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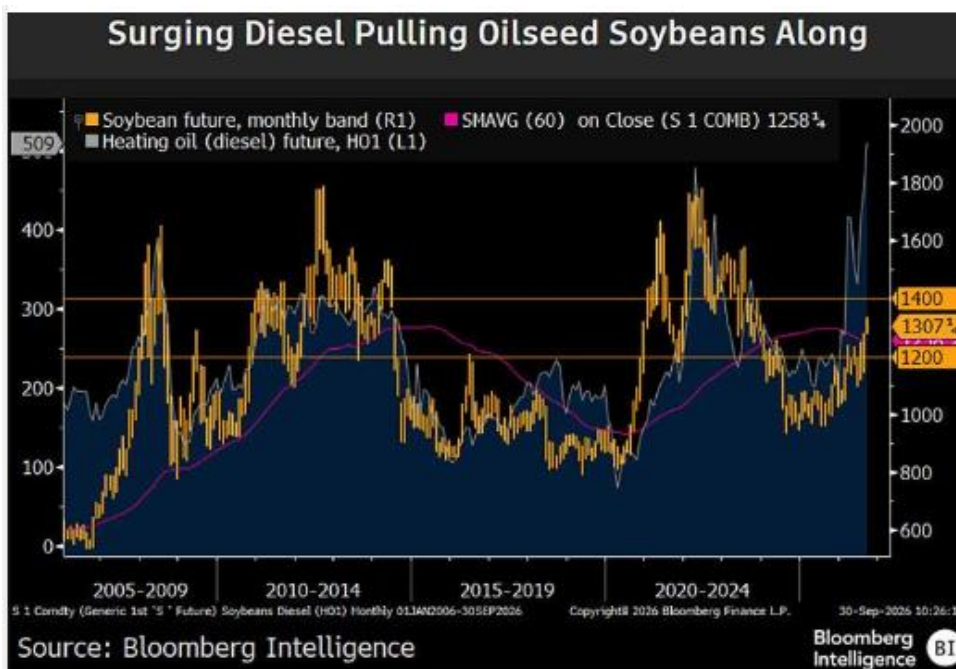
A weekly Cornbelt digest of marketing, economic, agronomic, and management information.

Commodity market price drivers—

- **Old crop corn stocks on hand as of Sept. 1, 2026**, totaled 2.10 bil. bu., up 35% from Sept. 1, 2025, according to the [USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service](#). **Grain Stocks** report released Wednesday. Old crop soybeans stored in all positions were down 3% from Sept. 1, 2025, and all wheat stocks were down 13% from a year earlier. Of the total corn stocks, 787 mil. bu. were stored on farms, up 22% from last year. Off-farm stocks, at 1.31 bil. bu., were up 44% from a year ago. The June-August 2026 indicated disappearance was 3.20 bil., compared with 3.09 bil. during the same period a year earlier. This report also contained revisions to the previous season's production for corn and soybeans, which is normal for this time of year since the marketing year is complete. Production for 2025 corn was revised down less than 1% and soybean production was revised down slightly from the previous estimates. All wheat stored in all positions on Sept. 1, 2026, totaled 1.85 bil. bu., down 14% from a year ago. On-farm stocks were estimated at 547 mil. bu., down 21% from last September. Off-farm stocks, at 1.30 bil. bu., were down 10% from a year ago. The June-August 2026 indicated disappearance was 608 mil. bu., down 14% from the same period last year. In preparation for the Grain Stocks report, NASS conducted separate surveys for on-farm and off-farms stocks during the first 2 weeks of September. NASS also released the [Small Grains Annual Summary](#) report today. All wheat production totaled 1.53 bil. bu. in 2026, down 23% from the revised 2025 total. All wheat area harvested for grain totaled 31.9 mil. acres, down 15% from 2025. The U.S. all wheat yield was estimated at 48.1 bu. per acre, down 10% from 2025.

- **Grain market analysts agreed** last week's grain stocks report was a nasty jolt, "revealing 2.095 bil. bu. of Sept. 1 stocks — substantially more old-crop supply than traders anticipated. [Although production estimates held relatively steady](#), the surprise came from weaker-than-expected feed and residual demand, effectively adding the equivalent of nearly 2 bu. per acre to the 2026 supply equation. This revelation quickly pressured corn futures below the psychological \$5 threshold, though analysts suggest a floor may be forming. Meanwhile, harvest is running behind schedule across much of the Eastern Cornbelt following persistent late-summer rainfall, creating basis opportunities even as flat prices remain under pressure. Adding to the complexity, a potentially historic "super" El Niño is developing, which could disrupt production across multiple continents in the months ahead.
- ✓ "The biggest takeaway from Wednesday's report is simple: USDA didn't find a bigger crop, but it found the missing corn. Don't focus only on flat price during harvest. Watch basis and futures spreads closely, particularly if you have storage." --Andrew McCarty, Pluto Commodities.
- ✓ "The USDA corn stocks surprise was quickly priced into futures, which often become volatile when data differs from expectations. But the effect on basis is usually much more modest. For unpriced corn without storage, consider locking in basis now to limit downside from the seasonal weakness that often runs through mid-October." --Josh Strine, Purdue Univ.
- ✓ "Call your grain elevator, call the ethanol plant, call whomever you sell to, and get some cash targets working right now. Sometimes those big market rallies can happen in the middle of the night. Automate basis notifications and set triggered sales based on target prices." --Naomi Blohm, Total Farm Marketing
- ✓ "Even with prices retreating about 20¢ in corn over the last week and a half of September, we are still looking at a 50¢ rally. Take advantage of being able to market a small percentage of your 2027 crop anywhere above expected cost of production with premium, specialty or hedge-to-arrive contracts. --Matthew Giarelli, Hedgepoint.
- **What will happen this Friday** when the USDA releases the October World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE)? Early yield results for corn have been good in some areas (IA, MN, KY, TN), while below expectations in other areas (central IL and the Dakotas). Overall, traders expect USDA to lower the U.S. corn yield and keep the bean yield unchanged in their monthly S & D report, which will be released on Friday, October 9th at 11 am. However, in the Stocks Report USDA found 170 mil. more bu. than what the average trade guess was, which is equivalent to an extra 2 bu. per acre on the national yield (assuming the U.S. harvests 88.5 mil. acres). Even if USDA lowers this year's corn yield by 2 bu. per acre in this Friday's report, it only offsets the 2-bu. increase from the stocks report. Grain market analysts say that was why corn was down 21¢ on the day of the report and down 30¢ for the week.

- **US soybean processing and corn use for alcohol production** increased in August compared with a year earlier, providing stronger domestic demand for two of the nation's largest crops. The USDA reported Thursday that processors crushed about 210 mil. bu. of soybeans for oil during August, up from 198 mil. bu. in August 2025. The crush produced about 2.45 bil. lbs. of soybean oil, a 4% year-over-year increase. USDA also reported 528 mil. bu. of corn were used to produce alcohol during August, up 4% from the same month last year. Of that amount, about 478 mil. bu. went into ethanol production. About 92% of the corn used for fuel alcohol was processed through dry-milling facilities. Dried distillers' grains production totaled 1.85 mil. tons, down 2% from August 2025. Wet distillers' grains production increased 5% to 1.28 mil. tons.
- **If there is any benefit to higher diesel prices**, Bloomberg commodity analyst Mike McGlone says it is the fact that [it is pulling biodiesel higher, subsequently pulling soybean oil higher](#). "New soybeans cage may be \$12-\$14; diesel driving. It could take something substantial to dislodge soybeans from what appears to be a new cage between \$12-\$14 a bushel. My graphic highlights a top companion that helped push beans into the teens -- soaring diesel prices



soaring diesel prices -- which may suggest a primary risk for falling back toward \$12.

- **US corn stocks heading into the new marketing year** were substantially higher than a year ago, according to the latest USDA Grain Stocks report. Old-crop corn stored on farms and at commercial facilities totaled 2.10 bil. bu. as of September 1, up 35% from a year earlier. USDA says 787 mil. bu. were stored on farms, a 22% increase from last September, while off-farm stocks totaled 1.31 bil. bu., up 44%. Corn disappearance from June through August totaled 3.20 bil. bu., compared with 3.09 bil. during the same period in 2025. Soybean stocks were down 3% from a year earlier, while all-wheat stocks fell 14% to 1.85 bil. bu. USDA also revised its 2025 production estimates slightly, reducing corn production by less than 1% and soybean production by a small amount. The report comes as harvest gets underway, with larger old-crop corn supplies adding another factor for farmers watching prices this fall.

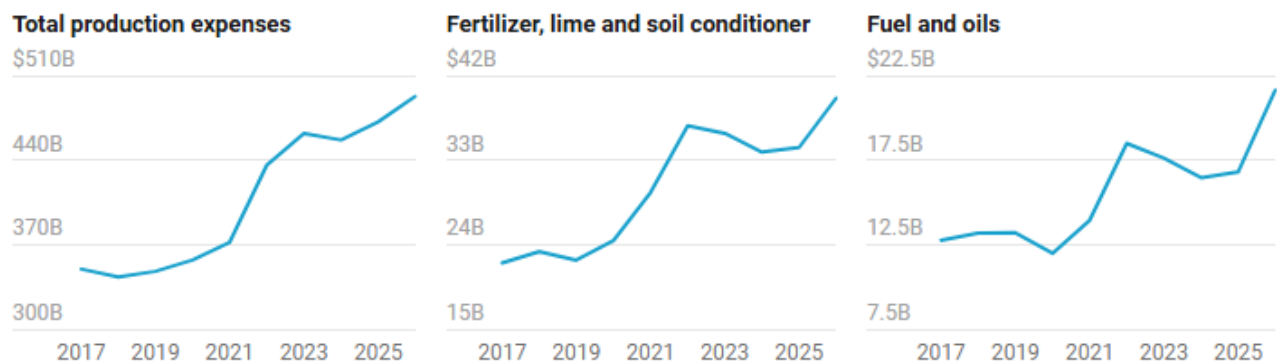
Farm Economy---

- **According to the September survey of bank CEOs in rural areas** of a 10-state region dependent on agriculture and/or energy, the overall [Rural Mainstreet Index \(RMI\)](#) sank below growth neutral for the 4th time in the past 6 months. Readings range between 0 and 100 with 50.0 representing growth neutral. Overall: The region's overall reading for September fell to 44.7 from 50.3 in August. "Pessimism from higher fuel and fertilizer costs exceeded the optimism stemming from higher grain prices, according to bankers across the 10-state region," said Survey Director Ernie Goss. One IL banker reported that, "Corn harvest has begun in our area. Early reports are that corn yields are down at least 10% from 2025. Current fuel prices and fertilizer prices for 2027 are major concerns." Farming and ranchland prices: For the 4th time in the past 5 months, the farm and ranchland price index climbed above growth neutral, increasing to 50.1 from 47.2 in August. "Farm and ranchland values have been holding up much better than farm and ranching income," said Goss. Bankers were asked to name the top buyer of farm and ranchland in their area. Overwhelmingly, 89.5% reported existing farmers as the number 1 customer in the sale of farm and ranchland, while the remaining 10.5% identified investors as the second-ranking purchaser of ag land. Farm equipment sales index increased to a very weak 25.0 from August's 22.2. "This is the 37th straight month that the index has fallen below growth neutral. The 2026 conflict in Iran and tariffs on imported steel/aluminum have created even more volatility and reluctance among farmers and ranchers to purchase new farm equipment," said Goss. Bankers were asked to identify input factors causing the greatest financial pressures among agricultural customers. Approximately, 52.6% of bankers named higher fertilizer costs, while the remaining 47.4% identified soaring fuel costs as the top factor producing financial pressure among agricultural producers. As stated by another IL banker, "Current fuel prices and fertilizer prices are major concerns for 2027." According to trade data from the International Trade Assn. (ITA), regional exports of agriculture goods and livestock for the first 7 months of 2026 were \$6.629 bil., compared to the same period in 2025 of \$6.182 bil., for a gain of 7.2%. Even with expansion, 2026 regional exports of agricultural goods and livestock were 4.4% below 2024 for the same period of time. A 59.9% slide in the 2024-26 export of agriculture and livestock to China was the prime factor accounting for the 2024-26 export slump. Approximately 79% of bankers reported that tariffs were having a negative impact on the agriculture and livestock economy. The remaining 21.0% stated that tariffs have had little or no impact on rural economic conditions. The September Rural Mainstreet Index (RMI) for IL declined to 45.3 from 48.8 in August. The farm and ranchland price index for September rose to 50.8 from August's 46.7. An IL banker reported, "With the bump in commodity prices (corn and soybeans), it will be interesting to see how our ag producers come out financially when this crop year is wrapped up. We are feeling better than we were going into this crop year." IL exports of agriculture goods and livestock for the first 7 months of 2026, compared to the same period in 2025, expanded by \$99.9 mil. for a 6.5% gain. The greatest upturn in IL ag exports was to Indonesia with a 30.8% gain from 2025 to 2026.

- **Steep fuel prices are hitting farmers** in a year where [they're already contending with other high input costs](#), said [Purdue ag economist Michael Langemeier](#). [Prices for farm equipment and fertilizer](#) have also shot up this year amid the Trump administration's tariffs and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. A gallon of diesel [topped \\$6](#) for the first time in mid-September, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. And the price has only gone up since. Across most of the central U.S., diesel prices are averaging \$6.68 per gallon. In Texas and other states along the Gulf Coast, the average is \$6.17. Diesel prices had already been on the rise the past few years due to the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. But prices jumped after the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran in February, blocking the Strait of Hormuz. A quarter of the world's seaborne oil trade goes through the strait, according to the International Energy Agency.

Farm production expenses

Prices for inputs like fertilizer and fuel have spiked in recent years due to the Trump administration's tariffs and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, among other economic pressures.



2026 data is forecasted. Total production expenses includes operator dwellings.

Chart: Abigail Bottar/Harvest Public Media • Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture • Embed • Created with Datawrapper

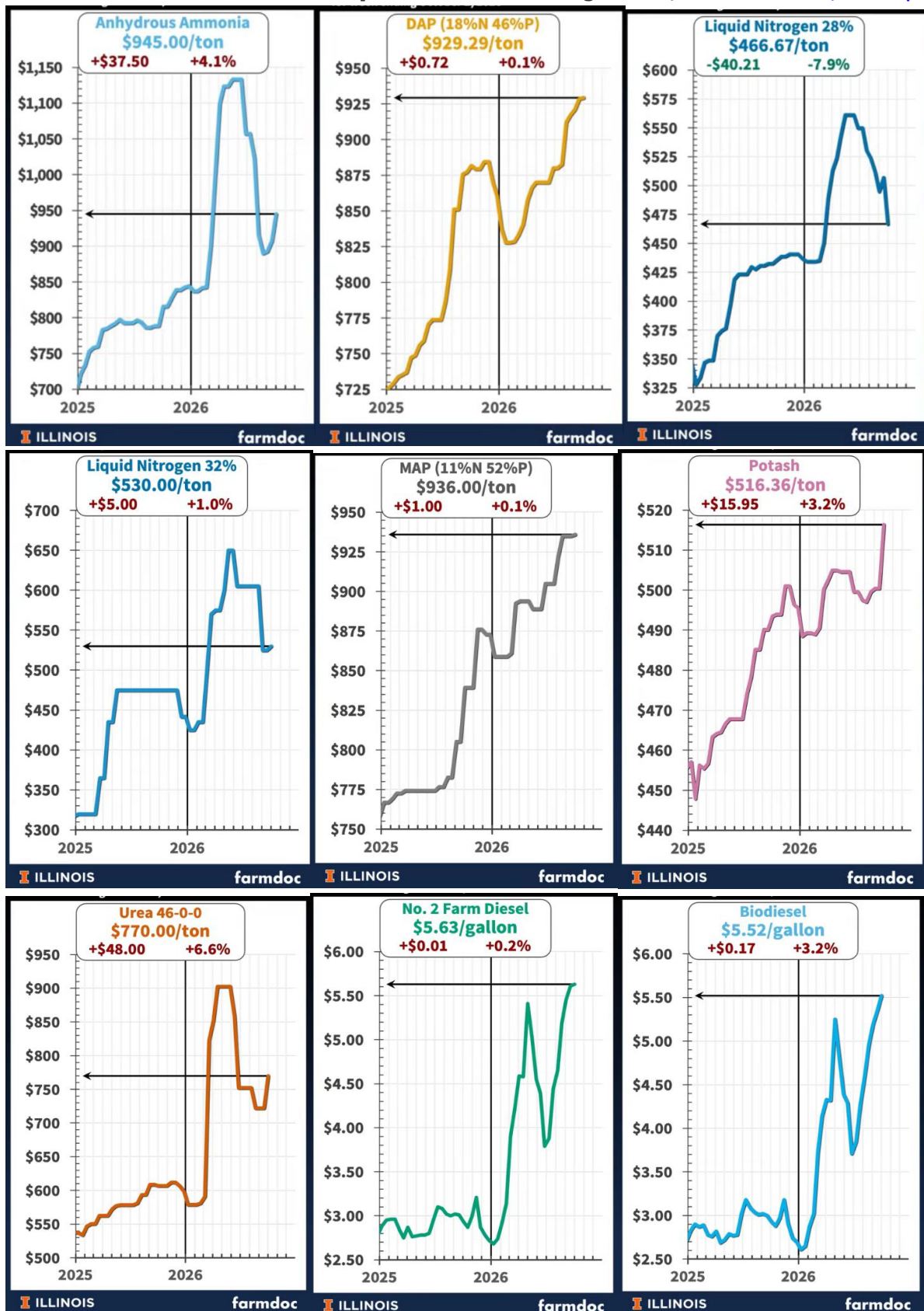
Along with fuel prices directly paid by farmers, downstream transportation costs are also rising, which farmers directly absorb in the grain basis. [Low levels](#) on the Mississippi River, an important export corridor for corn and soybeans, are also pushing up transportation costs. "More and more people are vying for that freight, which drives the cost up," said MO farmer Tory Meyr, "and then they're also raising the cost of the freight just because of diesel fuel, which is what the tugboats run on." These increased costs are heavily influencing where, how and when farmers transport their harvest, said Pres. Steve Kuiper with the IA Corn Growers Assn. He said many producers are reconsidering grain storage plans this year. "You might bring it to a more local elevator than bring it further away because added fuel costs," he said. "You don't gain that much of a price difference if you're having to drive further." Ben Brown, a senior research associate and extension agricultural economist at the University of Missouri, thinks a lot of farmers will take the approach of doing less field work in the fall and spring to bring down diesel use. "I also think we'll see fewer chemical applications," he said. "So instead of maybe a two-pass crop protection in the growing season, maybe just a single-pass and doing a higher rate."

Grain Management Priorities—

- **Some of your grain is too dry coming into the bin.** But some of it is too wet, and needs heat and air, which consume energy. To the rescue is [IA St. Univ. ag engineer Kurt Rosentrater](#) with a tool designed for producers and anyone else with grain needing management to identify, prioritize, and quantify energy-efficiency opportunities in grain handling, storage, drying, and processing operations. The Grain Facility Energy Audit Tool, www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/crops/xls/a2_39grainfacilityenergyaudit.xlsx, supports both farm-scale and commercial-scale grain facilities. It combines detailed technical checklists with screening-level energy and cost calculations. The tool is intended for walk-through and preliminary audits rather than full engineering studies, but it provides credible order-of-magnitude estimates to guide management decisions. Users can download the tool and save a local copy; no user information is acquired by the authors.
- ✓ Step 1: Enter Facility Data on the Facility Overview & Dashboard worksheet, enter the facility name, facility type, and annual throughput (bushels per year). Select the state for the default commercial electricity price or override the default with a site-specific rate. Select the primary dryer fuel and enter the delivered natural gas or propane price.
- ✓ Step 2: Document Energy Data and Complete Technical Checklists on the Technical Specifications tab, start with the Facility Overview and Utility and Energy Data checklists to document operating schedules, metering, and historical energy use. This may include working with your accounting department or directly measuring consumption using a handheld meter. This information provides context for interpreting calculated savings.
- ✓ Step 3: Use Quantified Checklists Depending on facility type, use the Farm-Scale or Commercial Checklist to estimate potential energy use and cost savings. When an item is marked Yes, the tool automatically calculates energy savings per bushel, cost savings per bushel, and annual savings based on throughput and energy prices. Results from this worksheet are summarized on the Manager Dashboard.
- ✓ Step 4: Review the Manager Dashboard and Opportunities & Priorities. The Manager Dashboard summarizes estimated annual energy and cost savings. Review this information and use space provided on the Opportunities & Priorities worksheet to note future steps and initiatives to reduce energy consumption. These tables are intended for management discussions and prioritization of next steps.
- ✓ Common Mistakes • Overestimating precision: Screening-level results should not be treated as exact predictions. • Ignoring throughput accuracy: Incorrect annual bushel estimates can significantly skew results. • Overlooking over-drying of grain: Small moisture reductions below target can drive large thermal energy penalties. • Running equipment unloaded: Fans and conveyors left running without grain movement waste energy. • Focusing only on equipment upgrades: Operational and control changes often provide faster payback. • Neglecting demand charges: Peak demand can dominate electricity costs at commercial elevators.

Fertilizer Costs, Supply, and Dynamics—

- IL Fuel and Fertilizer Cost report for week ending Oct. 2, [via Jim Raftis, IL Dept. of Ag](#)



- Average nitrogen rates** used on farms enrolled in Precision Conservation Management (PCM) have varied little across years. [Univ. of IL Farmdoc ag economists](#) report, “The high nitrogen fertilizer prices suggest that application rates above economically optimal levels could be more costly this year than in other years, implying strong economic incentives to lower application rates. However, PCM data suggest that nitrogen rates across farms do not change much year to year or in response to fertilizer price.

Table 1. Operator and Land Returns on Central Illinois Corn Fields with High SPRs Enrolled in Precision Conservation Management, 2020 to 2025

Year	Amount of Actual Nitrogen Applied per Acre				
	125 to 150	151 to 175	176 to 200	201 to 225	226 to 250
Operator and Land Returns in \$ per acre					
2020	\$293	\$312	\$313	\$295	\$280
2021	\$603	\$575	\$591	\$591	\$659
2022	\$744	\$767	\$749	\$747	\$691
2023	\$285	\$308	\$281	\$249	\$239
2024	\$155	\$237	\$231	\$235	\$160
2025	\$238	\$258	\$237	\$203	\$27
Average	\$386	\$409	\$401	\$387	\$374

ILLINOIS  farmdocDAILY

Prospects are for much higher nitrogen prices compared to recent years. In the September 19th release of the [IL Production Cost Report](#), the average anhydrous ammonia price for retail prices in IL was \$908 per ton. The Univ. of IL nitrogen rate recommendation system for corn production is called the Maximum Return to N Rate (MRTN) rate and is available online through the [Corn Rate Calculator](#). The website provides nitrogen rates and ranges for northern, central, and southern IL. Profitability results from [Precision Conservation Management](#) (PCM) indicate that the MRTN range does result in the highest return outcomes. Overall, the average nitrogen application rates used by participating farmers have not varied much since the beginning of PCM in 2015. Nitrogen rates released by the Univ. of IL suggest that many farms could improve profitability by reducing nitrogen fertilizer rates and moving to the MRTN. MRTN results are corroborated by return studies using PCM data. Moving to MRTN rates this year may have larger impacts on profitability, as nitrogen fertilizer prices are high. PCM farmers know about MRTNs but average application rates suggest many farmers have chosen not to adopt those rates. Over time, rate increases on some farms have offset rate decreases on others. The reason for this is unclear at this point. Searching for an answer may be worthwhile, as results suggest farmers could improve profitability. Moreover, reducing nitrogen rates may have societal benefits as lowering rates could also reduce nutrient losses from the soil, lowering nitrates entering water bodies.”

- Exec. Dir. Mike Steenhoek of the Soy Transportation Coalition** says he continues “to get asked for ballpark estimates for what an “average” farmer will pay in additional diesel costs during the current environment. I therefore put together the below and attached table to highlight the impact. Of course, some farm operations will be larger or smaller, some farmers will drive further or shorter to the delivery location, etc. – resulting in a higher or lower financial impact of the increased cost of diesel. Moreover, many farmers will receive certain discounts from their fuel supplier based on volume purchased. I did not apply those in the below scenario for either 2026 or 2025 since the focus of the below estimate is comparing the increase in costs farmers are incurring. Based on the chart below, a farmer will pay \$27,300 more in off road diesel and \$8,320 more in on road diesel for a grand total of \$35,620 more this year in diesel fuel costs:

Scenario: “A family farm has a 6,000-gallon tank for off road diesel (utilized for farm equipment) and a 1,000-gallon tank for on road diesel (utilized by the farm semis for delivering the soybeans and grain to market). The farmer has 3 deliveries each year from the fuel supplier in February, June, and October to fill the 6,000 off road diesel tank and 6 deliveries a year in December, February, April, June, August, and October to fill the 1,000-gallon on road diesel tank. As a reminder, the diesel fuel for on farm purposes (i.e. “red dyed diesel”) is exempt from federal and state diesel fuel taxes. Diesel fuel taxes will therefore only apply to the on-road diesel purchased by the farmer. The federal diesel tax per gal. is 24.4¢. The average state diesel tax per gal. is 34.76¢. The average total tax per gal. of diesel fuel is therefore 59.16¢ per gal.”

	A	B	C
3	OFF ROAD DIESEL (Farm Equipment Utilization)		
4			
5		2026	X 6,000 gallons
6	October	\$ 5.79	\$ 34,740.00
7	June	\$ 4.76	\$ 28,560.00
8	February	\$ 3.09	\$ 18,540.00
9	TOTAL		\$ 81,840.00
10			
11		2025	X 6,000 gallons
12	October	\$ 3.16	\$ 18,960.00
13	June	\$ 2.86	\$ 17,160.00
14	February	\$ 3.07	\$ 18,420.00
15	TOTAL		\$ 54,540.00
16			
17	Increase \$:		\$ 27,300.00
18			
19	NOTE: 59.16 cents (federal diesel tax per gallon +		
20			
21	ON ROAD DIESEL (Delivery from Farm to Delivery		
22			
23		2026	X 1,000 gallons
24	October	\$ 6.38	\$ 6,380.00
25	August	\$ 5.35	\$ 5,350.00
26	June	\$ 5.35	\$ 5,350.00
27	April	\$ 5.64	\$ 5,640.00
28	February	\$ 3.68	\$ 3,680.00
29	December (2025)	\$ 3.76	\$ 3,760.00
30	TOTAL		\$ 30,160.00
31			
32		2025	X 1,000 gallons
33	October	\$ 3.75	\$ 3,750.00
34	August	\$ 3.80	\$ 3,800.00
35	June	\$ 3.45	\$ 3,450.00
36	April	\$ 3.64	\$ 3,640.00
37	February	\$ 3.66	\$ 3,660.00
38	December (2024)	\$ 3.54	\$ 3,540.00
39	TOTAL		\$ 21,840.00
40			
41	Increase \$:		\$ 8,320.00
42			
43	Total Increase \$:		\$ 35,620.00

Agronomy—

- **As August ended and September began**, Dr. Matt Montgomery of Beck's Hybrids recorded a video in his Pike County Red Crown Rot Screening Trial. He says, "Definite varietal differences again appeared in that trial, with most of those varietal differences matching 2025 product observations. Our trials are designed to detect varietal tolerance to RCR. We want to find products that keep RCR from developing exponentially, that keep RCR below critical thresholds, and that delay the appearance of RCR as much as possible. Varietal tolerance is a key component of RCR management. One of the most striking observations in our 2026 trial appeared in the Seed Treatment component of that effort. Our observations have demonstrated, without a shadow of doubt, that Escalate Xseed™ (which contains cyclobutrifluram/ Victrato®) sets the standard for RCR management. [This video provides a stark visual](#) that underlines that point, and it also makes another important point related to seed treatments. Extreme care must be given when active ingredients are selected for seed treatments in RCR-prone areas. In some cases, some active ingredients cause RCR symptomology to increase dramatically. If a product has not been screened in a RCR location, its use in RCR-prone areas should be approached with great caution. Untested products carry the risk of increased RCR yield losses. Remember that RCR management appears to be crystalizing around 3 main areas: Varietal selection, the use of cyclobutrifluram (part of our Escalate Xseed™ upgrade) in seed treatments, and stress mitigation."
- **You know what corn is**, but C.O.R.N. stands for [The Corn Outreach and Research Network at Purdue Univ.](#) It is a collaborative, multi-state partnership of university Extension specialists, agronomists, and researchers dedicated to advancing corn production through science-based agronomic solutions. 23 agronomists, specializing in corn from a variety of Cornbelt universities collaborate on research priorities and disseminating advice to farmers. Their fact sheets include:
 - ✓ [Drought and heat stress](#)
 - ✓ [Wind damage in corn](#)Their video research presentations include:
 - ✓ [Abnormal ear development](#)
 - ✓ [Optimizing corn hybrid maturity based on planting date](#)
 - ✓ [Early stage corn growth and development](#)
 - ✓ [How weather stress impacts corn yield](#)
 - ✓ [How foliar disease control increases corn yields and kernel weight](#)
 - ✓ [Assessing hail damage in corn](#)
 - ✓ [Crop scouting school](#)



- **National Nematode Day is October 5!** Get a cupcake and celebrate. But celebrate their imminent departure, not their presence in your soybean fields. First, enjoy this visit with Univ. of IL nematologist [Nate Schroeder in this short video conversation](#). That will get you prepared to start doing something (today, maybe) to take back your soybean fields from soybean cyst nematodes and reclaim your good soybean yields. The first video is designed to spur your excitement, then a [second video conversation with Nate Schroeder](#) is designed to suggest the strategy and procedures to achieve your goals. Then you can start observing October 5th every year as nematode departure day!
- **Fertility researcher John Jones is embarking** on a substantial project to help farmers with more efficient uses of phosphorus, regardless of soil types. He is looking at application rates, methods of application, timing, and a wide variety of variables to help increase efficiency and decrease your cost. He's just getting started, no answers yet, but you'll want to keep up with his findings. [He describes his research in this 8-min video conversation](#).
- **Have you had crop disease in a portion of a field**, and spent unneeded cash to spray the entire field? That's what will happen without maps of the disease in a field. But those maps will soon be available, thanks to the Smart Plant Lab at the Univ. of IL. Plant pathologists Boris Camiletti and Bruno Pugliese are working to convert satellite images of IL crops that indicate potential diseases, such as tar spot in cornfields, and red crown rot in soybeans. Since the satellites can detect plant stress, unseen by farmer eyes, the technology of the Smart Plant Lab will be able to identify those stressed areas in a corn, soybean, or wheat field, and provide maps to guide fungicide application. [Pugliese explains the process in this short video](#).
- **On your 2027 soybean ground**, what cover crop are you planting this fall? There are many options, and Jim Isermann, cover crop specialist on the IL Soy Agronomy Team, tested cereal rye, wheat, and barley this year at various experimental plots. He outlines the benefits and disadvantages of each, when planting them ahead of soybeans. [Watch this 5-min. video of his evaluation if you are planning your cover crop seeding this fall](#).
- **Frequently, the USDA and FSA offices**, and farm programs must halt on September 30, because the federal fiscal year begins a new year on Oct. 1. Univ. of IL farm policy specialist Jonathan Coppess, a veteran staff member of Congressional Ag committees, and former FSA undersecretary looked at what is operating and not at USDA with the calendar turnover, [in this short video conversation](#).
- **And a good time was had by all!** Smiles on kid faces reflected the excitement when the University of IL College of ACES opened its wide variety of educational topics for kids and parents to learn about recently. The annual Harvest Fest was an opportunity for youngsters to begin thinking about a career, whether it is painting pumpkins, diving into corn, or strawbale sitting. Sweet potato the pig was a bit cranky, but even the FFA members at the Andreas Ag Academy in Decatur brought their livestock exhibit, [as seen in this short video](#).

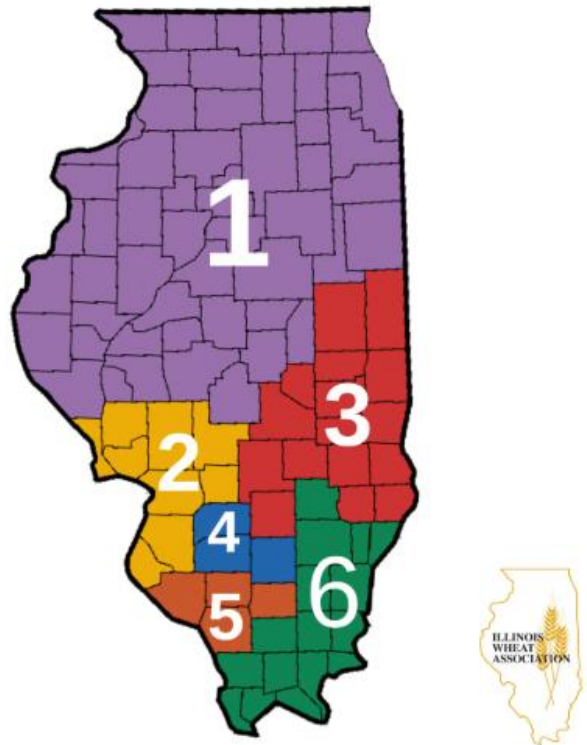
USDA—

- **New enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program** has stopped following the Sept. 30 expiration of the 2018 Farm Bill, leaving USDA without authority to approve additional contracts. DTN reports Congress' latest continuing resolution funds the federal government through Dec. 11 but does not extend the Farm Bill. The USDA's Farm Service Agency told offices that Sept. 30 was the deadline for approving CRP contracts. Beginning Oct. 1, county offices can complete certain activities involving contracts approved before the deadline, subject to state office review. The lapse does not mean all Farm Bill programs immediately stop. CRP faces a different problem because USDA's legal authority to enroll new acreage expired. The 2018 Farm Bill originally expired in 2023 and was subsequently extended 3 times. Congress could restore CRP enrollment by extending or reauthorizing it.
- **The Farm Service Agency has completed a major upgrade** to acreage reporting, moving producers nationwide onto a new system designed to improve efficiency and reduce paperwork. FSA Deputy Administrator of Farm Programs Jared Hagert says the transition is already showing promising results. He says the new acreage reporting platform was thoroughly tested before launching nationwide, "We had a great, great opportunity here the first part of this year to get, it was about 89 counties, so 2 whole states, ND and MD, along with some other test counties to really take a good hard look at our new geospatially based acreage reporting. As for the first time ever, we've got a geospatially referenced map that ties all of this land to those reference points. So, as we went through and developed the system, ran it through testing, it was extensive, somewhere close to 25 mil. acres were reported in the system and that ran from about the first part of April until we cut over completely for the whole United States. So, we're all on the same system now." The new system is expected to offer more digital options for producers. Hagert says that starts with creating a Login.gov account, "We will be able to take an acreage report from a producer that logs in on their laptop to login.gov, you know, that's key. If you don't have login.gov or signed up for it, take, when you get a chance, you're having a cup of coffee in the morning, take and sign up for it because it's the key to USDA programs in the future." Hagert says the new reporting system is already saving time for both producers and county office staff, "Acreage reporting is our number one lift that we have as an agency within the Farm Service Agency. That's the paramount time, that's where we spend the time with our staff. Just in the pilot program, we're looking at 20%-time savings, you know, in reporting acres, in the new system, and I have to say that's going to be our worst number. We're only going to get better, so it's pretty exciting when you take a look at it." Even as USDA modernizes its reporting tools, Hagert says producers can still work with FSA in the ways they're most comfortable, "We heard the undersecretary, Richard Fordyce, talk about USDA is going to meet producers where they're at. And that, whether you're large, small, beginning, veteran, we're going to meet you where you're at. And that goes as far as acreage reporting too. I mean, yeah, we are modernizing it, but that doesn't mean that you can't report acres the same way you always have. So, you know, that option is always there." (American Ag Network)

- USDA announced a “streamlining” of the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).** The Rural Business Cooperative Service (RBCS) is issuing a [final rule with comment period](#) that will simplify the application process, reduce risk to the agency, and protect taxpayer dollars. “This rule cuts the red tape so that farmers and rural small businesses can spend less time and money navigating paperwork and more time investing in their operations,” said [Under Secretary for Rural Development Glen R. Smith](#). “At the same time, we’re protecting productive American farmland from oversized solar developments and ensuring taxpayer-supported energy investments don’t put components from foreign adversaries on American farms. REAP should work for rural America, not foreign supply chains or projects that take good farmland out of production.” Changes include disincentivizing solar, photovoltaic, and wind energy systems, requiring projects to be fully built, operational, and demonstrating performance before applying for funding; multilocation projects and specific application of certain technologies are now ineligible. For more information on this program visit <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs> or contact your [State Energy Coordinator](#).
- Members of the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA)** welcomed the USDA’s announcement that it will continue and expand the Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program in fiscal year 2027. This investment will utilize \$650 mil. through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and \$350 mil. through the Conservation Stewardship Program to provide additional opportunities for producers to adopt [voluntary, incentive-based conservation practices to strengthen their operations](#). FACA is also encouraged by the Department’s initiative to expand locally led input in selecting additional eligible conservation practices and expanding technical assistance options for producers to utilize.
- Matt Frostic took over Oct. 1 as the new president** of the National Corn Growers and says [it is Farm Bill approval time](#). Frostic says expanding access to the higher-ethanol blend could provide a rare win for both sides of the pump—giving consumers another fuel choice while strengthening demand for U.S.-grown corn. “I would urge every farmer out there that hears this to make contact with their senators and staff—and give a brief comment about the support and how it impacts your farm is important,” Frostic says, “Lawmakers notice when the number of farmers speaking up starts to climb.” Right behind Matt Frostic, as Pres. of the National Corn Growers will be Minonk, IL, farmer Bill Leigh, who led the IL Corn Growers 5 years ago, and has been on the National Corn Board for 9 years. Leigh says his priorities for the National Corn Growers this year will be organizational-related, before he assumes the Presidential role in October 2027. Then he says he wants to see farmers take more leadership in driving governmental agricultural policy. He offered those thoughts and many more [in this 20-min. video visit Friday](#).

- **The general election is Nov. 3**, but in IL, there is another election before the end of this month. Wheat growers will be voting at county Farm Bureau offices to fill 3 IL Wheat Development Board seats. The board has vacancies in districts 3 and 6 and for a statewide at-large board member, according to the agriculture department. No petitions were filed for candidates seeking to fill the vacancies, so IL wheat producers in districts 3 and 6 can participate in the election as write-in candidates for the district vacancies. IL wheat producers in any district can participate as a write-in candidate for the at-large vacancy. They must be of legal voting age, live in the district in which they are running and be a qualified wheat producer. In-person voting will be during normal business hours Oct. 28 at county Farm Bureau offices statewide. Absentee ballots for those unable to vote in person are available by contacting the IL Agriculture Department at 217-524-1083 or by email at agr.marketnews@illinois.gov.

IWA DISTRICT MAP



Mark Your Calendar! --

- **October 4-10 is National 4-H week.** We are calling all Illinois 4-H alumni to share your Beyond Ready "How It Started. How It's Going." story and show how your 4-H journey launched your future. Complete a quick survey, upload photos from your 4-H days and today, and inspire others with your growth, skills, and success story. Your journey isn't over—it's just the beginning! Share your story below to participate and be featured on our Illinois 4-H Alumni social media. Let's celebrate how 4-H has made a difference in your life! [Share your 4-H story here.](#)
- **New Univ. of IL research** using Precision Conservation Management field data validates cover crops and carbon, vis-a-vis farmer compensation. Dr. Laura Gentry and Dr. Saurav Raj Kunwar break down the costs and value of cover crops, what it means for evaluating cost-share and carbon program payments, and why a bigger PCM dataset makes the case stronger for every enrolled farmer. [The Oct. 6 webinar will be 9-10 am. Register here.](#)
- **Oct. 9 is the date for a Climate change adaptation workshop** to prepare your farm for unpredictable weather, changing pest pressures, and extreme climate events. The event is from 9 am to 1 pm at Caledonia, IL, including lunch with a \$15 registration fee. [Details.](#)

- **Cultivating caution webinars will be** Oct. 14 on farmer mental health and Nov. 11 on manure pit gases. [Register here for those webinars.](#)
- **USDA has announced a new data modernization plan.** Anyone concerned about the impact is encouraged to listen to an Oct. 21 webinar, presented by the National Ag Law Center at the Univ. of AR. Webinar Opportunity (October 21): Several private attorneys will present "Agricultural Data Rights: A New State Law Landscape." To register, click [here](#).
- **ARC & PLC decisions will need to be made,** and Farmdoc ag economists will help with that during an Oct. 22 webinar 11 am to 12 noon. The Farm Service Agency has officially opened the enrollment period for the 2026 Commodity program decision with a deadline of December 11th, 2026. Ag economists will offer this webinar to cover the final payments from the 2025 program year and discuss considerations and provide guidance on the ARC/PLC program decision for 2026. [Register here to get the webinar details.](#)
- **The Dept. of Agriculture** at IL State Univ. will hold an open house on Oct. 30, from 12 noon to 3 p.m. beginning with lunch, a tour of the Ropp Ag Building, a student/faculty panel, and optional other tours at 3 p.m. Registration information will be announced later.
- **Lakeland College at Mattoon** will hold an agricultural open house on Dec. 4 from 9 am to 12 noon. Breakout sessions will be held on a [variety of ag careers](#) at Lakeland, with lunch served afterward. Pre-register by Nov. 20.
- **Save the date** for ISA's [2027 Soybean Summit](#), taking place January 26-27 at the I Hotel & Conference Center in Champaign.
- **The 2026 Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy** Annual Partnership Conf. will be Thursday, December 3. In-Person: IL Department of Ag., John Block Building Auditorium, 801 East Sangamon Avenue, Springfield, IL 62702. Doors Open: 9:00 AM or Virtual Access Opens: 9:20 AM | Program Begins: 9:30 AM | Ends: 4:30 PM [Register here.](#)

Understanding the rapidly changing agricultural industry can be a daunting task. At Heartland Bank, our team of ag specialists will work with you to meet the goals of your farming operation. With over 160 combined years of agricultural service experience, we are focused on providing outstanding service and results throughout Central and Northern Illinois. Whether it's farmland real estate, operating and equipment loans, or farm management expertise, we have the professionals who you can trust to improve your farmland's productivity and asset value. Contact one of our knowledgeable experts today at 309-661-3276 or toll free at 1-833-797-FARM (3276).

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