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

Commodity market price drivers—

- **The price of soy oil** approached 2-year highs last week before settling back down. Arlan Suderman, the chief commodities analyst for StoneX, said, “We get some underlying support from the strength of the biofuel program that was announced by the EPA last month, and that certainly is a positive. Demand for soy oil, we believe, is going to be very strong. We're going to be using up the surplus that we built up over the last couple of years. We've already seen soy oil stocks start to



TradingView

go down. He said demand for soy oil is strong and expected to grow in the immediate future, “That's one reason we went higher because of this biofuel program. In order to hit the program's objective, we're going to need to have our biomass diesel plants going at nearly full capacity the rest of the year, and our crushing facilities for soybeans are going to have to go near full capacity as well. And then we'll probably still have to import some fuel and probably have to import some soy

oil.” However, when increasing demand pushes prices that much higher, suppliers always start looking elsewhere. Suderman said that’s likely a reason for a collapse earlier last week, “Why had we started to collapse? Because the higher these prices get, the more they start making buyers start to look at imported supplies and start to question, ‘Okay, at what point does it become cheaper to start using other materials, including imported soy oil from Argentina?’ Suderman said it doesn’t change the long-term fundamentals of the market, but it’s been quite a ride in soy oil. (American Ag Network)

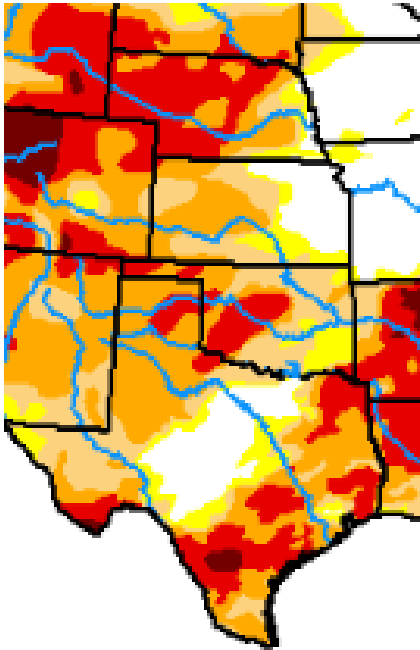
- **Domestic soybean crush capacity has surged** in the past few years, reshaping where and how your soybeans are used. For IL farmers, the shift means more beans are staying stateside, more oil is flowing into renewable diesel, and more demand is reshaping the economic landscape. “We’ve seen an unprecedented expansion in soybean crush capacity across North America, on the order of 20% to 25%,” explains [Matt Hopkins, Vice President of North America Soy Crush at ADM and an IL soybean farmer himself](#). “That’s a meaningful shift in a relatively short period of time.” At the center of it all is a powerful driver: biomass-based diesel demand and the oil derived from your crop. For decades, roughly half of U.S. soybeans were exported whole. Today, that balance has shifted. “Now, the majority of them are staying here and being crushed in the U.S.,” Hopkins says. Several forces converged to create this kind of structural change. Supportive U.S. biofuels policy and the rapid expansion of renewable diesel have combined to significantly strengthen demand for soybean oil. At the same time, protein demand domestically and globally remains solid. In short, demand for the full-circle package of U.S. soy benefits has grown at a healthy clip. “In the end, it’s both. It all works together,” Hopkins says. “Biodiesel and renewable diesel are growing drivers, but the industry is ultimately driven by the combined value of both meal and oil. It’s the total demand that matters.” “Since biodiesel and renewable diesel have continued to become more mainstream over the last decade, we’ve continued to invest so we can meet evolving demand across markets,” Hopkins says. One example is Green Bison Soy Processing, a joint venture between ADM and Marathon Petroleum in Spiritwood, N.D. “We built that plant — the first soybean crush facility in the state — to meet demand driven by renewable diesel while also producing meal for feed markets,” Hopkins explains. Further east, IL is particularly well-positioned within this evolving system. “IL is uniquely positioned between eastern and western crush facilities, as well as export channels,” Hopkins says. “That allows IL soybeans to easily satisfy demands both domestic and foreign. And we continue to be in just the right place as the market evolves and grows.” In other words, your crop isn’t locked into a single pathway. IL is famous for its infrastructure, including river access and rail, giving you options as you market your crop. That helps buffer your operation in an unpredictable global economy. “Increased domestic demand helps reduce reliance on foreign demand and trade flows, which can be unpredictable,” Hopkins says. “Stable local demand is always going to be beneficial to farmers.” If there’s one development that has reshaped the crush landscape more than any other, it’s renewable diesel. “When we think about the wider biofuels market, the biggest change has been the introduction of renewable diesel,” Hopkins says. For Hopkins, the expansion of soy crush capacity offers a hopeful and straightforward signal. It’s an opportunity for farmers,” he says. “More demand is good for all of us, and more capacity to meet it is a sign of the health of our industry.”



- Wheat futures jumped Thursday** on the Chicago Board of Trade in response to drought conditions expanding in U.S. Plains wheat fields, with the U.S. Drought Monitor map showing the spread of extreme drought in NE and patches spreading in OK and TX. While dry weather supported wheat, it remains to be seen if the concerns keep wheat positive in the coming sessions; "I remind us all that it's still grass," Gary Sandlund of Futures International told Dow Jones, highlighting that winter wheat is a resilient crop. The weather outlook in wheat-growing areas is turning dryer and moving futures up, but rainfall on the eastern side of the Cornbelt is making the soil moisture especially strong for farmers during planting.



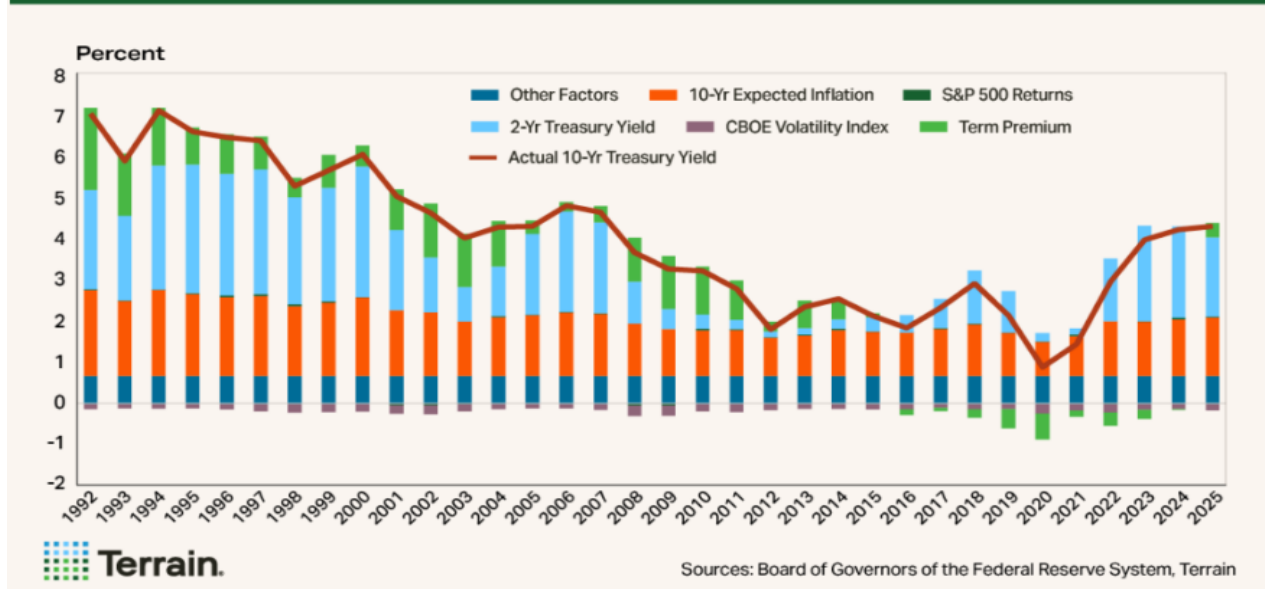
- The winter wheat crop has been short on moisture in many states**, including OK. Jimmy Kinder is an OK wheat producer and said, "It's been a story of almost like a cat with 9 lives. We've lost it several times, and then we're coming back and standing in a dual-purpose wheat field right now that has shown the battle scars of the year. So, we started off early this Fall, in 2025, and had limited moisture. We had some problems with wheat trying to actually die, just getting enough for sure to germinate, and trying to die, and we had to re-sow quite a bit of the wheat that we had planted." Kinder said his cattle production is "paying the bills" on his farm this year, "We turned cattle out on some wheat that probably normally wouldn't have been turned out on, but we needed the pasture, and so that's where we were. So, we grazed it super hard all year, and then we had March come in, and we were trying to break dormancy. We didn't have any moisture, and it got hot, and we thought we were going to have to write off quite a few fields. In fact, I've got a couple of fields that have already been turned in as a loss." The USDA said OK winter wheat was a total of 45% poor to very poor (13% very poor, 32% poor), 45% in fair conditions, 9% in good condition, and only 1% was excellent. (Radio Oklahoma Network)



The Business of Farming—

- **Ten-year Treasury yields**, which are a good benchmark for long-term rates at the farmgate, are unlikely to return to the low levels that followed the 2008 financial crisis for 3 reasons, according to Terrain Ag senior analyst [Matt Erickson](#). “Those are: continued income; growth; higher expectations for future inflation and rate levels; and U.S. government debt measures. Erickson says, “This environment argues for U.S. farmers to undertake disciplined balance sheet management rather than aggressive, highly leveraged expansion. Disciplined balance sheet management can look like:
 - ✓ Prioritizing liquidity and working capital.
 - ✓ Where feasible, locking in fixed rates on term debt to help reduce exposure to further rate volatility.
 - ✓ Making only selective capital expenditures focused on improving efficiency, reducing per-unit costs, or enhancing yield stability.Erickson says, “The bottom line, in a higher-for-longer rate environment, balance sheet strength, liquidity and targeted investment are likely to outperform aggressive, debt-driven growth strategies at the farm level.”

The Influence of Factors Driving 10-Year Treasury Rates From 1992-2025



Risk management also takes on added importance. Forward contracting, hedging strategies and crop insurance can help protect margins in an environment where both input costs and financing costs are less forgiving. At the same time, resilient consumer demand supported by a firm labor market continues to underpin food consumption. The goal, therefore, is not retrenchment but disciplined positioning. In the current environment, balance sheet strength, cost control and margin protection are likely to outperform highly leveraged growth strategies.

- **How does one navigate the volatility of the market** and the economy in the midst of the conflict with Iran? [Commodity economist Bree Baatz with Terrain Ag](#) says “I continue to forecast the 2025/26 season average corn price at \$4.15/bu., as 50% to 60% of the crop has likely already been marketed at prices averaging between \$3.90/bu. and \$4.10/bu.

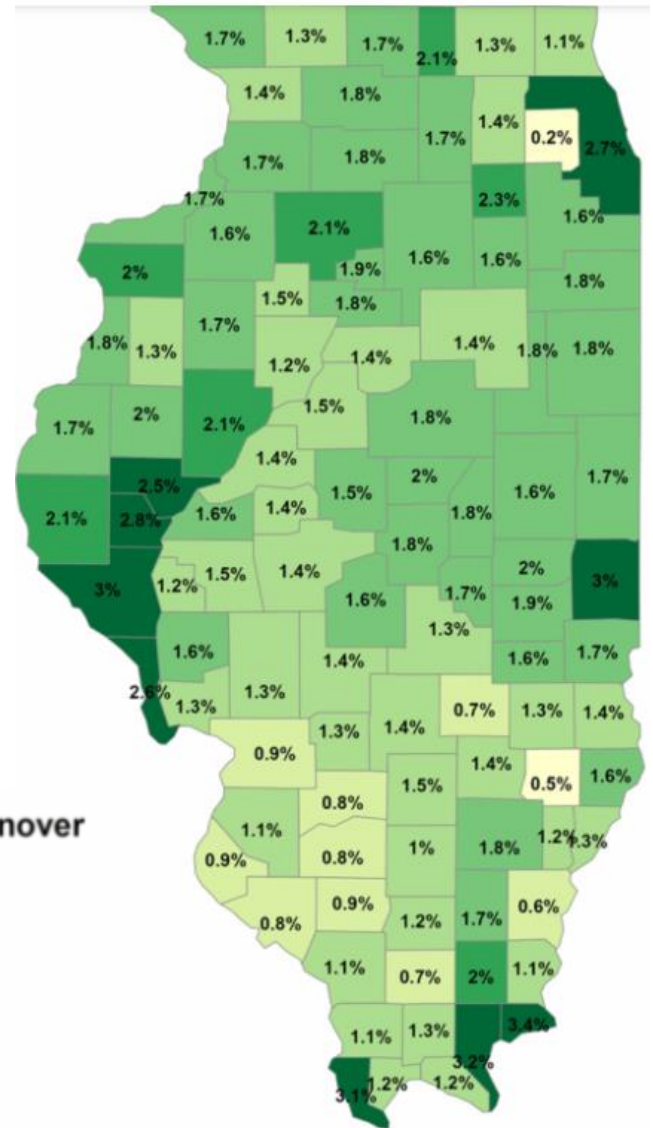


Commitment of Traders’ data suggest a significant amount of corn was sold in the first half of March as prices moved higher. I forecast corn cash prices to average \$4.30/bu. in Q2, with nearby futures trading largely sideways in the \$4.50/bu. to \$4.90/bu. range. Factors supporting this forecast include a moderate length to the Iran conflict, average South American weather for the rest of the second-crop corn season, and average U.S. planting conditions. Volatility will remain higher until the Iran conflict ends. Better-than-expected weather or a resolution to the Iran conflict could push prices lower. And Baatz says she has several ideas, “Over the next quarter, several factors warrant a close watch,”

- ✓ Margins. Through much of March, margins moved as fast as the headlines did. Depending on when you purchased inputs, consider if putting a floor under the current market prices makes sense for your operation. However, I believe the current balance of risks skew toward higher prices, so consider strategies that will position your farm to be able to capture higher prices if they materialize.
- ✓ Iran conflict. Both input and crop prices will change based on how long the conflict is expected to last. This volatility could offer opportunities to market more old-crop grain or a portion of anticipated 2026 production.
- ✓ Fertilizer supply situation. In an extreme case, shortages of fertilizers could impact the prospect of supplies of other grains, including rice and wheat, which could push corn prices higher. In the same extreme case, governments’ intervention in trade, either limiting exports or procuring/stocking food grains, could magnify price moves.
- ✓ U.S. planting weather. Weather over the next 2 months will help determine whether we meet, exceed or fall short of the 95.3 mil. intended corn acres, with a corresponding price response.

Land Values, Farmland Issues, Data Centers---

- Sometime farmland frequently sells, sometimes it rarely sells.** What is the rate of turnover of IL farmland. [IL Farmdoc ag economists](#) tallied that data. Do you live in a dark or light green county on the map? Illinois property transfer records were screened against several criteria: parcels between 10 and 1,281 acres, effectively excluding most rural residential properties while retaining commercial operations up to 2 full sections; Transactions were further screened using price-per-acre thresholds to limit the influence of data errors, development parcels, and non-representative sales. Turnover in IL remained structurally low throughout the period, averaging 1.77% of total farmland from 2003–2011 and 1.45% from 2012–2025 (the latter may rise slightly upon final reporting). Turnover is not uniform; farm size, ownership structures, urban influence, and local markets drive meaningful regional variation. The map illustrates the geographic distribution of sales across the state. The reported rates reflect total qualifying farm sales, as defined in this study, divided by USDA measures of land in farms for each county. Because turnover is a percentage of total farmland, counties with smaller agricultural bases may exhibit elevated rates from just one or two large transactions. In summary, IL farmland turnover follows consistent patterns mirroring the broader Cornbelt, though at significantly lower levels than other real estate forms. Even through multiple economic cycles including commodity expansions, margin compression, financial market stress, and the recent inflation surge, the volume of land changing hands fluctuated within a narrow range relative to total supply. However, due to the thin market, small percentage shifts still represent large variations in annual parcel sales. Given the large total value of the asset class, a relatively small turnover rate remains sufficient for accurate pricing with respect to market fundamentals and thus should not be viewed as either a problem or a source of non-market distortions.



Agronomy—

- **USDA again wants to pull the corn and soybean germplasm** from the Univ. of IL at Urbana and transfer the soybean seed collection to the Univ. of MO, and the corn seed collection to IA State Univ. USDA said it is consolidating. Opponents say it is because IL is a blue state and the others are red states. The closures would be effective this October, unless something changes. IL Soybean Assn. science coordinator Dr. Corey Lacey said, “Last year we saw a USDA proposed budget, and, in that budget, we saw a conversation about moving the germplasm and the ARS facility in Champaign-Urbana. This facilitated with our, this associated with the Univ. of IL. A coalition came together last year, and we were able to change some language to protect it from getting moved. Unfortunately, this year in the proposed budget we saw that language happen or get added back and so there's a conversation about moving the Urbana ARS facility, part of it to MO and part of it to IA.” And so, what would happen if they did that? The Urbana ARS facility houses a weed research unit, but it also houses 2 key germplasm collections, the maize collection and the soybean germplasm collection. And one thing I really like to call out is IL soybean is that the soybean germplasm collection is our national collection. It's a premier collection of germplasm. And it's one of these institutions that operates in the background. And you don't realize how important it is until it's gone. And because it is associated with all the genetics research that happens around soybean yields and disease in the last probably several decades. And so, if they did move it, what that means is that we're potentially risking losing some of that germplasm. And at best, we're delaying any research by several years as they move the facility. And so, a delay in research means less progress when it comes to soybean genetics in the coming years, which is a problem when we're dealing with, when we're dealing with the economy and the situation farmers are facing right now. Our understanding is that the ARS facility at Missouri doesn't currently have the facilities to house the germplasm facility. And so that's a big part of the conversation because what that means is before they can even move it, they're going to have to invest and build out a whole infrastructure in Missouri. And so again, that's another reason why this doesn't quite make sense. We're also being told that in general, the Univ. of MO hasn't asked for this. The researchers there, the academics understand that this is a bigger issue and that's keeping it where it's been housed for the last 50 years makes a lot of sense.” So, what is IL Soybean Assn. doing to turn this around? “There is also a broader coalition that includes IL Corn, IL Farm Bureau, American Soybean Assn., and the Univ. of IL that started outreaching to our legislators in DC and also directly to USDA to say we don't want to be critical of the administration. We're just saying this is something that we'd like to reconsider.”
- **For a video report on the USDA action** and the response of the IL Soybean Assn. [utilize this link to WCIA, Ch. 3, Champaign.](#) →



- **Dr. Corey Lacey of the IL Soybean Assn.** says farmers have a lot at stake here because such a transfer of research would mean a multi-year delay in advancing science, yields, genetics, and new soybean varieties may never get released. He says farmers should contact their Congressional representatives and ensure this USDA action goes nowhere. The University's Dr. Don Ort, an influential global researcher in genomic biology, says there is no perceived advantage in the USDA's plans, and it would cause a significant delay in research programs to the detriment of farmers."



- **The United States Supreme Court is set to hear oral arguments** on April 27 in Durnell v. Monsanto, a closely watched case involving allegations that exposure to the herbicide Roundup caused cancer. The lawsuit, brought by a MO plaintiff named John Durnell, claims that Roundup and its active ingredient, glyphosate, led to the development of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He's asking the Court to uphold a \$1.2 mil. jury award. The case is 1 of thousands filed over the past decade against Monsanto Company, now owned by Bayer. Bayer argues that the claims should be dismissed, citing federal law that limits states' ability to impose additional labeling requirements. Plaintiffs counter that their claims align with federal standards requiring adequate safety warnings. The National Agricultural Law Center said the outcome could shape future litigation involving pesticides. →
- **Is glyphosate in our food supply causing cancer?** [Here's what the latest science says.](#) "Since I've been a health writer for many years, friends often come to me asking about the latest health claims they've seen making waves on social media. With the 24-hour news cycle, it's easy for a single misinterpreted study or claim to spread far and wide—and cast fear into the hearts of folks just trying to feed themselves and their families. One of the most common questions I get is whether glyphosate—the herbicide used on common food crops to kill weeds—causes cancer. People also want to know if we need to clean out our pantries and refrigerators to remove foods that might be "contaminated" by it. "...a product so pervasive—might raise some red flags, but [Jessica B. Steier, Dr.P.H., PMP](#), CEO of Unbiased Science, would like to set the record straight. "The reality is that without glyphosate and other pesticides, our food supply would be decimated," says Steier. "We would see lower crop yields, more soil erosion from aggressive tilling, higher food prices and increased food insecurity. While it's always prudent to assess risks, it's equally important to recognize the benefits these tools provide in modern agriculture." "For the general public consuming trace amounts in food, the risk is negligible" says Steier. "The most comprehensive regulatory reviews, including those by the EPA and the WHO, conclude that glyphosate is unlikely to pose a cancer risk at real-world exposure levels." (Read the original article on [EatingWell.](#))

Farm Bill 2.0—

- **Will a vote come this week on another Farm Bill?** “Leadership is preparing for a vote on the bill the week of April 27, as [POLITICO](#) first reported. The notice sent by Whip Tom Emmer’s floor director emphasizes that the bill is budget-neutral and prioritizes ‘responsible spending on agriculture,’ language meant to appeal to fiscal conservatives who typically oppose spending on the massive package that governs all major nutrition and agriculture programs.” “House Agriculture Committee Reps. Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Jahana Hayes (D-CT) are urging their Democratic colleagues to vote against the Farm Bill when it comes to the floor next week. In a letter to House Democrats, McGovern and Hayes argue that voting for the bill would be a political risk ahead of November’s midterm elections because the legislation cements cuts to federal nutrition assistance programs. The stakes are far too high for us to cede ground on the issue of affordability, the lawmakers wrote in the letter, which was first obtained by POLITICO. This is a defining issue for us, and this vote is a decisive moment that gives us a strategic opportunity to highlight how the GOP Farm Bill will raise costs while cutting benefits for families that are already struggling to pay for groceries.” [Agri-Pulse](#) says, House Republican leadership and Ag Committee Chair Rep. Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson, R-PA, have been testing support for the farm bill ahead of a floor vote, with early conversations suggesting the bill has broad appeal across the conference, even with fiscal conservatives. Thompson met with Freedom Caucus members on Monday night, noting that it was a ‘really positive discussion. He said he emphasized to the group, which is known for its fiscal conservatism, that it had advanced the committee with bipartisan support and that it was budget neutral. While Thompson said some individual members may withhold their support, he said the majority of members would back the bill.
- **“A coalition of 338 farm groups (last) week** sent House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-LA, and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-NY, a letter urging them to take up what’s known as Farm Bill 2.0 on the House floor,” [reported DTN](#). ““The bipartisan passage through committee is a significant milestone, and we urge House and Senate leadership to build on recent momentum and prioritize timely consideration and passage of a bipartisan, bicameral Farm Bill 2.0,’ the groups wrote. ‘While we recognize the competing demands on congressional time and resources, the timeliness of this legislation to the agricultural economy and rural America cannot be overstated.’”
→
- **The letter from the 338 farm organizations** to House leaders was 10 pages long. There were only 5 paragraphs, and 8 and a half pages of names of national and state farm groups. IL agriculture was represented by Illinois Crop Improvement Association, Inc. IL Farm Bureau, IL Fertilizer & Chemical Association, IL Seed Trade Association, Inc., IL Soybean Growers, IL Wheat Association, and Farm Credit IL.

- **Congressional leaders are signaling renewed momentum** on a long-delayed Farm Bill as pressure builds from agricultural groups ahead of the 2026 planting season. Lawmakers from both parties said negotiations have accelerated, though disagreements remain overspending levels, conservation programs and nutrition policy. Congress continues to operate under an extension of the previous law, leaving farmers uncertain about long-term support. According to Reuters, lawmakers are working through budget constraints while trying to preserve crop insurance and commodity programs. Politico reported negotiations have intensified in recent days, with staff working toward a potential framework. The American Farm Bureau Federation said delays could affect financing and planting decisions, while the National Farmers Union urged a bipartisan compromise. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins has called for swift action. Lawmakers expressed cautious optimism but warned another extension could prolong uncertainty for producers.
- **More than 100 pork producers** from across the US traveled to Capitol Hill to warn lawmakers about the economic strain caused by CA Proposition 12. Backed by new retail and USDA data, producers argued the law is driving up costs and disrupting the industry. Research from ND St. Univ. Agricultural Risk Policy Center found pork prices tied to Proposition 12 remain significantly higher, with some cuts in pork loins rising by 32%, and ribs were up 22%. The analysis also estimates that CA consumers have paid \$350 mil. more for pork while consumption has declined. A trio of IL Pork Producers Assn. members met with Rep. Darin LaHood, R-IL, (pictured left) about pork issues.



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