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

Commodity market price drivers—

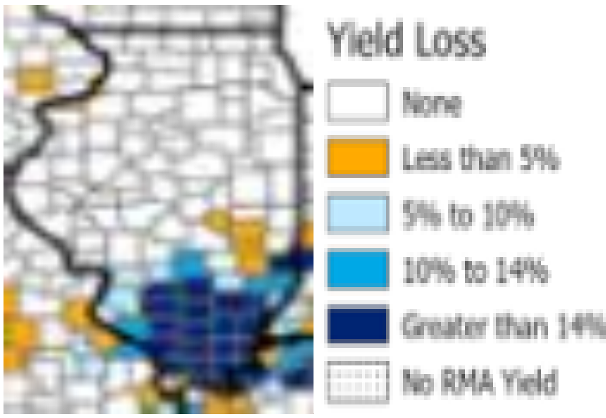
- **There is some bullish news in the US grain trade** that may make your day**.**
  - ✓ Fresh soybean purchases by China are providing some encouragement for U.S. growers. The Wall Street Journal reports Chinese buyers have begun placing new orders for U.S. soybeans currently being planted. USDA officials say they remain optimistic China will meet previously announced purchasing commitments during the 2026 marketing year. The renewed demand comes as U.S. farmers face increased competition from record South American production. Analysts say Chinese purchases could help support soybean prices and improve export prospects later this year. Industry observers also note that growing demand from renewable fuel markets is increasing domestic soybean oil consumption, creating another source of support for the oilseed sector. Producers continue to watch trade developments closely as global demand is needed.
  - ✓ On the other hand, nearly 1 bil. bu. of corn has been purchased by non-traditional buyers. 913 mil. bu. of new corn sales have been recorded to "other" countries. China is not on that list. This is going on while Mexican purchases are at record levels. It is also noteworthy that corn purchases from the European Union are at a 40-year high, and it is noteworthy the EU is buying US corn, soybeans, and wheat without putting any tariffs on those imports that normally would push EU member nations to other suppliers. And so far, substantial corn purchases are going to "unknown" buyers.

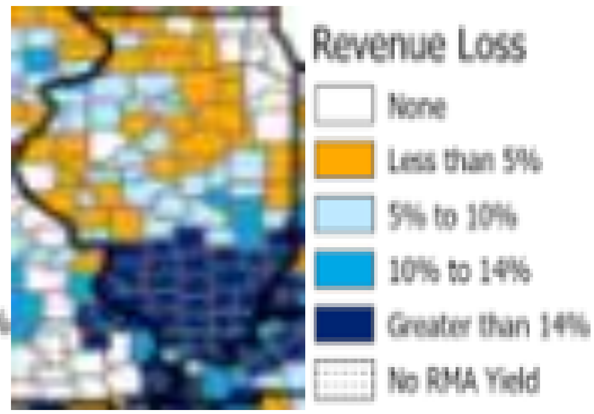
- ✓ **Most U.S. farmers have nearly finished spring planting** as crop conditions remain generally favorable. According to USDA data, 97% of the nation's corn crop has been planted, while soybean planting is more than 90% complete. USDA reports show 67% of the corn crop is rated good to excellent, reflecting favorable weather across much of the Cornbelt. Soybean emergence is also progressing ahead of average in many states. Agronomists say timely rains and moderate temperatures have helped establish crops, although localized concerns remain in portions of the Plains and Upper Midwest. Attention is now shifting toward summer weather patterns, which will play a major role in determining yield potential.
- ✓ **While nearly all planting has been done once.** There may be many farmers in the Cornbelt who are replanting fields, and many ponds, where weather has been incessantly unfriendly. Crop insurance agents in those areas are going to be busy, filing claims and reports of various types. There has been excessive rain and flooding, and there has been hail that has left fields decimated, as this field found by DTN's Pam Smith near Decatur. Farmers with losses from flooding or other storm damage should have already contacted their crop insurance agent and had an adjuster come out. Hail coverage can be paid out now, but crop insurance revenue protection policies will need to wait until production evidence is provided before an indemnity is paid out. Farmers can choose not to plant a second crop and receive 100% indemnity on the lost production from the first crop. Another option would be to plant a second crop but not insure it. If a farmer plants a second crop on the same acres, but chooses not to insure it, then he or she still would receive 100% indemnity on the first crop. The second crop acres also would need to be reported on the acreage report as uninsured or uninsurable. If the option for late planting is favorable, that has to be compared to the June 25th deadline this week, and how late that corn crop is going to mature next fall. But whatever you decision may be, it has to be in concert with your crop insurance agent and the insurance carrier. Consult with him or her as soon as possible to retain your flexibility. A farmer whose field is flooded could also choose to terminate the corn and replant a second crop such as soybeans. If a farmer doesn't want to insure the soybean crop, he or she can take a 100% loss on the corn crop and get the 80% guarantee. "The soybean crop is planted, but you'd have no risk protection because you took all the risk on the corn," says Univ. of MO ag economist Ben Brown. Brown noted another issue to be aware of when changing crops are the limitations of crop protection tools. It is prohibited to switch crops during a specific period of time if some herbicides have already been applied to the previous crop.

Farm Programs and Mailbox Money—

- **With USDA's calculation of 2025 yields,** the Risk Management Agency has calculated payments in counties where farmers signed up for Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) along with their Yield Protection or Revenue Protection crop insurance. [Univ. of IL Farmdoc ag economists]() say farmer will get a payment, although many counties had record yields in 2025. "When combined with an underlying revenue plan such as RP, ECO and RP act as revenue policies. ECO-95 requires a 5% revenue loss and ECO-90 requires a 10% yield loss. SCO requires a 14% revenue loss to trigger a payment."

Corn:





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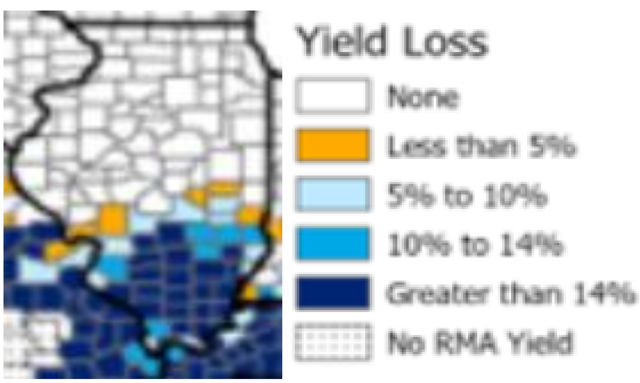

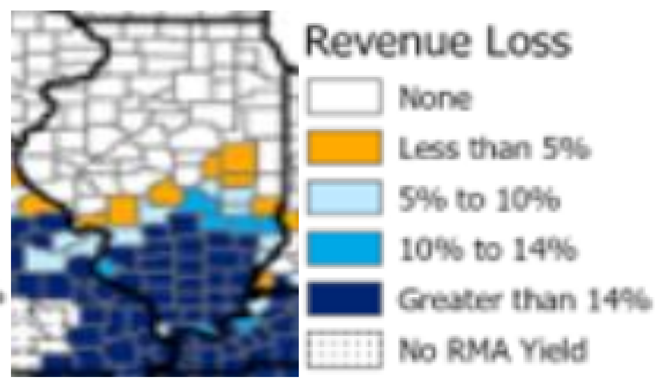

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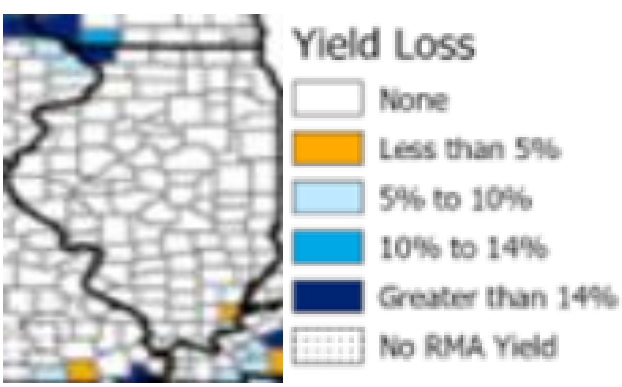

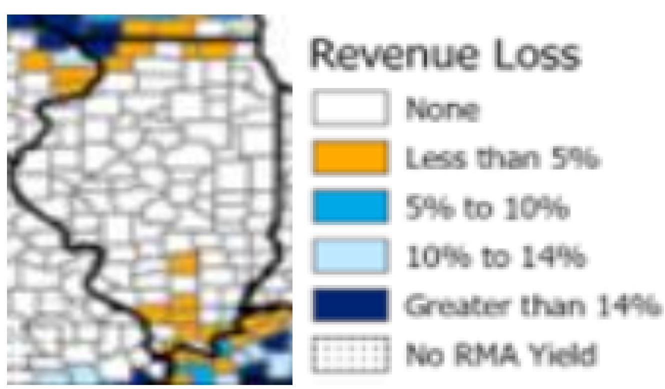

Agronomy—

- **Dr. Matt Montgomery,** (aka the Short Bald Agronomist) is alerting corn growers about the potential for "today's likely pathogen possibilities ranging from Gray Leaf Spot to Northern Corn Leaf Blight to Southern Rust to Tar Spot. It is a very different scenario compared to thirty years ago. In the mid-1990s, growers typically encountered just one of the above. A world with 4 likely pathogens was a little unheard of." Can you control all 4 with one shot of fungicide? "Growers must be strategic with their expenditures. With so many "disease players," which of the four should a grower primarily target? Should fungicides be applied in the late vegetative stage, at tassel time or at brown silk? What is a grower to do?" Applications at our research farms and on-farm trials continue to show that "tassel time applications" (R1) show the most return on investment. That timing fits very well for Gray Leaf Spot management. Our field scouting work also shows us that Gray Leaf Spot (left) still tends to dominate in most geographies. In other words, the primary target is still Gray Leaf Spot (GLS) which means a well-timed R1 (tassel time) application will typically serve growers well. Monitor Tar Spot development and Southern Rust progression to see if the season might favor later, brown silk applications, but plan on tassel time being ideal more years than not. The battle against GLS begins with hybrid resistance. Hybrid selection is typically our first step when battling most foliar diseases. Regardless of the product used, fungicides should be multiple active ingredient products rather than single active ingredient products. The use of multiple active ingredient fungicides decreases the risk of resistance development in GLS and other corn fungal foliar diseases. Single mode of action/ single active ingredient use is strongly discouraged.

Conservation, Environment, and Energy—

- **The White House war on wind farms** may have been short-lived." With White House policy favoring expansion of coal-fired power plants, and eradication of wind and solar installations, the result was not surprising. Lawsuits, and quick appeals refocused the debate within court system and "A federal appeals court dismissed the Trump administration's appeal, leaving in place a ruling that vacated its nationwide wind energy leasing and permitting halt. State officials and lawmakers warn that the cancellations threaten renewable energy targets, jobs, and grid reliability, while the administration promotes natural gas and geothermal development."

USDA—

- **FSA deadlines for current programs requiring application:**
  - ✓ July 15, 2026: Spring Seeded Crop, Perennial Forage, Hemp, & CRP Acreage Reporting Deadline
  - ✓ July 15, 2026: ARC – Individual Yields Submission Deadline
  - ✓ August 1, 2026: Farm Reconstitution and Farm Transfer Request Deadline
  - ✓ August 7, 2026: ASCF Application Deadline
  - ✓ August 17, 2026: ECAP Payment Eligibility Deadline
  - ✓ August 31, 2026: Base Allocation Summary review and action Deadline
  - ✓ September 1, 2026: Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) 2026 Premium Balance Due
  - ✓ September 30,2026: Final Date to File Acreage Report for Aquaculture (surface acres of water)

- **The USDA is encouraging farmers** to voluntarily serve on local Farm Service Agency county

committees. Nominations are now being accepted for the 2026 election cycle, with forms due to local FSA offices by Aug. 3. FSA county committees help make key decisions on how federal farm programs are administered at the local level, including disaster assistance, conservation programs, commodity support, and county office operations. FSA Administrator Bill Beam says, "Local voices matter, and agricultural producers play an important role in shaping how federal farm programs serve their communities." Eligible candidates must participate in or cooperate in a USDA program and live within a Local Administrative Area that is up for election this year. Producers may nominate themselves, be nominated by others, or be nominated by qualifying organizations. More than 7,700 producers currently serve on FSA county committees nationwide. For more information, contact your local FSA office. IL FSA Director Bill Graff reminds farmers of 2 deadlines:

  - ✓ Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers enrollment for USDA's $1.6 bil. relief program has begun. The application deadline is Aug. 7.
  - ✓ Farmers can now review and potentially adjust farm base acres through Aug 31. To remain eligible for USDA programs, certification of crops and grazing acres are currently underway until July 15th deadline.
  - ✓ The expansion of payment limitation and payment eligibility provisions was announced in the first week of June. With that came the broader definition of farm income to reflect a more modern agricultural business practices and more exceptions to income limitations. Contact County FSA offices to update farm records.

Trade, Tariffs, and USMCA—

- **One of America's most important trade agreements** is up for renewal. In this week's commentary, American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall sys a strong farm economy is driven by healthy international trade, "Strong trade agreements help create a strong economy here at home. One of the most important is the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement… known as USMCA. Canada and Mexico are by far America's largest trading partners. Together, they spend almost $60-bil. on agricultural products every year. And the agreement benefits America's families, too. A recent study by Purdue Univ. shows that without USMCA, families would have paid $700 more per year for groceries. North American trade agreements have enabled year-round availability of certain products and helped develop markets for America's farmers. All 3 countries are now considering extending USMCA for another 16 years. We support its renewal. Farmers need the certainty that USMCA provides." (American Farm Bureau)
- **President Trump has openly questioned the value** of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, suggesting the U.S. may be better off without it. This comes as he continues to expand a sweeping tariff regime covering goods from steel to pharmaceuticals, and even proposes new duties on 60 economies over forced labor concerns. Industry groups warn that abandoning USMCA could disrupt supply chains and harm sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, while Canadian officials stress there is still time to reach an agreement before the pact's 2036 expiration.
- **The conservative CATO Institute says,** "In yet another of his unending twists on trade, President Donald Trump has suggested he may not renew the current United States trade agreement with Canada and Mexico. Especially interesting was one of his explanations of why. "We don't need anything that Canada has; we don't need anything that Mexico has, but they need everything that we have, and they have to treat us better," **said** Trump. "We don't need their cars; we don't need their lumber; we don't need their energy; we don't need anything that they have." According to the numbers from April of this year, Canada is the leading trading partner of the US in imports and exports of goods, totaling $86 bil. Mexico ranks second, totaling $64.8 bil. in 2-way goods trade with the US. Overall, the regional economic integration of the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (formerly the North American Free Trade Agreement before Trump made a few changes in it and relabeled it as the USMCA in his first presidential term) has made all three parties to the agreement more competitive domestically and internationally. It is not remotely credible to suggest that the United States needs nothing from its 2 top trading partners any more than it would be credible to suggest that they need nothing from us."

Biofuels News--

- At **[National Corn Growers Association]**, we've been making the case that agriculture's long-term challenge isn't just production. It's demand. Farmers continue to produce more with fewer resources and greater efficiency. But when demand doesn't keep pace, pressure shows up quickly in the farm economy. That was the central message of our February report, America's Crop at Risk: The Future of Corn and Family Farms. We laid out what is at stake for corn growers and rural communities if the next generation of demand fails to materialize. That's why a new study from S&P Global Energy stood out to me. It adds third-party validation to the case for biofuels as a driver of future demand growth. As both an economist and a farmer, I see this in the numbers and at the farmgate. In a world of rising productivity and slower growth in traditional demand channels, we need to think strategically about where the next generation of demand will come from. For corn growers, which means continuing to press for policies that expand market access, including year-round E15, while also looking more broadly at the role biofuels can play in emerging markets such as aviation, maritime, and the bioeconomy. As I've been highlighting in recent presentations, I see this as a pivotal moment to restore profitability and keep opportunity on the farm. Biofuels remain a key part of that story. Links to the S&P study is here. Link to the NCGA research is here.

- **Clean fuel producers** have more certainty heading into the current tax year following an updated federal model tied to the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit. Clean Fuels Alliance America welcomed the Department of Energy's release of the latest 45ZCF-GREET model, which reflects changes approved by Congress last July. The updates remove indirect land use change penalties and limit eligibility to fuels made from feedstocks sourced in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The revised model allows biodiesel, renewable diesel, and sustainable aviation fuel producers to accurately calculate tax credits available for fuel produced this year. Kurt Kovarik, Vice President of Federal Affairs for Clean Fuels Alliance America, says the update provides needed certainty for the industry. "We appreciate this timely update," Kovarik said. "This increased certainty will help our industry achieve the administration's goals of generating more domestic energy and creating new domestic market opportunities for farmers."

All Things FFA—

- **How does an FFA member get to be the State Star Farmer?** A good path to take is through the Taylorville FFA program. Ryker Beckmier is the 2026 FFA State Star Farmer and a member of the Taylorville FFA. The 2025 FFA State Star Farmer was Kade Beckmier and a graduate of the Taylorville FFA. The 2024 State Star Farmer was Drew Mickey and graduate of the Taylorville FFA. The 2023 State Star Farmer was Cole Paulek and a graduate of the Taylorville FFA. Ryker's achievement also continues a remarkable tradition of excellence for the Taylorville FFA Chapter. With his selection as the 2026 IL State Star Farmer, Taylorville FFA has established a new IL FFA record by producing 4 consecutive State Star Farmers.

Tucker Beckmier, father; Megan Beckmier, mother and advisor; Ryker Beckmier; Sue Schafer, Charley Dammerman, and Thomas Nichols, advisors.

At the 2026 IL FFA convention, the Taylorville FFA chapter also had 7 recipients of the State FFA Degree, 4 members who will receive the American FFA Degree at the national FFA convention in November, and 5 members receiving the top state proficiency award for their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). The chapter also had 5 students named Illinois State Champions in the Agriscience Fair, showcasing excellence in agricultural research and scientific discovery. The chapter was also recognized for winning the state Livestock Evaluation competition, which requires team members to evaluate and rank breeding and market livestock based on current industry desired traits and performance data. Taylorville FFA Chapter was also selected as a National Finalist for its outstanding community service projects, recognizing the positive impact members have made within their school and community. Congratulations for a job well done go to Taylorville FFA chapter advisors Sue Schafer, Megan Beckmier, Charlie Dammerman, and Thomas Nichols.

Mark Your Calendar! --

- **Corn vs. Soybeans baseball in Decatur Tuesday night!** The Decatur Beanballers (9-10 will host the Normal Cornbelters (12-9) June 23 at Millikin University's Workman baseball diamond at 6:30 pm. Every Central IL corn and soybean farmer should plan to attend to cheer on their team. Both teams have a 6-4 record in their last 10 games and will appreciate a friendly crowd. All the details are here.
- **Nutrient Stewardship Summer Field Days**, sponsored by County Farm Bureaus, begin June 23 and extend through Sept. 11. Each has a different program, speakers, and focus. Check your county on this list and register to attend.
- **U of IL Extension** Weed Science Field Day will be June 24 at the Clem Farm, east side of Savoy, located at 1114 County Road 1200 East, Champaign. Preregistration is not required. Tour research plots, interact with weed science staff, compare favorite corn and soybean herbicide programs to other commercial programs and get an early look at a few new products that soon will be on the market. The tour will conclude around noon with a box lunch, $10 charge for meal and book. CCA credits are available.
- **Sustaining your farm legacy** will be the focus of several 2026 meetings and on-line programs, being jointly presented by Extension and IL Farm Bureau, for IL farmland owners and agricultural stakeholders. 6/30 Sycamore, 8/25 Mt. Vernon. Details.
- **The Illinois Forage and Grassland Council** is hosting a one-day educational event on June 26, from 9 AM to 3 PM on Friday, June 26 at Spoon River College, Canton. Registration is open through June 16 at https://illinoisforage.org/events/2026institute at a cost of $40 per person. It will feature 14 interactive sessions hosted by livestock and forage producers, industry professionals, and researchers.
- **Assn. of IL SWCD's** will hold its summer conference in East Peoria, July 13-15. Registration information is here. Early bird rates are available until June 1.
- **July 15 will be the Research and Field Day** at the Orr Agricultural Center at Baylis, beginning at 8:30. Watch for details.
- **The IL Ag Leadership Program** has scheduled the 2026 IALF Alumni Memorial Golf Outing & Alumni Social, a day of camaraderie, friendly competition, and purpose in support of leadership development across IL agriculture. Golf will be at Hughes Creek Golf Club in Elburn. The Social will follow at Whiskey Acres on July 15. You can register, sponsor, donate, or learn more here.
- **The 2026 Heart of America Grazing Conference** is coming to Effingham, on July 15–16. The schedule includes a farm tour, keynote speaker Steve Campbell (the "cattle Coach"), and tech sessions on virtual fencing, cropland grazing, and multi-specie grazing. Details and registration are here.

- **July 16 will be the field day** for the IL Soybean Assn. Agronomy team. It will be held at the ISA Agronomy farm, along Route 51 between Wapella and Heyworth, beginning at 3 pm. Walk through the research plots, connect with ISA agronomy experts and get an inside look at the research happening both at the farm and in fields across IL. Whether you're a farmer, industry partner or just interested in the future of soybean production, this is a great opportunity to learn and network. Register here.
- **IL Milk Producers Assn. will hold a dairy tech day** July 16, beginning at 10 am at the Henrichs Dairy Farm at Breese. The Dairy Tech Tour will be held 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Henrichs family recently installed a new 40 cow rotary milking parlor. Attendees will hear from those involved in the project to learn about the equipment used and ask any questions about the project. Registration is not required, details are at: https://www.illinoismilk.org .
- **The deadline is July 20** to submit an application for the next class of the IL Ag Leadership Program. Members of the 2028 Cohort class will be chosen this summer and begin classes in the fall. If you are interested, or know someone who should be chosen, here is the application information.
- **The Research and Field Day** at the Monmouth Extension Center is set for July 22, beginning at 8:30 am. Mark your calendar and look for details.
- **Aug. 6 will be the Crop Physiology Field Day** at the U of I South Farms. Mark your calendar for the daylong event.
- **Aug. 6 & 7 will be the National Strip Till conference** being held at the BOS center in Springfield. General and breakout sessions with multiple speakers, sponsored by Strip-Till Farmer magazine. Program is here. Register here.
- **The Alma Mater Plots** (U of I Morrow Plots offspring) will be the focus of a daylong event Aug. 11 at 4202 South First St. Champaign. University researchers are seeking farmer input for what research should be conducted in the new research farm.