



Grain Outlook Report

Corn, Soybeans and Wheat

Corn

- 2025 ending stocks remained above the 2 billion bushel mark after USDA revised feed and residual use lower in September.
- U.S. corn demand also looks firm to start 2026/27, with ethanol use expected to remain near record-highs.
- 2026 abandonment looks to be in line with historical averages due to a year with few major weather issues.
- Prices have been reversing lower in recent weeks, as funds exit net-long positions mid-harvest.

Soybeans

- Record soybean yield, high acres lead to record supplies.
- Crush use continues to set records, surging amid biofuel feedstock demand.
- China returns in a big way to U.S. market, driving exports well above 2025-26 13-year low.
- Attention remains on South America and how El Niño could effect production.

Wheat

- Lowest acreage on record does little to boost prices with abysmal demand.
- Black Sea supplies being choked off does little to drum up U.S. demand.
- Price increase from Russia-Ukraine war likely to lead to a jump in acres.
- Demand remains shaky, limiting price rallies, but potential remains.

The 2025-26 crop year has wrapped up with ending stocks coming in much higher than anticipated just a few months ago, largely due to an unexpected drop in feed and residual use in the final quarter of the year as USDA's September Grain Stocks report showed more corn on hand at the end of the marketing year than was originally forecast. Demand remained robust in both ethanol and also in exports in the final quarter of the crop year. While U.S. corn prices did increase, pockets of extreme crop stress in areas such as Europe caused importers to turn to the U.S. for corn. Ending stocks totaled 2.095 billion bushels, up from our July forecast of 2.072 billion bushels. While that difference may seem minor, the months between reports saw USDA adjust ending stocks as low as 1.922 billion which caused a whiplash in markets after being raised again in October.

The biggest change on the balance sheet for the 2026 crop year since our last update is undoubtedly our yield. The Pro Farmer Crop Tour in the third week of August gave us concern that corn yields may not be near 2025's record. While USDA has raised its yield estimate as the forecast period has progressed, with the agency's current estimate at 181.2 bushels, we maintain our yield estimate of 173.2 bushels until the final report is released in January. USDA did also increase acres in their August report after incorporating FSA acres into their supply assumptions. USDA's planted and harvested acres estimates are currently 96.73 million and 88.592 million, respectively. Given the completeness of FSA data in October, we align our estimates with those figures as well.

Corn demand continues to look strong, though slightly behind last year's record-setting pace on exports. Both the spread and cash markets also seem to point to supplies potentially being tighter than USDA has indicated. Part of the slower exports may be attributed to increased soybean exports so far compared to the same period last year, adding competition for capacity. Our demand assumptions for the 2026-27 crop year have decreased alongside our forecast for the crop size. We now forecast 2026-27 demand at 15.830 billion bushels, down slightly from last year's record 16.450 billion bushels. The decrease was attributed mostly to feed and export use, as ethanol demand has remained red hot. PElevated crude oil prices should keep ethanol and other biofuels in high demand. Feed use is expected to decrease from last year but remain near the historical bounds of total supply. Historically, feed use follows total supply at a ratio between 34% and 36% and is impacted by the quality of the corn crop, availability of alternative feeds and livestock numbers. We are placing 33.6% of total supply into the feed forecast, or 5.875 billion bushels. The uncertainty around the size of the crop and limited number of cattle in the U.S., combined with USDA's surprise revisions as of late, causes us to be hesitant to increase our forecast much above that mark at this juncture.

Ethanol is the next largest use category. Crushers continue to take advantage of corn prices that are low relative to ethanol bids, resulting in healthy crushing margins to operate at capacity. USDA currently has ethanol use pegged at 5.65 billion bushels, which would exceed the record of 5.605 billion set in 2017/18. Our estimate is slightly lower at 5.60 billion, though it is early enough in the marketing year for that to change. Concerns around long-term demand slowing due to small refinery exemptions and thus lower biofuels production were mostly eased as obligations were reallocated to future years. Ethanol use also remains volatile given the wars in Iran and Ukraine and their impact on energy prices.

Exports continue to prove robust despite being down from last year's record-pace. Speculation continues around whether China could enter the U.S. corn market, but those chances continue to wane as the bargain buying window during harvest starts to close. Our export forecast is 3.0 billion bushels, down from our previous forecast of 3.2 billion and below last year at 3.425 billion.

Ending stocks project to 1.634 billion bushels. Our previous forecast was 1.75 billion. Lower yields are the main culprit, although those were partially offset by increased acres and ethanol demand remaining steady amid the projections of a smaller crop. The stocks-

to-use ratio projects to 10.4%, above average and below 11.3% in 2025-26. Farm level cash prices are projected to average \$4.60, modestly above last year.

In our long-range forecasts, corn plantings are seen falling steadily to near 92 million acres before bouncing slightly in 2030-31. The continued erosion of markets for alternative crops outside of corn and soybeans, especially those traditionally grown in the southern U.S., is likely to leave corn plantings somewhat sticky. Given the ratio of December corn futures to January soybeans at the time of writing, we expect producers to favor soybean plantings in 2027. There are also concerns of higher input costs given disruptions to fertilizer flows in the Strait of Hormuz, which could further incentivize producers to opt for the option that provides them with lower operating costs.

Trend yield forecast continues to be more conservative by roughly half a bushel than those made by USDA analysts who project the 2028/29 corn yield to 186.5 bushels compared to our forecast of 186.0 bushels per acre. Corn yields broke the 180-bushel mark last year at 185.9 per acre. USDA's final January report looks to once again be a major market mover as debates around yield continue, and the agency currently has its estimate at 181.2 bushels per acre.

CORN SUPPLY/DEMAND											
(million bushels)											
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26*	2026-27*	2027-28*	2028-29*	2029-30*	2030-31
ACREAGE											
Planted (million acres)	90.432	92.901	88.162	94.641	90.909	98.788	96.730	93.500	92.500	92.000	93.500
Harvested(million acres)	82.168	84.988	78.705	86.506	83.046	91.258	88.592	85.500	84.500	84.000	85.500
Yield (bushels/acre)	171.4	176.7	173.4	177.3	179.3	185.9	173.2	184.5	186.0	187.5	188.0
SUPPLY											
Beginning Stocks	2,004	1,235	1,377	1,360	1,763	1,552	2,095	1,634	1,849	1,691	1,691
Production	14,087	15,018	13,651	15,341	14,892	16,964	15,344	15,775	15,717	15,750	16,074
Imports	24	24	39	28	20	30	25	25	25	25	25
Total	16,115	16,277	15,066	16,729	16,675	18,545	17,464	17,649	17,591	17,466	17,790
USE											
Feed & Residual	5,667	5,670	5,486	5,842	5,452	6,120	5,875	6,000	6,100	6,000	6,200
Food, Seed, Industrial	6,467	6,758	6,558	6,869	6,813	6,905	6,955	7,100	7,200	7,200	7,300
Ethanol for Fuel	5,028	5,320	5,176	5,478	5,436	5,550	5,600	5,700	5,800	5,800	5,800
Exports	2,747	2,472	1,662	2,255	2,858	3,425	3,000	2,700	2,600	2,575	2,350
Total	14,881	14,900	13,706	14,966	15,123	16,450	15,830	15,800	15,900	15,775	15,850
ENDING STOCKS											
STOCKS-TO-USE	1,235	1,377	1,360	1,763	1,552	2,095	1,634	1,849	1,691	1,691	1,940
	8.3%	9.2%	9.9%	11.8%	10.3%	12.7%	10.3%	11.7%	10.6%	10.7%	12.2%
ANNUAL PRICE (\$/bu)											
Farm	4.53	6.00	6.54	4.55	4.24	4.35	4.60	4.50	4.60	4.60	4.70
Central Illinois	5.47	6.72	6.46	4.50	4.19	4.30	4.55	4.45	4.55	4.55	4.65
LOAN RATE (\$/bu)											
TARGET PRICE (\$/bu)	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
*Doane projections											

Soybean Outlook



With the 2025/26 marketing year now closed, the balance sheet finished with ending stocks of 315 million bushels. That is unchanged from the carry-in level of 325 million bushels reported for 2024/25 and keeps the stocks-to-use ratio steady at 7.3 percent. Production totaled 4.261 billion bushels on 80.4 million harvested acres and a 53.0-bushel yield. Total supplies reached 4.608 billion bushels—the tightest since the early 2020s outside of the 2023/24 drought-impacted year.

Use for the year came in at 4.293 billion bushels. Crush set another annual record at 2.646 billion bushels, extending the multi-year streak of record crush driven by renewable diesel demand. Exports finished at 1.515 billion bushels, well below the levels of the early 2020s and the lowest in several years. Seed and residual use totaled 132 million bushels. The combination left the market with little margin for error on the demand side, even though absolute stocks were not historically tight.

The market has continued to show limited enthusiasm for these stocks levels. Prices averaged near \$10.40 for the year, only modestly above the multi-year lows of 2024/25. This mirrors the pattern noted earlier in the year, when relatively tight stocks-to-use ratios failed to produce the price response seen in 2021/22 and 2022/23 (when ending stocks were in a similar range but prices were 30–40 percent higher). The difference remains the export outlook and China's selective presence in the U.S. market.

China's share of U.S. exports remains well below the pre-trade-war average of roughly 39 percent and even the 21–22 percent range seen after the Phase One agreement. The 1.515 billion bushel export total for 2025/26 implies continued limited Chinese participation. If China were to step back in more aggressively for 2026/27, the current balance sheet has limited room to absorb the additional demand without price rationing. Historical analysis has shown that U.S. exportable surplus can still meet a large share of global needs even with reduced Chinese buying, but a sharp rebound in Chinese purchases would quickly pressure the 7-percent stocks-to-use range.

For 2026/27, planted acres are projected to rebound to 86.9 million from the low 81.2 million of 2025/26. Harvested acres of 85.9 million and a trend yield of 53.3 bushels per acre produce a crop of 4.577 billion bushels. Combined with a 315-million-bushel carry-in and modest imports, total supplies rise to 4.917 billion bushels—the largest since 2020/21. Crush is expected to expand further to 2.780 billion bushels, another record, supported by continued growth in soyoil demand for biofuels. Exports are projected to recover to 1.700 billion bushels. Ending stocks are seen at 329 million bushels, holding the stocks-to-use ratio near 7.2 percent.

The cash price forecast for 2026/27 is \$12.00, up from the \$10.40 average of the prior year. The increase reflects the combination of recovering export demand, still-record crush and supplies that, while larger, do not rebuild stocks aggressively. Prices have already begun to reflect the tighter relative balance sheet and the potential for stronger demand.

Longer-term, planted acres are expected to stabilize in the 87–88 million range as renewable diesel capacity continues to support crush margins. Yields are assumed to trend modestly higher, reaching 55.0 bushels per acre by 2030/31. Ending stocks hold in the 300-million-bushel area in most years, with stocks-to-use ratios in the mid-6 to low-7 percent range. Cash prices are projected to average near \$12.50 once the market fully adjusts to the higher structural demand from the biofuel sector.

SOYBEAN SUPPLY/DEMAND

(million bushels)

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25*	2025/26*	2026/27*	2027/28*	2028/29*	2029/30*	2030/31*
ACREAGE												
Planted (million acres)	76.1	83.4	87.2	87.5	83.6	87.3	81.2	86.9	86.5	87.0	87.5	88.0
Harvested(million acres)	74.9	82.6	86.3	86.2	82.3	86.2	80.4	85.9	85.7	86.2	86.7	87.2
Yield (bushels/acre)	47.4	51.0	51.7	49.6	50.6	50.7	53.0	53.3	53.0	53.5	54.0	55.0
SUPPLY												
Beginning Stocks	925	539	257	274	264	342	325	315	329	305	300	300
Production	3,551	4,216	4,464	4,270	4,162	4,374	4,261	4,577	4,542	4,612	4,682	4,796
Imports	15	20	16	25	21	29	22	25	25	25	25	25
Total	4,492	4,775	4,737	4,569	4,447	4,745	4,608	4,917	4,896	4,942	5,007	5,121
USE												
Crush	2,165	2,141	2,204	2,212	2,285	2,445	2,646	2,780	2,800	2,825	2,850	2,875
Exports	1,683	2,266	2,152	1,979	1,700	1,882	1,515	1,700	1,675	1,700	1,740	1,800
Seed	77	80	79	75	75	70	75	75	80	80	80	81
Residual	28	31	28	39	45	23	57	33	36	37	37	35
Total use	3,953	4,518	4,463	4,305	4,105	4,420	4,293	4,588	4,591	4,642	4,707	4,791
ENDING STOCKS												
Stocks-to-Use Ratio	13.6%	5.7%	6.1%	6.1%	8.3%	7.3%	7.3%	7.2%	6.6%	6.5%	6.4%	6.9%
CROP YEAR PRICES												
Farm Level (\$/bu)	\$8.57	\$10.80	\$13.30	\$14.20	\$12.40	\$10.00	\$10.40	\$12.00	\$12.25	\$12.50	\$12.50	\$12.50
Illinois Processor Points Soybeans (\$/bu)	\$8.83	\$13.41	\$15.04	\$14.80	\$12.43	\$10.18	\$11.60	\$12.20	\$12.55	\$12.80	\$12.80	\$12.80
Soymeal 48% (\$/ton) (44% pre-2001)	\$299.50	\$392.31	\$439.81	\$451.91	\$384.11	\$299.77	\$325.13	\$335.00	\$340.00	\$345.00	\$350.00	\$350.00
Soybean Oil (cents/lb)	29.65	56.87	72.98	65.26	47.28	47.59	63.40	65.00	67.50	70.00	70.00	70.00
LOAN RATE (\$/bu)	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.20

* Doane projections

Wheat Outlook

USDA wrapped up the 2026 wheat acreage and production estimates in the Small Grains summary report on September 30. There was a modest upward adjustment to the production estimate compared to the 1,498 million bushels forecast for July. The final 2025 wheat estimate of 1,534 million bushels represented a gain of 36 million bushels from the July forecast. In comparison, the 2025 crop rose 56 million bushels between the July forecast and the final estimate in September.

Planted acres resumed the long-term decline after seeing an influx due to higher prices stemming from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Final acres fell 3.0 million from 2025-26 to the lowest mark in over a century.

The final national yield estimate ended up above expectations with a strong push from spring wheat and soft red winter wheat. The final all wheat national yield estimate was 48.1 bu. per acre, up from our previous estimate of 46.5 bu. per acre. Total production was 1.534 billion bushels, 455 million bushels below last year's figure. Total supplies sunk 370 from the previous year as higher carry-in limited the effect of lower production figures. Supplies were the lowest since the 2023-24 crop year.

Total use for 2026/27 is projected to fall 201 million bushels from last year to 1.843 billion bushels. The drop in supplies is the main reason for the drop seen in use. While food and seed use is sticky, more variable categories such as feed and exports are seen as falling. It has been a slow start to the export year, despite a lack of supplies out of the Black Sea. Exports were previously expected to firm given curtailed shipments out of Russia and Ukraine, but that demand has not led to U.S. supplies being booked. Importers are running off of stocks and bigger than expected supplies out of Australia and Argentina. Exports see the biggest potential to swing in the remaining months of the marketing year. Current shipments indicate total exports will end up below our current estimate of 750 million bushels, but if importers shift favor to U.S. origin supplies, that could quickly flip.

The 2026/27 ending stocks forecast is 756 million bushels, down from 920 million in 2025/26 and the tightest since 2023/24. Stocks to use is calculated at 41%, down from 45% last year and the lowest since 2023/24. The cash price forecast is projected to \$6.50, up from \$5.06 in 2025/26 and the highest since 2023/24.

Russia and Ukraine began attacking civilian vessels in the Black Sea, which has curtailed exports from either country to a fraction of normal levels. That paired with a continuation of the war in Iran ignited wheat prices in the late summer. Historically, wheat price changes year-over-year are one of the biggest drivers of planted acres. Given the big increase in price, we anticipated 2026-27 planted acres to surge to 46.3 million acre, the most since 2024-25. Prices turned lower toward the end of the decision window for new-crop acres, which could curtail some of those expectations.

Wheat acres are seen as resuming the long-term downtrend, after a blip higher in a "reversion to the mean" the next couple of years. Use is projected to stabilize between 1.8 and 1.9 billion bushels. There is some opportunity for the U.S. to provide more wheat on the world market, but U.S. producers have preferred planting other crops and logistical disadvantages have kept a lid on U.S. prices compared to other countries. The war in Ukraine and Iran are some unknowns that could shake up prices and demand needs on the world market, which has asymmetric risk to the upside for wheat, but until it is reflected in the current cash market, drastic changes are unlikely.

World production risks persist. El Niño conditions and residual constraints on fertilizer and energy flows linked to the U.S.–Iran conflict continue to limit southern-hemisphere output, supporting prices and limiting the ability of foreign competitors to offset the U.S. shortfall. In the longer-range forecasts, use stabilizes between 1.87 and 1.94 billion bushels, ending stocks hold in the mid-800s to low-900s, and cash prices gradually rise to \$6.50 toward

\$6.00. Geopolitical uncertainties in the Black Sea and Middle East remain asymmetric to the upside for prices, but they have not yet been fully reflected in the current cash market.

U.S. WHEAT SUPPLY/DEMAND

(million bushels)

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26*	2026/27*	2027/28*	2028/29*	2029/30*	2030/31*
ACREAGE												
Planted (million acres)	45.5	44.5	46.7	45.8	49.6	46.3	45.5	42.5	46.3	43.1	42.8	42.5
Harvested (million acres)	37.4	36.6	37.1	35.5	37.1	38.6	37.3	31.9	37.3	34.1	33.8	33.5
Yield (bushels/acre)	51.7	49.7	44.3	46.5	48.7	51.2	53.3	48.1	51.0	52.0	52.0	52.0
SUPPLY												
Beginning Stocks	1,080	1,028	845	674	570	696	855	920	756	855	855	880
Production	1,932	1,820	1,646	1,650	1,804	1,979	1,989	1,534	1,900	1,773	1,755	1,742
Imports	104	100	96	122	138	149	125	145	140	140	140	150
Total	3,116	2,948	2,588	2,446	2,512	2,824	2,969	2,599	2,796	2,768	2,750	2,772
USE												
Food	962	961	971	972	961	969	960	960	960	960	960	960
Seed	62	64	58	68	62	61	58	59	59	58	57	56
Feed and Residual	95	85	88	74	85	113	118	74	102	95	103	101
Total Domestic Use	1,118	1,109	1,117	1,114	1,108	1,143	1,136	1,093	1,121	1,113	1,120	1,117
Exports	969	994	796	761	706	826	908	750	820	800	750	750
TOTAL USE	2,087	2,103	1,913	1,876	1,815	1,969	2,044	1,843	1,941	1,913	1,870	1,867
ENDING STOCKS												
	1,028	845	674	570	696	855	920	756	855	855	880	905
ANNUAL PRICE												
Doane Farm (\$/bu)	\$4.58	\$5.05	\$7.63	\$8.63	\$6.96	\$5.52	\$5.06	\$6.50	\$6.20	\$6.20	\$6.00	\$6.00
Doane Kansas City (\$/bu)	\$5.66	\$6.54	\$10.00	\$10.56	\$8.12	\$6.68	\$5.91	\$7.35	\$7.05	\$7.05	\$6.85	\$6.85
LOAN RATE (\$/bu)												
	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$3.38
TARGET PRICE (\$/bu)												
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* Doane projections