 bil. was the economic aid program, then $6 bil. for SDRP Stage 1. When we wrap up SDRP Stage 2, we will have administered all $30 bil. in disaster and economic relief.

- **Hemp producers will soon find their market has disappeared.** Federal regulators are poised to overhaul hemp rules with a sweeping ban on most hemp-derived THC products slated to take effect Nov. 12, 2026. The change comes after Congress approved a funding bill in November 2025 that redefines "hemp," restricting allowable total THC per retail container to just 0.4 milligrams — a move that could render more than 95% of today's edibles, vapes and other hemp-derived cannabinoid products federally illegal. Under the new rules, even naturally occurring cannabinoids like delta-8 and THCA may fall outside the legal hemp definition. The FDA has been tasked with issuing guidance by early 2026 to clarify which cannabinoids and product formats will be restricted. Industry leaders warn the ban could devastate a $28 bil. hemp marketplace, put hundreds of thousands of jobs at risk, and force companies to reformulate or exit.

Tariffs, Trade, and Agriculture—

- **President Trump on Thursday lifted the 40% tariffs** he imposed in July on Brazilian food imports, reversing a policy that had raised U.S. consumer costs and strained agricultural markets. The move removes duties on Brazilian beef, coffee, cocoa and fruit beginning Nov. 13, and may trigger refunds for tariffs already paid, according to a White House order. The rollback follows similar actions last week easing food tariffs from other countries as the administration reassesses trade measures that contributed to higher grocery prices. Brazil supplies about 1/3 of U.S. coffee and has become a major source of beef for the U.S. market. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said Trump aimed to "wipe the slate clean" after earlier broad tariff threats, calling the step a shift toward affordability. Commodity markets reacted sharply. U.S. cattle futures fell on concerns about increased Brazilian beef imports, while global coffee prices plunged more than 6% as traders anticipated a surge of Brazilian shipments.
- **President Trump's idea to import more beef from Argentina** has restarted the debate over mandatory Country of Origin Labeling. Mike Stranz, the vice president of advocacy for the National Farmers Union, shares the group's perspective on the issue, "There's been an impact on political interest in approving legislation to reinstate mandatory Country of Origin Labeling. After all, if there's going to be more imports from other countries into our beef marketplace, there ought to be mandatory labeling laws on the books to make sure that consumers have the right to know where the beef comes from, and a clear, strong labeling regime in place to make sure that those are clearly labeled as such." He said the National Farmers Union has been a strong supporter of MCOOL, backing the policy since its creation in the early 2000s. Rep. Harriet Hageman, R-WY, and several colleagues reintroduced legislation to reinstate MCOOL, renewing the debate over transparency in beef labeling, "We opposed its clawing back in 2015 when Congress struck it down. I think that we're at a different time now, and consumers really want to know about where their food comes from, especially when it's very clear we're going to be importing more beef. So, we're hopeful that there's some legislative avenue to get this done." (KSIR radio)

- **The US Soybean Export Council** has been working worldwide to promote US Soybeans and increase exports, and Reggie Strickland, a NC farmer is one of those who has worked abroad to increase exports. He said China needs continued pressure from the US to buy more soybeans. India and Vietnam are good potential markets, but India needs to change its policies and adds that the Indian government is the problem. His comments are in this short video.
- **Ellen Zimmerman with the US Grains and BioProducts Council** says there are many polices and trade restrictions which could be changed to benefit US farmers who want to see grain exports increased. She addresses some of those and says IL farmer Mark Wilson of Toulon, Chairman of the USGBC, is also working on that this year. Her comments are in this short video.
- **U.S. wheat farmers are welcoming** the efforts to expand agricultural trade in Latin America, with officials saying 4 new trade frameworks expected to be signed within the next 2 weeks. Dalton Henry of U.S. Wheat Associates said the agreements could boost demand in key markets such as Ecuador, where trade barriers are easing and purchasing opportunities are growing. Frameworks with El Salvador and Guatemala are also under development, offering potential expanded access for U.S. wheat in countries that rely heavily on imports. Henry noted that Argentina remains a major competitor in the global wheat market but said a trade framework could foster cooperation and stability in regional supply chains. "U.S. wheat farmers are cautiously optimistic," Henry said, adding that the agreements could strengthen export relationships across Latin America and promote long-term market growth. Finalization of the pacts could provide a critical boost for producers facing global competition and fluctuating prices.
- **The Senate Finance Committee has voted** to advance President Trump's nominee for USTR Senior Ag Negotiator, but not before partisan divisions surfaced. There was no denying Julie Callahan, an Assistant US Trade Representative for Ag, has the experience to be USTR Senior Ag Negotiator. Even the Committee's minority leader Ron Wyden, D-OR, admitted as much, but urged panel Democrats to oppose her nomination, "Dr. Callahan is a very experienced trade negotiator. But I have strong concerns about her failure to commit to this committee during her confirmation, that if confirmed, she would follow the law, not a blind order from Donald Trump." Wyden declared the president is interested only in his own agenda, including tariffs, and not bringing down costs for everyone, while charging Callahan would not stick up for farmers and others. But a quite different view from Senate Finance Chair Mike Crapo, R-ID, who also noted Callahan's many years of trade experience, "…as reflected by the over 80 trade associations supporting her nomination. If confirmed as Chief Agriculture Negotiator, she will ensure the important interests of American agriculture are championed." Callahan vowed at her confirmation hearing to press to reopen China's market to beef, sorghum, and other commodities. The final tally had Callahan confirmed by a vote of 17-10. The Callahan nod now goes to the full senate. (Berns Bureau, Washington)

- **Farmers may make better trade negotiators** than politicians. Take Jeff O'Connor for example. He raises soybeans and that is what Indonesia wants. On Monday, O'Connor, along with IL Soybean Association Director of Market Development, Todd Main, and International Markets Specialist, Caitlyn Abbey, attended a meeting at the Indonesian Consulate in Chicago to discuss soybeans with the Under Secretary of State from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as members from the Indonesian Dept. of Agriculture. They discussed ag-tech and the expanding soybean market in Indonesia, and a good order for IL soybeans should be arriving soon. (By the way, Jakarta, the Indonesian capital is now the world's largest city with a population of 42 mil. people. Moreover, urbanization will continue to accelerate, catalyzing people to earn higher incomes, which in turn, demands different diets and energy compositions. Moreover, as humanity urbanizes, their diets evolve to more ready-to-eat meals that contain higher quantities and qualities of protein (especially animal proteins) while being cooked in veg oils. Does O'Connor grow enough soybeans, or will he need your help now and then?)

Agri-Politics—

- **The New Democrat Coalition**, made up of about 115 House Democrats, on Thursday unveiled a sweeping Rural Revitalization Agenda aimed at boosting healthcare access, strengthening the farm economy and expanding broadband in underserved communities. The coalition said the plan is designed to spur long-term economic growth in rural areas. The effort is led by Reps. Kim Schrier, D-WA, Jim Costa, D-CA, April McClain Delaney, D-MD, and Josh Riley, D-NY. The agenda focuses on stabilizing rural hospitals, improving access to medical services and addressing persistent hunger. It also calls for new investment in small and specialty crop producers, reforms to trade and Farm Bill programs, and measures to ensure farmers can compete in global markets. Another major pillar targets the digital divide by expanding reliable, affordable broadband and modernizing federal connectivity programs. Coalition leaders said they intend to work across the aisle on a bipartisan Farm Bill while pushing for greater parity and support in existing rural programs.

- **A bi-partisan group of US House members** have introduced legislation designed to make fertilizer more affordable. It is a companion to a Senate bill that is also moving through that chamber. In the House it was sponsored by Rep. Nikki Budzinski, D-IL, along with Reps. Ashley Hinson, R-IA, Marie Glusenkamp Perez, D-WA, and Randy Feenstra, R-IA. By requiring the USDA to conduct a study of the market factors driving fertilizer costs, the bill would provide greater certainty and transparency for farmers navigating the high prices of these important inputs. This legislation is especially important as farmers struggle to make ends meet amid President Trump's trade war and the loss of critical markets overseas. Sens. Chuck Grassley, R-IA, Tammy Baldwin, D-WI, and Joni Ernst, R-IA, introduced companion legislation in the U.S. Senate. "IL growers are struggling to make ends meet because of high input costs, including the cost of fertilizer. Fertilizer is an essential tool for farmers to maximize their crop yields, but they often lack insight into how fertilizer prices are determined – making it harder to balance their books," said Rep. Budzinski. "I'm proud to introduce this common-sense, bipartisan legislation to give our farmers more transparency and ensure that farm inputs are priced fairly." The legislation is endorsed by the National Corn Growers Assn., the American Soybean Assn., National Farmers Union, and American Farm Bureau. Specifically, the report should include:

  - ✓ A description of impacts on the fertilizer market that influences price.
  - ✓ Market trends in the past 25 years.
  - ✓ Description of the imported fertilizer and market impacts.
  - ✓ Impacts of anti-dumping and countervailing duties.
  - ✓ An assessment of the regulatory environment governing fertilizer production.
  - ✓ A study of fertilizer industry concentration.
  - ✓ A study of emerging fertilizer technologies; and
  - ✓ A description of whether current public price reporting is sufficient for market transparency.

- **House and Senate lawmakers** have introduced legislation to reverse GOP cuts to the SNAP food aid program. "Congress has upheld a 50-year bipartisan commitment that Americans should not go hungry, but the Republicans' Big Ugly Bill breaks that promise with the largest SNAP cuts in history. To fund tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy, Congressional Republicans approved cuts that the Congressional Budget Office estimates will eliminate $187 bil. in food assistance over the next decade, even as President Trump's tariffs increase grocery prices. These Republican cuts will take meals away from millions of Americans, including children, seniors, veterans, workers and people with disabilities, while harming farmers, ranchers, small businesses and grocers who rely on SNAP dollars. Additionally, the Republicans' Big Ugly Bill creates a massive unfunded mandate on state governments that could force deep cuts or even eliminate SNAP entirely." More here.

The Forgotten Farm Bill—

- **Whatever happened to the Farm Bill?** Director Kevin Semlow (below) of the IL Farm Bureau's Governmental Affairs staff says, the legislation (H.R. 5371) re-opening the government included, "Extension of the Farm Bill until September 30, 2026. This one-year extension provided statutory authority for substantive language on numerous key programs preventing them from sunsetting and having them roll back to 1930/1940's programs. There was talk before the shutdown of the need for a "skinny farm bill" to address the sunset Farm Bill and possibly allow other topics like a Prop 12 fix, year-round E-15, and several other ideas to be addressed. The approval of H.R. 5371 for all intense purposes has removed that option. We continue to communicate to our congressional delegation that this pattern of one year Farm Bill extensions is not healthy for agriculture. We need a permanent five-year Farm Bill that modernizes and adjusts the Farm Bill programs to address current economic drivers. We will also continue to call for a fix to the Prop 12 issue. It was also hopeful with the ending of the shutdown we would see a farmer assistance/financial "bridge" program announced by USDA and the White House. Unfortunately, the optimistic discussion of some type of farmer assistance did not materialize and Secretary Rollins and Deputy USDA Director Vaden over the past several weeks made several public comments that a different approach may be coming. On Wednesday Secretary Rollins publicly stated with funding restored, work on a proposal has moved forward. She said, "…we expect to release and announce that (a financial assistance plan) the first week of December."

- **As the federal government reopens**, farmers say the temporary extension of the 2018 Farm Bill offers little relief from rising costs and growing uncertainty. President Donald Trump's signature restored funding for the USDA, but the farm law that underpins crop insurance, conservation programs and disaster aid is only renewed short term. KY farmer Keith Lowry told the Paducah Sun that production and input costs have doubled since 2018 while commodity prices have stagnated, leaving growers without the safety net they need. He added that trade disruptions — including past tensions with China — continue to narrow export opportunities for soybeans and other crops. American Soybean Association President Caleb Ragland said reopening the government is only a first step and urged Congress to advance regulations and trade efforts that support demand. Farmers say the shutdown hindered access to loans and assistance, compounding a difficult year marked by heavy rains, drought and escalating expenses.

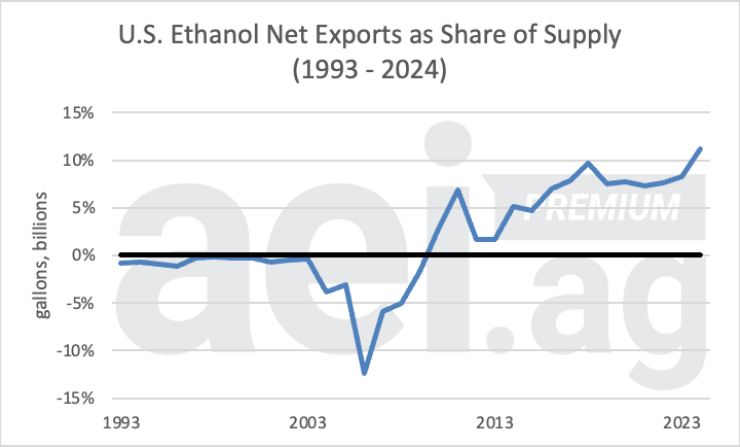
IL Issues—

- **IL is getting closer to improving broadband service** for unserved and underserved locations. As we have discussed previously, the State of IL will receive nearly $1 bil. to connect unserved and underserved locations through a federal program called the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD). (BEAD was created by the Biden administration, then put on hold by Trump officials.) The IL Office of Broadband has provided information about the locations and broadband providers that have been preliminarily awarded BEAD grants. You can see a map of locations to be served and the preliminary grant recipients at this web site: BEAD Connect IL. You can search the map for locations in a county, a type of broadband technology, or for specific broadband providers. There is a total of 157,004 IL locations that are expected to be connected through the BEAD program. Please keep in mind that these grant awards are not yet final. The IL Office of Broadband submitted this information to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for approval. It is expected that NTIA will provide that final approval by the end of this year. Once final approval is received, the IL Office of Broadband will complete contracts with the broadband providers with installation occurring over the following 4 years. Please keep in mind that these grant awards are not yet final. The IL Office of Broadband submitted this information to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for approval. It is expected that NTIA will provide that final approval by the end of this year. Once final approval is received, the IL Office of Broadband will complete contracts with the broadband providers with installation over the following 4 years.

Biofuels News--

- **At the COP30 global climate conference in Brazil,** the governments of Brazil, Italy, Japan, and India are spearheading a new pledge calling for the rapid global expansion of biofuels as a commitment to decarbonizing transportation energy. "The proposal is to expand the global use of so-called sustainable fuels from 2024 levels by at least 4 times, so that by 2035, sustainable fuels cover 10% of all global road transport demand, 15% of aviation demand, and 35% of shipping fuel demand. By Friday, the last official day of COP30, at least 23 countries had joined the pledge — while Brazilian delegates have been working "hand in hand with industry groups" to get language backing biofuels into the final summit deal. Though scientists continue to experiment with utilizing other raw materials for biofuels — a list which includes agricultural and forestry waste, cooking oils, and algae — the bulk of feedstocks almost exclusively come from the fields. Different types of food crops are used for different types of biofuels; sugary and starchy crops, such as sugar cane, wheat, and corn, are often made into ethanol; while oily crops, like soybeans, rapeseed, and palm oil, are largely used for biodiesel. An analysis by a clean transport advocacy organization published last month found that, because of the indirect impacts to farming and land use, biofuels are responsible globally for 16% more CO2 emissions than the planet-polluting fossil fuels they replace. More than 96 mil. acres of Earth's cropland are already devoted to biofuel feedstocks. The EU Deforestation-Free Regulation, or EUDR, cites soybeans among the commodities driving deforestation worldwide."

- **Global demand for biofuels means increased ethanol exports.** That is the analysis of ag economist David Widmar of Agricultural Economic Insights. "In 2024, the U.S. exported 1.9 bil. gal. of ethanol, surpassing the previous high of 1.7 bil. gal. (2018). Conversely, ethanol imports hit a record low in recent years, falling to just 71,000 gal. in 2024. A second way of considering the magnitude of ethanol exports is as a share of the annual supply. In Figure 2, net exports (exports less imports) are reported as a share of total annual supply. Because imports exceeded exports before 2010, net exports were negative for many years. Imports' role peaked in 2006 at 12% of supply. In recent years, and notably in 2024, exports have increased considerably. Most recently, net exports accounted for 11% of supply. For a different perspective, consider that total ethanol use increased by 1.4 bil. gal. since 2015, or roughly 10%. That growth, however, predominantly came from increased exports (78%) rather than domestic consumption (22%). In 2024, the 7 largest destinations of U.S. ethanol exports accounted for 81% of total exports. The largest buyer was Canada, accounting for 36% of activity. The U.K. (12%) and India (10%) were also major buyers. Since 2015, Canada has accounted for 40% of new export activity, with the U.K. representing 22%. For the 2025/26 marketing year, the USDA expects 35% of the U.S. corn crop will be used for ethanol production. The implication is that, as a rough rule of thumb, about 3 mil. acres of U.S. corn production are tied to ethanol exports.



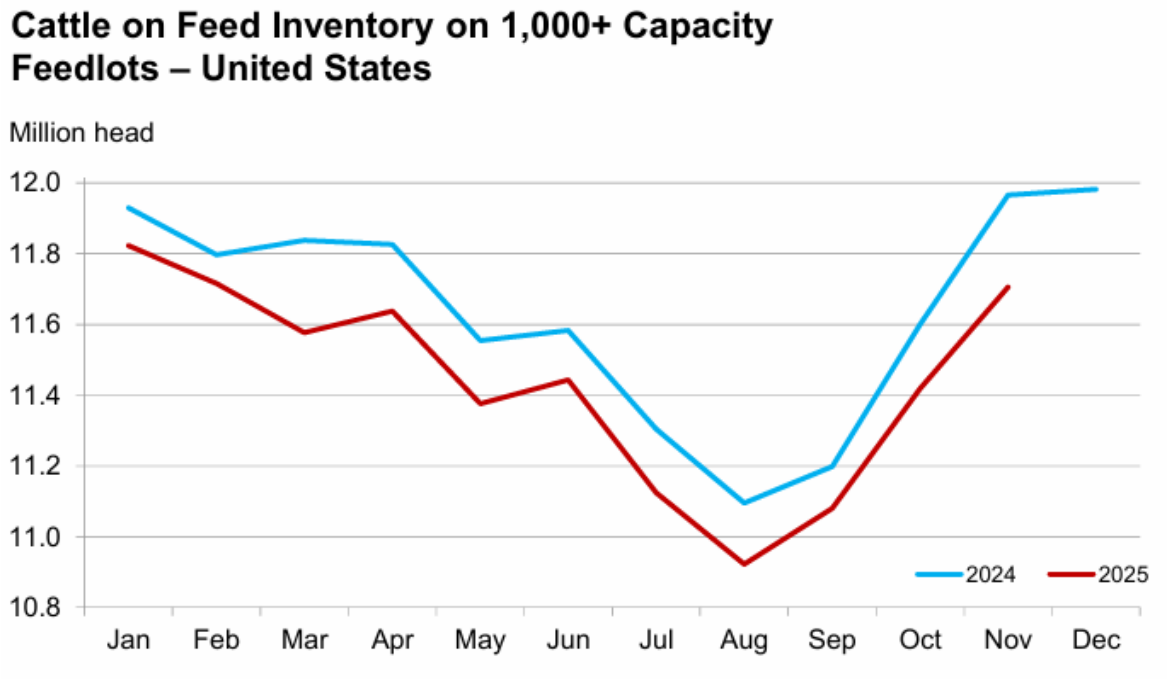
- **The biofuels industry has its own recipe for alphabet soup**. In the bowl one can spell out 45Z, E15, RINS, and SREs. Currently, in Washington there are policy developments and challenges to all of these, which can be confusing. For a clear view, Emily Skor, CEO of Growth Energy was consulted, and she cleared up the confusion in this short video. She also has a request for farmers, with suggestions on what they can do.
- **US ethanol exports climbed sharply in August**, driven by record sales to Canada and the European Union, federal trade data show. Shipments reached 188.8 mil. gal., a 15% increase from July and 24% higher than a year earlier. Canada remained the top buyer at 74.4 mil. gal., while another 47.6 mil. gal. moved through the Netherlands for use across the EU. Those markets accounted for nearly 2/3 of all U.S. ethanol exports. The U.S. imported no foreign ethanol during the month. Other key markets have shifted as well. Colombia boosted purchases by 43% to 14.1 mil. gal., India rebounded after several slow months, and Mexico increased buying as the United Kingdom, Peru and the Philippines pulled back. Year-to-date exports reached 1.42 bil. gal., 16% ahead of 2024. Exports of distillers dried grains, or DDGs, with solubles also strengthened, rising 10% to 1.17 mil. metric tons, though cumulative shipments remain slightly below last year.

- **Leaders from the biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel industries** gathered in Washington last week for Clean Fuels Alliance America's annual membership meeting, where the organization set policy priorities and pressed lawmakers for regulatory clarity. The event highlighted the strength of Clean Fuels' broad membership, which includes producers, feedstock suppliers and technology developers. During the meeting, members elected 7 officers to 2-year terms. The group also heard from Rep. Ashley Hinson, R-IA, who reiterated her support for renewable fuels and pointed to a bipartisan letter urging the Environmental Protection Agency to reallocate small refinery exemptions and finalize Renewable Fuel Standard rules. Clean Fuels members held 87 meetings with congressional offices, urging lawmakers to push Treasury and EPA to finalize guidance for the 45Z clean fuel tax credit and the 2026–27 RFS. Leaders said regulatory certainty is essential for continued investment, rural economic growth and the industry's long-term environmental goals.
- **The White House has held separate meetings** with oil refiners and biofuel producers as it works to resolve a long-standing dispute over U.S. biofuel-blending requirements, according to sources familiar with the discussions. BiofuelsNews.com reports the talks focus on bil. of gal. of blending obligations that were waived for small refineries, raising questions about whether larger refiners should make up any of the exempted volumes. A decision, originally expected by the end of October, was delayed by the federal government shutdown. The outreach reflects the administration's effort to balance competing interests: the oil industry argues that federal mandates threaten refinery jobs, while the agricultural sector says the waivers have reduced demand for corn-based ethanol and other biofuels. The outcome could influence fuel prices, farm incomes, and energy policy heading into next year. Officials also discussed year-round sales of gasoline containing 15% ethanol, or E15, potentially linking the measure to small-refinery waiver reforms to win support from both industries.
- **USDA announced Friday that it is making $7 mil. available** nationwide to advanced biofuel producers through the Advanced Biofuel Producer Payment Program. The funding will support eligible producers by providing quarterly payments based on the actual production of finished advanced biofuels. The enrollment period runs from October 1 to December 15, 2025. "This home-grown biofuel production results in lower prices at the pumps, creates jobs, and puts farmers first." USDA aims to increase domestic production using American-grown feedstocks. Interested parties can contact their state Rural Development Energy Coordinator for program details.

Animal Agriculture--

- **American beef producers** need to be protected before foreign producers. That is the opinion of Casey Jentz, the Chief Operating Officer for the American Angus Assn. He says imports fill a need, but he hopes demand will remain high going forward. His comments are in this short video.

- **The White House is creating turmoil in the livestock market.** Recent comments from the Trump administration about the beef industry and its goal to lower consumer beef prices have had a major impact on the cattle markets. R-CALF United Stock Growers of America CEO Bill Bullard explains the market's reaction, "What that indicated to us, what was a clear indication, was that the marketplace is broken because the market responded in a very wild fashion just upon the announcement of the President, and it tells us that our market system is entirely broken, that the market is too thin. When a market reacts simply to statements and rumors, as our market does, it's an indication of market failure in the industry." The recent events of comments have proved the volatility of the market, "We saw that first the markets collapsed after that announcement, and then the Secretary of Agriculture talked about the plans on the New World screwworm, and that sent the market reeling again. And a market shouldn't do that. A robust market wouldn't do that, but an ultra-thin market like we have in our cattle industry today is one that is highly sensitive to any adverse information, and it overreacts." Bullard says they also want the operations of the CME and feeder cattle contracts investigated to determine whether market manipulation is allowing large corporations to profit from a system meant to help producers manage risk. (KSIR radio)
- **No surprise Friday with the Cattle on Feed Report.** Feedlot numbers totaled 11.7 mil. head on November 1, 2025. The inventory was 2% below November 1, 2024. Placements in feedlots during October totaled 2.04 mil. head, 10% below 2024. Net placements were 1.99 mil. head. Placements were the lowest for October since the series began in 1996. Marketings of fed cattle during October totaled 1.70 mil. head, 8% below 2024.



- **We're partnering to fight hunger in Illinois!** The IL Pork Producers Assn. says, 

"Thanks to donations from pig farmers and support of various partners, Pork Power has provided more than 1 MILLION pounds of pork since the program began in 2008. Food banks across Illinois work with our association to accept donations and distribute them to families throughout the state. We can't wait to share more about how many lbs. of ground pork we're donating this year - be sure to keep following along."
- **Omaha Steaks President and CEO Nate Rempe** said, unfortunately, America's beef bills will likely keep climbing. He told Fox News that the nation's shrinking cattle supply and continued record demand are driving the possibility of $10-per-pound ground beef that could stretch family budgets for some time. "We need to get our arms around this in the U.S.," he said. "By the third quarter of next year, American families are going to see $10 a pound for ground beef in the grocery store, so we're in for a bit of a haul here." He added that prices likely won't come down in a significant way until 2027. "Heifer retention is a decision that the rancher and feedlot operator make to hold back female animals to help rebuild the herd," Rempe said. "It's a double-edged sword, because that means the supply is going to continue shrinking as fewer cattle go to market."
- **The Senate unanimously passed** the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, clearing a major hurdle toward restoring whole and 2% milk options in school meal programs. The bill now heads to the House, where similar legislation passed overwhelmingly in 2023, before it can be sent to the president's desk. The measure would allow schools to serve whole and reduced-fat milk alongside the current offerings of low-fat, fat-free and flavored varieties. Supporters say the change reflects updated nutrition research showing milk of all fat levels has neutral or positive health effects. Whole and 2% milk remain the most commonly consumed varieties at home. "Restoring schools' option to offer whole and reduced-fat milk will mean more schoolkids get the essential nutrients they need," said Gregg Doud, president and CEO of the National Milk Producers Federation.

Farm Life and Family Matters—

- **The average age of farmers** climbs significantly each year, and farmers typically work longer than other occupations. Those non-farm folks have retirement benefits, and likely are well care for with health insurance. But that is not the case for farmers, says Sean Voskuhl of AARP. Social Security, Medicare, and other elder issues are complicated and farm family awareness may not be where it should, says Voskuhl, who says retirement for farmers may bring challenges. He also says some rural areas have become "health care deserts" for rural families. His comments are in this short video.

The Labor Dilemma—

- **Reducing immigrants in the United States** will hurt U.S. agriculture short-term and the country overall longer-term geopolitical strategist Peter Zeihan (right) believes. "The United States really does have legs because of the openness of its society," Zeihan says. For agriculture-dependent states where small towns rely heavily on newcomers to sustain schools, local businesses, and processing plants, Zeihan's warning hits especially close to home. His message is that curbing immigration doesn't merely affect border communities; it threatens the long-term health of the national economy, the workforce, and rural America's survival.

Zeihan grew up in Marshalltown, IA, and emphasized that the immigration debate cannot be understood in isolation. The world's largest economies—Germany, China, Japan, Korea, Italy—are aging rapidly. Industrialization, he noted, brought declining birth rates, and said, "You play that forward for 90 years… and you're now running out of people who are under age 60." Zeihan underscored the severity of the trend. "We're looking at ethnicities that will vanish from the earth this century," he said. "This is the first year in American history, with the exception of the Spanish flu back in 1919… that our population has dropped, largely because of the immigration question," he said. For Zeihan, it's not just the Trump administration deportations for those in the country who entered illegally or overstayed their work visas that concern him. It is also how the Trump administration is canceling temporary legal status for workers or refugees. If restrictive federal immigration policies continue, Zeihan warned, the U.S. will begin "starting down the path to national oblivion that so many other countries started so many years ago." In some livestock counties, meatpacking regions, and food-processing centers, immigrants have been the difference between shrinking towns and stable ones. They fill vital roles in labor-intensive sectors and, just as importantly, bring families, open businesses, and keep schools alive. For agriculture specifically, reduced immigration means fewer workers in fields, barns, packing plants, and transportation. It also means fewer young families putting down roots in rural communities, communities already thinned by aging populations."

- **"The Trump administration now says its immigration crackdown** is hurting farmers and risking higher food prices for Americans by cutting off agriculture's labor supply." That was reported by the Washington Post from a document appearing in the Federal Register. "The Labor Department warned in an obscure document filed with the Federal Register last week that 'the near total cessation of the inflow of illegal aliens' is threatening 'the stability of domestic food production and prices for U.S. consumers. Unless the Department acts immediately to provide a source of stable and lawful labor, this threat will grow' with increased funding for immigration enforcement from the One Big Bill Act, the Labor Department said in the Federal Register, which is the place where all proposed rules are recorded for the public to view and comment." "Also, contradicting comments made by Agriculture Secretary Rollins that the U.S. farm workforce will become '100% American' as an effect of mass deportations, the Labor Department noted that Americans are not willing to step into farm work and lack the skills to fill agricultural jobs that undocumented immigrants are abandoning. 'The Department concludes that qualified and eligible U.S. workers will not make themselves available in sufficient numbers,' the agency said. The Labor Department made this case in paperwork documenting a new rule that took effect Oct. 2 that effectively lowers pay for seasonal migrants working in agriculture under the H-2A visa program. The move is aimed at giving farmers easier and legal access to immigrant workers 'to avoid imminent widespread disruption across the U.S. agricultural sector,' the agency said."

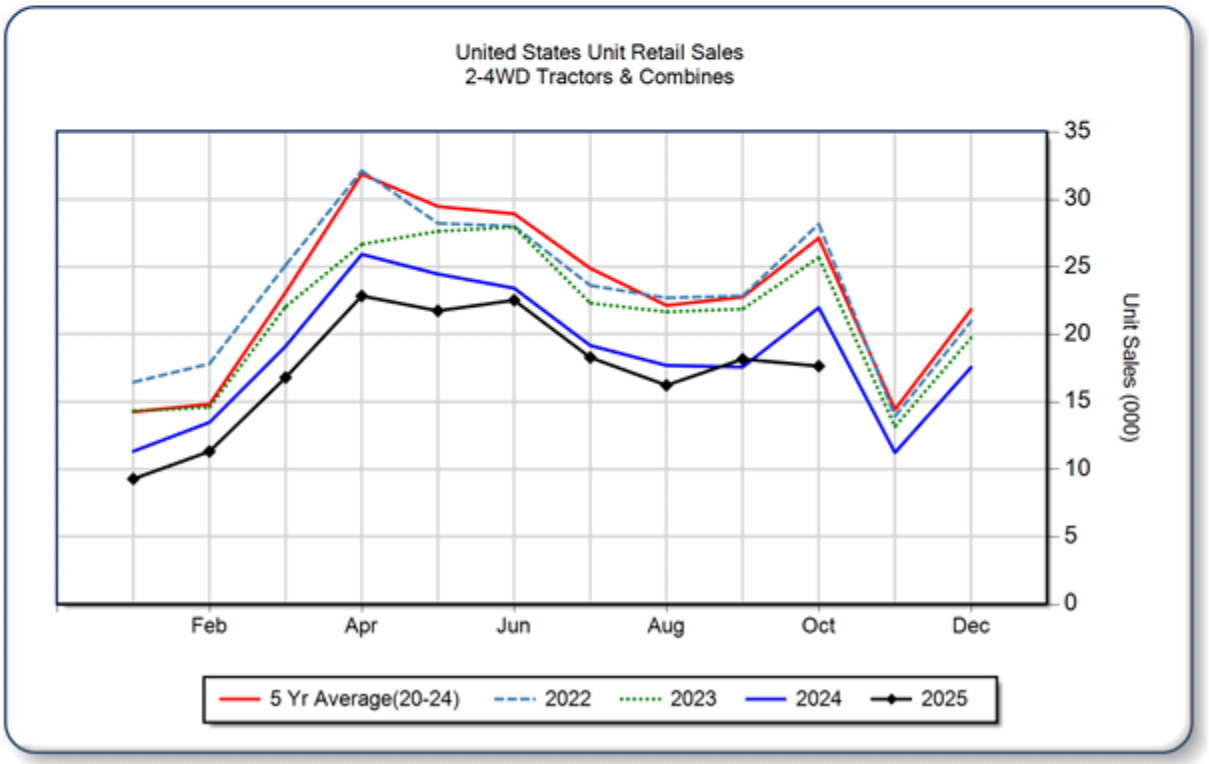
Agribusiness—

- **CropLife America, the Agricultural Retailers Association,** and the Council of Producers and Distributors of Agrotechnology have released new educational tools to help farmers, ag retailers, and pesticide applicators understand and comply with pesticide labels that contain Endangered Species Act language. The resources include an introductory ESA 101 presentation and a series of short instructional videos that help explain how to determine if any runoff and spray drift requirements need to be met, as well as how to use the Environmental Protection Agency's online compliance tools. "Our industry is committed to protecting endangered species and the ecosystems that we all rely on," said Alexandra Dunn, the president and CEO of CLA. "By offering clear and practical resources for pesticide label compliance, we are showing our continued support for farmers and applicators who need to have reliable access to weed, pest, and disease control technologies to maintain productivity, responsibly and sustainably."
- **Tyson Foods is closing one of its largest beef-processing plants** in NE at a time when a cattle shortage in the U.S. squeezes meatpacking companies reports the Wall St. Journal. "Tyson is also moving its Amarillo, TX, beef plant that can slaughter about 6,000 cattle a day to a single shift, down from 2 shifts a day. Tyson is the first of the big 4 meatpacking companies to close a major plant during the current cattle supply crunch. Meatpackers including Tyson have been losing hundreds of millions of dollars processing beef because of the lowest amount of cattle on U.S. pastures since the 1950s."

- **Data from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers** said U.S. sales of agricultural tractors dropped 19% in October 2025 compared to October 2024, while combine sales decreased 27% during the same time frame. "This month's decline in sales follows a slight uptick in both Canadian and U.S. sales in September," said Curt Blades, senior vice president at AEM. "However, we understand the uncertainty and volatility that remains in the marketplace." The biggest drop in U.S. tractor sales was in the 4-wheel drive segment, which fell to 316 sold in October 2025 compared to the same month last year, a 56% decline. U.S. combine sales totaled 514 in October 2024, falling to 376 this year, a 27% drop. Year-to-date combine sales were down 38% compared to 2024.

AEM United States Ag Tractor and Combine Report
October 2025

	October			YTD - October			Beginning Inventory
	2025	2024	%Chg	2025	2024	%Chg	Oct 2025
2WD Farm Tractors							
< 40 HP	9,585	12,291	-22.0	109,336	118,628	-7.8	60,093
40 < 100 HP	5,237	5,880	-10.9	44,925	46,692	-3.8	25,134
100+ HP	2,120	2,563	-17.3	15,203	19,952	-23.8	7,727
Total 2WD Farm Tractors	**16,942**	**20,734**	**-18.3**	**169,464**	**185,272**	**-8.5**	**92,954**
4WD Farm Tractors	**316**	**723**	**-56.3**	**2,216**	**3,832**	**-42.2**	**651**
Total Farm Tractors	**17,258**	**21,457**	**-19.6**	**171,680**	**189,104**	**-9.2**	**93,605**
Self-Prop Combines	**376**	**514**	**-26.8**	**3,063**	**4,970**	**-38.4**	**1,007**



Technology—

- **Besides a cushion and a jug of water**, what do you carry on your combine? Here are some ideas. Dry weather in the latter part of 2025 hastened crop dry down but also increased the potential for field fires. Chief Jerry Minor of the Pittsville, WI, fire department encourages farmers to keep a fire extinguisher and leaf blower on combines to keep hot surfaces clear of debris and fight a fire at an early stage. He is also intrigued by the addition of water tanks, hoses, and hydraulic pumps on grain carts to battle a small field fire until rural firefighters arrive, as he indicates in this short video.
- **Grandpa used to burn corn when coal was too expensive.** But now a corn derivative can be put in your furnace airflow stream to keep it clean. Poly-lactic acid from corn is used to make a polymer that forms a furnace air filter, created by Aerterra. Aerterra co-founder and CEO Curtis Firestone says "Corn-derived bio-polymers can deliver the same filtration performance as petroleum-based synthetic fibers or micro-fiberglass fibers, and our corn-based nano-fiber structures at higher efficiency levels lock in that performance over time, whereas some synthetic filters rely on electrostatic charge that may degrade over time. Unlike typical synthetic or glass-based materials, our materials are fully renewable, have a lower carbon footprint, and are more likely to break down naturally." And he says the market is immeasurable. "Every home, apartment, office, school, farm, and data center needs air filtration. It's a multi-billion-dollar category that has barely changed in decades. We believe Aerterra can become the leading bio-based clean-air brand, expanding from filters into a full portfolio of "Corn-Based Clean Living" products. We're just getting started."

Food and Nutrition—

- **The cost of cooking a Thanksgiving dinner is falling** for the third straight year, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual holiday survey. The group estimates that a traditional meal for 10 will average $55.18 this year, or about $5.52 per person—a 5% drop from 2024. Prices, however, remain above pre-pandemic levels after peaking at a record $64.05 in 2022. A sharp decline in turkey prices is driving much of the relief. A 16-pound frozen bird now averages $21.50, or about $1.34 per pound, down more than 16% from last year. While wholesale prices for fresh turkeys are higher, grocers are cutting retail prices and promoting holiday deals to boost demand. Farm Bureau volunteers collected prices during the first week of November, with USDA data showing further declines the following week. Half the survey's Thanksgiving staples, including rolls and stuffing, fell in price as lower wheat costs helped ease flour-based items.

Farm and Check-off Organizations —

- **Congratulations to the newly elected members** of the IL Wheat Development Board. With the newly approved wheat check-off program becoming effective Jan.1, the board will determine how the funds will be used for research and market development. Board members are: At-large IWDB board members include Brandon Warren (Wayne County), John Howell (Randolph) and Jarod Weaver (Edwards). District board members include Peter Gill (Stark, District 1), Dean Campbell (Madison, District 2), Rob Holscher (Crawford, District 3), Steve Launius (Washington, District 4) and Jamie Harvel (Clay, District 6). Board member will make an appointment to fill the Dist. 5 seat. The check-off rate is 1.5¢ per bu.

And Finally, This—

- **It's harvest time** at the oldest experimental agricultural fields in North America –at the Univ. of IL. Named for the College of ACES' first dean, Professor George Espy Morrow, the Morrow Plots have shaped modern farming for nearly 150 years. They were established in 1843 to study how crop rotation, soil nutrient depletion and fertilizer affected corn, soybeans, wheat and other crops, and were designated a National Historic Landmark in 1969. Today, the plots – stewarded by the Department of Crop Sciences – are still a living laboratory, providing valuable information on crop production and giving researchers and students a front-row seat to agricultural innovation. Now with a revitalization gift from Bayer for its sesquicentennial in 2026, the plots are getting a major overhaul to prepare them for the next 150 years, including a fresh landscape design and a live webcam, so anyone can watch innovation in action. From shaping farming knowledge to inspiring generations of agricultural researchers, the Morrow Plots are a cornerstone of Illinois' identity and agricultural legacy. (In an historical note, the Morrow Plots were targeted by some University students in the late 1960's who were protesting the Vietnam War, although the Morrow Plots had nothing to do with the conflict. A perceptive crop research leader caught wind of the threat, and the night prior to the planned student protest, he quickly organized a harvest of the research crop to ensure the data was secure. The student marchers the following day headed toward the plots where they planned to spray it with Agent Orange being used in Vietnam to kill vegetation. Armed with his bullhorn he used in county Extension programs for farmers, he welcomed the protestors to the "First Student Crop Tour of the Morrow Plots," and proceeded to give them his complete knowledge of their historical nature, relevance to the University, and offered to answer their questions. Completely befuddled, the leader of the group was allowed to squirt some water on a post as a token of his plans to kill the crops and then meekly lead the group away.)

Mark Your Calendar! --

- **IL Corn Growers** will hold their annual meeting Nov. 25, at the AgriCenter in Bloomington. The meeting begins at 8 am with organizational updates, and remarks from NCGA Pres. Jed Bower of OH. Awards will be given out to honor contributions to the IL Corn industry. Details and Registration will be announced later.
- **Rollover training for emergency responders** will be held Dec. 2 in Chatham and Dec. 3 in Centralia, sponsored by IL Pork, IL Beef, and JBS. Responders will be prepared for effectively handling incidents involving rolled-over livestock trailers. Details and registration
- **Beef Quality Assurance** workshops will be held in December for beef producers to update their BQA certificates. There will be sessions. Dec 2 in Elizabeth and Teutopolis, Dec 4 in Congerville and Greenville, Dec 5 in DeKalb, and Dec 10 in Fairview. Details and on-line registration are at Illinoisbeef.com.
- **Dinner and data (on cover crop results)** will be sponsored by the IL Soybean Assn. at the St. Clair Co. Farm Bureau Office at Belleville on Dec. 4. Registration begins at 5:15, dinner and program at 5:30. CCA credits available. Details and registration here. IL Soy and IL Extension speakers will handle the program.
- **IL Beef Assn.** will hold a Cattlemen Connect educational meeting Dec. 5 at DeKalb Co. Farm Bureau for BQA training, risk management, packer capacity, and carcass value determination, and later at Larson Farms for a live cattle evaluation and timely marketing demonstration. Details and register here.
- **The 2025 Farm Assets Conference** is scheduled for Friday, December 12 at the Agri-Center, on Carroll Drive, off Route 9 on the west side of Bloomington. The Farmdoc program starts at 8:00 a.m. Registration is $80 per person through noon December 8 and $100 thereafter. Register here for the Farmdoc Farm Assets Conference and get details.
- **The Illinois Farm Economics Summit** addresses current economic conditions and policy issues impacting global, US, and IL agriculture. They include Farmdoc presentations, discussion, and Q&A on grain and livestock markets, farm financials and profitability, farm and risk management, farmland values and leasing, farm policy, and more. Preregistration for the 2025 IFES meetings is $80 per person through December 7th. Registration is $100 after Dec. 7th. Register for Dec. 15 Dekalb, Dec 16 Peoria, and Dec. 17 Mt. Vernon.

ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

- **Cornbelt Update is a weekly service of the Illinois Soybean Association and provided to Illinois Soybean Growers.**
- www.ilsoy.org
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