

Nueces Agriculture

"IMPROVING FOOD & FIBER PRODUCTION"

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TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



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"Spring Edition"

Did you know that:

AUGUST 28, 2019 BY FERALHOGS

- Feral hogs foul water sources for native wildlife and humans.
- Feral hogs consume native wildlife and plants and jeopardize their population and health.
- Feral hogs compete for food and habitat resources with native animals.
- Feral hog rooting causes erosion and can compromise sensitive ecosystems as well as render some areas impassable for farm machinery.
- Feral hogs will prey on the young of livestock and wildlife such as kids, lambs, and deer fawns.
- Feral hogs harbor diseases (swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, and others), which can impact the livestock industry.
- Feral hogs carry parasites that can be harmful to the livestock industry.



Upcoming Training:

FARM WORKER PROTECTION SAFETY TRAINING

When May 5, 2023

Time 9:00 AM

Where. A&M AgriLife Ext. Office,
710 East Main, Robstown, TX

Pesticide handlers and workers must be trained every year unless they are certified applicators. All participants in this training will be issued cards verifying they have successfully completed the required training and given a copy of the sign-in roster for their employer's files.

PRIVATE APPLICATOR TRAINING

When June 6, 2023

Pre-Registration Required (361) 767-5223

Time 8:30 AM

Where. A&M AgriLife Ext. Office,
710 East Main, Robstown, TX

Fee: \$50.00 (Includes study manuals)

A Private Applicator is defined by law as a person who uses or supervises the use of a restricted-use or state-limited use pesticide for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity.

Women's AG Leadership Conference Celebrates 25 Years

By Lisa Foust Prater, 3/8/2023

Each spring, a coalition of Minnesota women and organizations host the Women's Ag Leadership Conference. The 25th annual conference will be held April 12 at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska.

The conference is open to anyone with an interest in women's agricultural leadership, including those in production, industry, and education. Since its inception, more than 3,700 women have attended.

“We are bringing together some amazing speakers to really drive home the fact that a sterling future can only be achieved if we continue to build leaders in agriculture that have the skills, talents, and resilience to carry them forward in our ever changing world,” says event co-founder Doris Mold. “From ways to prevent burnout, to expanding your reach through podcasts, to building networks, we’re helping attendees set themselves up for long-term success.”

The day will feature roundtable discussions, breakout sessions, and mini sessions. Topics include the 2023 Farm Bill, nutrition, and the ag and fertilizer market.

Registration fees begin at \$30 for students and \$50 for first-time attendees or farmers. Visit WomensAgLeadership.org for more on the conference and to register online.



Record-Breaking Egg Profits Prompt Accusation of Price Gouging

By Claire Carlson, January 23, 2023 The Daily Yonder

A farmer-advocacy organization says record-breaking increases in the price of eggs isn't being caused by inflation or avian flu, as claimed by egg companies, but by price collusion among the nation's top egg producers.

In a letter sent to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) last week, the organization Farm Action accused the country's dominant egg producers of scheming to raise prices.

"The real culprit behind this 138% hike in the price of a carton of eggs appears to be a collusive scheme among industry leaders to turn inflationary conditions and an avian flu outbreak into an opportunity to extract egregious profits reaching as high as 40%," read the Farm Action letter to the FTC.

The average price of a dozen eggs jumped from \$1.79 in December 2021 to \$4.25 in December 2022. To explain the increase, industry leaders have cited inflation plus the avian flu outbreak, which began in February 2022 and has killed more than 43 million commercial egg-laying hens, according to USDA data.

The avian flu outbreak in 2015 was deadlier but did not produce price spikes as high as those seen in 2022. The 2015 outbreak killed about 12% of the egg-laying hens in the U.S. Most of the 50 million birds that died were egg-laying hens and turkeys, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS).

During the 2015 outbreak, the average price of a dozen Grade A eggs doubled, from \$1.29 to \$2.61, according to the ERS.

During the current avian flu outbreak, average egg prices have nearly tripled.

Egg production has become a more vertically integrated industry over the past 45 years, according to the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, a USDA-funded program based at Iowa State University. Vertical integration means different companies have merged to control multiple stages of the egg production process.

The largest egg producer in the United States, Cal-Maine Foods, has come to dominate the egg industry through the acquisition of other egg farms across the country, according to their website.

Critics of vertical integration say it has made the egg market less competitive, allowing big companies to coordinate pricing.

"If our market was truly competitive and working the way it's supposed to work, then if one dominant firm tries to raise their price, another firm should try to take their market share," said Sarah Carden, senior policy advocate at Farm Action, in an interview with the Daily Yonder.



“But instead what we see is all of them raising their prices,” Carden said.

Cal-Maine’s gross profit jumped 10-fold from one 26-week period in 2021 to the same period in 2022, according to the company’s most recent quarterly financial statement. For the 26-week fiscal period ending in November 2021, gross profits were \$50.4 million. In 2022 for the same period, gross profits were \$535.3 million.

From the first quarter of 2022 to the last, the company’s margins grew more than three-fold, according to Farm Action.

“To increase your gross margins by 345% from the year before while consumers are looking at at least doubled egg prices – I mean, that’s just theft,” Carden said.

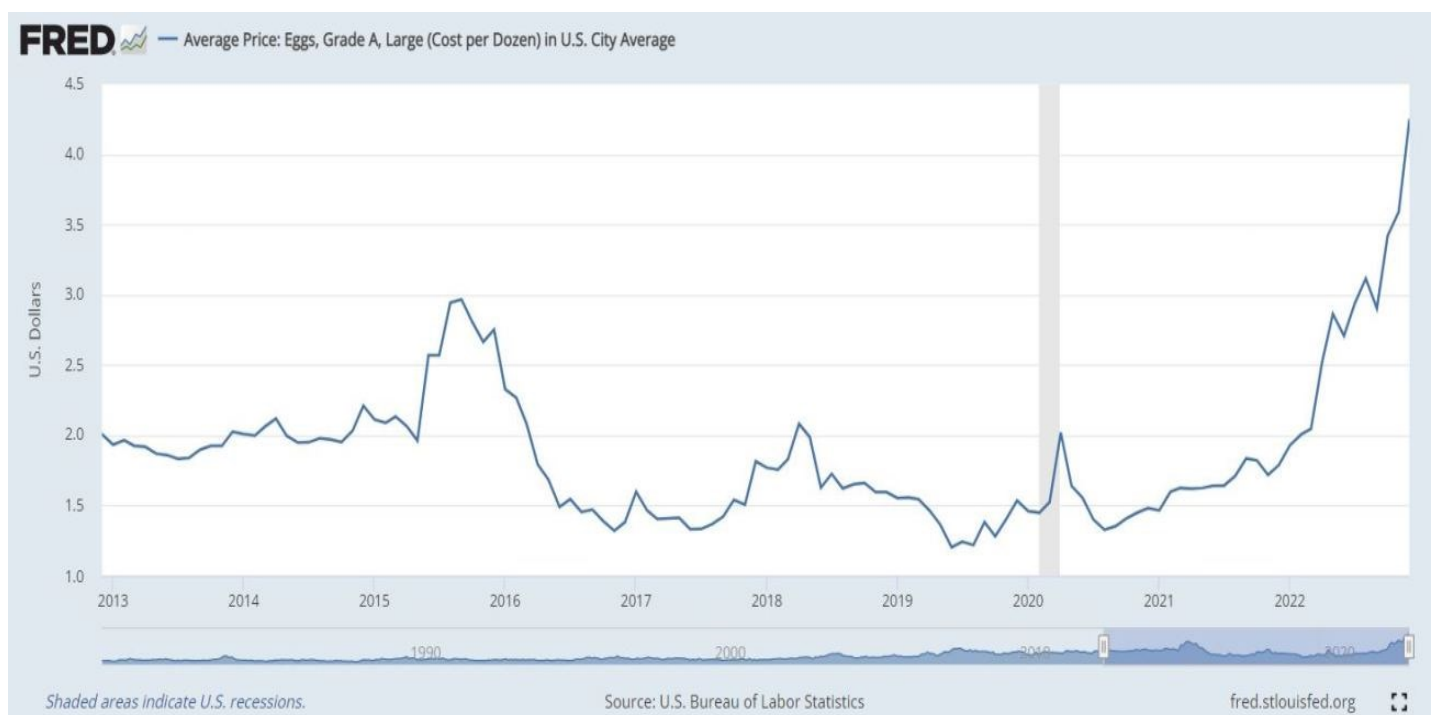
Cal-Maine also sold more eggs during the last 26-week period of 2022 than in the same period of 2021: 559.4 million eggs by the dozen sold compared to 524.2 million eggs by the dozen.

“We see big agriculture controlling this narrative about avian flu and supply chain issues,” Carden said. “But when you block out all that noise and just look at the numbers... there’s not a substantial decrease in [egg] supply.”

A spokesperson for the American Egg Board said that supply and demand set egg prices, not farmers.

“Eggs are bought and sold on the commodity market, where farmers don’t set the price of eggs – the market does,” a representative wrote in an email to the Daily Yonder.

Farm Action is urging the FTC to investigate Cal-Maine and the nation’s other largest egg producers (Rose Acre Farms, Versova Holdings L.L.P., Hillandale Farms, and Daybreak Foods) for “anti-competitive arrangements that suppress competition among egg producers.”



Commentary : The History of Slaughterhouse Tourism

By Anna Thompson Hajdik, January 4, 2023 The Daily Yonder

Cosmopolitan indeed is the sight-seeing throng that surges through the entrances of the Chicago Stock Yards. Ruddy-faced Germans jostle globe-trotting Englishmen, and the Japanese tourist, invariably armed with a camera, is familiar figure. Every state in the union, as well as almost every country on the globe, contributes its quota to the tide of humanity that ebbs and flows here with unfailing regularity, for the world-famed livestock market enjoys unique distinction.

John O'Brien's, *Through the Chicago Stock Yards: A Handy Guide to the Great Packing Industry*

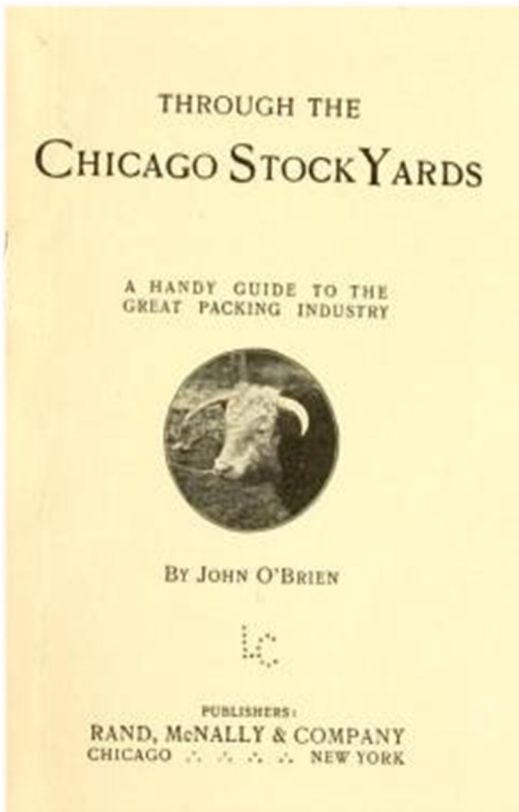


John O'Brien's 1907 guidebook, *Through the Chicago Stock Yards: A Handy Guide to the Great Packing Industry* captured the interest of a global audience in the varied activities that took place on a 475-acre expanse of land in the midst of a bustling, teeming metropolis. O'Brien goes on to compare the yards to such American wonders as Niagara Falls and the Rocky Mountains. Referred to as "Chicago's Pride," the stockyards stood as the city's leading tourist attraction for decades.

Today, in contrast, the average American consumer is sheltered from the meat production process. The industrial transformation of agriculture — which was ironically aided by the Chicago meatpackers of the early 20th century — led to the relative invisibility of American farming and a greatly diminished agricultural literacy for much of the non-farming public. In hindsight then, the window into rural industry that stock yard tourism afforded was truly unique.

The Union Stock Yard and Transit Company of Chicago opened for business on Christmas Day, 1865. From the beginning, efficiency and speed were the goal. They drew inspiration from the city of Cincinnati (and soon displaced that city's reputation as the nation's Porkopolis) with the implementation of the disassembly line. By the early 20th century, other than the steel mills of the Rust Belt, the meat packing factories of Chicago were America's largest.

There was also no going back from the innovation of the disassembly line in all its efficiency. Throughout the 20th century, industrial food production systems became commonplace as farms became fewer in number and larger in size, the nation became more urban, and Americans grew less agriculturally literate. As they did, the meatpacking industry consolidated and decentralized. Smaller companies went out of business. Larger companies left big cities behind, including Chicago. The once celebrated Chicago Stockyards closed in 1971. As the business of meatpacking evolved, packing companies moved to rural communities which were less dependent on union labor than cities and closer to the farms and livestock that supplied them.



The move then that meatpacking made to rural America has led to a cascade of different effects. In towns like Garden City, Kansas, meatpacking eventually led to prosperity, population growth, and business development when it welcomed a Tyson plant in 1980. A similar story has played out in the community of Worthington, Minnesota, home of a JBS pork plant, and considered one of the most rapidly diversifying regions of the state. However, as these plants grew their operations and attracted more workers in the 1990s and early 2000s, public sentiment concerning the safety of America's food supply resulted in a profound questioning of conventional agricultural methods which extended to meat processing. Critiques of modern meatpacking went mainstream, most notably with books and articles by Erick Schlosser and Michael Pollan. While such critiques likely didn't gain much traction in communities like Garden City or Worthington, they did contribute to a broader national awareness of issues like animal welfare in industrial agriculture and problematic labor conditions in the meatpacking industry. A small but intriguing DIY animal slaughter movement even sprouted up mid-2000s, its niche coastal popularity dutifully covered by *The New York Times*.

Then the pandemic hit in 2020. Meatpacking plants became ground zero for the transmission of Covid-19. Communities like Worthington, Minnesota, and Waterloo, Iowa (home of the nation's largest pork processing plant) were devastated by the disease as workers in shoulder-to-shoulder contact brought Covid-19 home to their families. Buckling under the pressure from local officials and public health authorities, the Waterloo plant shut down for time. And it was a similar story for packing plants across rural America. Aside from the many public health issues raised by unmitigated spread of the virus in these meatpacking communities, the pandemic also resulted in an enhanced scrutiny of the nation's "Big Four" meatpackers, Cargill, JBS, National Beef, and Tyson as plant shutdowns led to unanticipated supply chain disruptions.

In the face of all this upheaval in the nation's food supply, the American Rescue Plan provided for \$1 billion in federal grants to strengthen local, independently owned meat processors, which ultimately represents an intriguing inversion of the late 19th century fascination with industrial meat production. One such beneficiary was Lindsey Fulton Loken in the small town of Wanamingo, Minnesota. Loken bought a small-town butcher shop in 2014 after the longtime owner passed away, renaming it Blondie's Butcher Shop. All the meat processed there comes from farms that are within a 30-mile radius of the business. She witnessed firsthand how it grew faster than she could have ever imagined, while also suffering from significant challenges as demand skyrocketed. Loken has also become an ambassador for her profession, routinely giving demonstrations on the art and science of meat to an enduringly curious public. 100 years ago, the great spectacle and sheer scale of the Chicago Stockyards represented for many visitors the limitless potential of American enterprise – until it became clear that profits for the meat packers outweighed their concern for worker and consumer safety. Today, as more consumers learn about industrial agricultural production methods, and again demand transparency, knowledge is a powerful tool for provoking change. As we emerge from the pandemic, our nation is in an especially dynamic era of heightened awareness and interest in food and agricultural issues. Producers and consumers hold the power to reimagine the American public's relationship to animals, agriculture, and food as we consider the twin forces of technological progress and artisanship on an evolving nation of meat eaters.

Your Texas Agricultural Minute

Protecting the right to farm in Texas

By Gar Joiner, Publisher

The challenges of farming in Texas within city limits are many.

For one, it's not easy moving farm equipment in city traffic. There also is a continual loss of farmland to development. Those are the realities.

But several cities have added more obstacles. They are restricting or prohibiting generally accepted agricultural practices or prohibiting any agricultural use of land through their zoning and other regulations.

Those actions can be addressed. The Texas Legislature is considering solutions.

HB 1750 by Rep. DeWayne Burns of Johnson County strengthens protections for agricultural operations within city limits.

Farmers are being forced to cut hay before it reaches the proper height because some cities don't recognize that hay is a crop. They consider hay to be tall grass that must be kept mowed short. Some cities are also enforcing these height restrictions on grass being grazed by livestock.

Ranchers are being forced to remove their cattle or face legal action due to zoning restrictions that prohibit agricultural use of land. Staging equipment, inputs or harvested commodities are also being restricted or prohibited as illegal "onsite storage."

Current law only protects agricultural operations annexed after Aug. 31, 1981. Trying to verify with a city which operations were annexed has proven to be a challenge.

As a result of this confusion, cities are enforcing ordinances and zoning against all agricultural operations without following the requirement in current law to prove a governmental requirement is necessary to protect public health.

The right to farm in Texas is important. The Texas Legislature can make sure that right is protected within city limits.

Cotton Growers Make Room For More Corn and Wheat

By Chuck Abbott 2/13/2023



Battered by drought and rising costs, U.S. cotton growers will devote more of their land to corn, wheat, and soybeans — crops that promise higher revenue this year — while sharply reducing their cotton plantings, said a survey released on Sunday. The National Cotton Council said its survey of growers indicated 11.4 million acres will be planted to cotton this spring, 17% less than last year.

“The U.S. cotton industry continues to navigate an environment characterized by increased production costs, slumping consumer demand, and supply chain disruptions,” said a Cotton Council summary of the economic outlook for this year. “The current economic signals are reflected in the 2023 survey results as many growers indicated a shift away from cotton to other competing commodities.”

Growers across the Cotton Belt said they would shift some of their land out of cotton. Corn, wheat, and soybeans were the most frequently mentioned alternatives. Futures prices for most alternative crops were strong for the past year but cotton futures have fallen more than 16% since last winter.

“History has shown that U.S. farmers respond to relative prices when making planting decisions,” said Jody Campiche, Cotton Council vice president for economics. “Price ratios for cotton to corn or soybeans are at the lowest level since planting of the 2009 crop. In addition, production costs remain elevated.”

The Cotton Council survey of growers in 17 states, conducted from mid-December through mid-January, is closely watched as an early indicator of farmers’ plans for the new year. The first survey-based estimate from USDA will be the Prospective Plantings report on March 31. The Cotton Council released its survey results at its annual meeting in Dallas. Cotton is one of the four most widely planted U.S. crops.

In Texas, the No. 1 cotton-producing state, growers said they would plant 6.2 million acres of cotton, a 21% reduction from 2022. Growers abandoned nearly three-quarters of their cotton land because of drought damage last year. Texas still harvested more cotton, 2.08 million bales, than its nearest competitor, Georgia, with 1.28 million bales.

Economic conditions should improve by the time this year’s crop is harvested, said Campiche. World demand for cotton is expected to rise 5%, and China’s removal of Covid-19 restrictions should provide a boost to cotton consumption, she said. China is one of the world’s largest cotton importers.

The Cotton Council estimated a U.S. cotton crop of 15.7 million bales this year, roughly 1 million bales larger than last year. American cotton mills were expected to expand production somewhat while exports decline modestly during the 2023/24 marketing year with the result that the U.S. cotton stockpile would climb by 1 million bales, to 5.3 million bales in summer 2024.

Actual plantings may be different than the survey indicated because of changes in market conditions or unusual weather at planting time, said the Cotton Council. There also are “several downside risks,” including high inflation, tighter monetary policy, the war in Ukraine, Covid-19 impacts in China, slower economic growth, geopolitical tensions, and slower world economic growth.

USDA: More Planted Acres, Lower Farm Income in 2023

By Cassidy Walter, 02/23/2023

This morning at USDA's 99th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum, USDA Chief Economist Seth Meyer announced the agency is projecting more planted acres of corn, soybeans, and wheat combined, but prices and farm income are expected to decline in 2023.

PLANTED ACRES

According to USDA's projections, American farmers will plant 91 million acres of corn this year, up 2.4 million acres year-over-year.

Feed and residual use is estimated to be up about 6% and exports are projected up 275 million bushels.

USDA is expecting reduced exports out of Ukraine, modest growth in global trade, and strong Chinese demand.

Wheat acres are expected to increase 3.8 million to 49.5 million, while soybean acres are projected to be the same as 2022 at 87.5 million.

USDA says the increase in wheat acres is in response to high global prices and tight supplies, partially due to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

While acres are unchanged, USDA is expecting soybean production to be up from 2022. Due to more favorable weather being anticipated, yield is projected to be up from 49.5 bushels per acre to 52 bushels per acre.

Combined, planted acres are projected to increase nearly 3%.

DECLINING PRICES

All three crops are expected to see a drop in prices.

Corn prices are estimated to drop over 16%.

The season-average price is projected to be \$5.60 per bushel.

Soybeans may see a drop of nearly 10%, according to USDA.

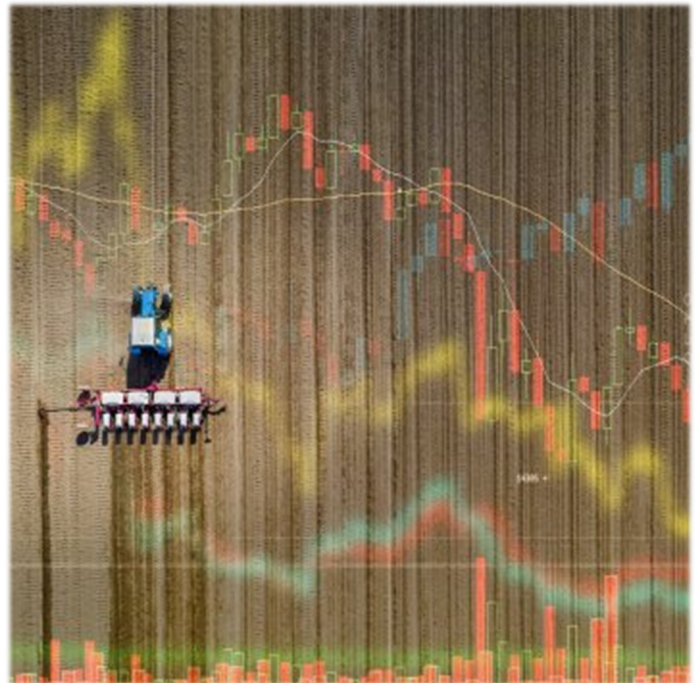
The season-average price is estimated to be \$12.90 per bushel.

Wheat prices are projected to drop almost 6%.

The season-average price is expected to be \$8.50 per bushel.

FARM INCOME

USDA projects 2023 net cash farm income to drop nearly 23% and net farm income to drop by more than 18%. Meyer emphasized that while income is expected to be below the record set in 2022, it will still be strong.



5 Crop and Livestock Charts to Ponder from USDA's 10 Year Outlook

By Sara Shafer, 02/15/2023

What will the next decade hold for your farm? What factors should you use to weigh investments or crop planning? Each year USDA provides a 10-year outlook for major crop and livestock commodities. Known as the Agricultural Baseline Projections, this report guides agricultural investments in Washington, D.C., and is helpful for farmers as it shines a light on current and future trends.

The latest baselined is built on the years 2023/24 to 2032/33. Here are five trends and data sets to ponder.

U.S. Crop Acres Stay Steady

High commodity prices typically expand total planted acres for the eight major field crops (barley, corn, cotton, oats, rice, sorghum, soybeans, and wheat). But total acres dipped to 249.5 million in 2022/23 from 253.4 million in 2021/22 largely because weather prevented plantings last crop season.

Did You Know? Corn, soybeans, wheat and upland cotton comprised more than 94% of the eight-crop total in 2022/23. For 2023/24, USDA projects corn acres to rise by 3.4 million to 92 million. In a decade, USDA predicts corn acres to taper down to 89 million.

For soybeans, acres this year are projected at 87 million. By 2023/24, soybean acres are projected to be 86.5 million.

For wheat, acres are projected to jump 4% and hit 47.5 million this year. In the next decade, USDA projects wheat acres to decline to 46 million.

Cotton acres are expected to drop to 9.5 million in 2023/24, down from 13.6 million in 2022/23 (and among the lowest since 1960).

Higher yields are expected to more than compensate for reduced planted acreage, resulting in record-high production for corn and soybeans and increased wheat production.

The national average corn yield is projected at 181.5 bu. per acre in 2023/24, up from 171.9 bu. in 2022/23, when drought zapped yields.

Did You Know? USDA projects the national average corn yield to hit just under 200 bu. by 2032/33.

Soybean yields are expected to recover from a four-year low of 49.8 bu. per acre in 2022/23. For this season, soybean yields are expected to average 52 bu. per acre and hit 56.5 bu. by 2032/33.

Wheat yields are expected to return to more typical levels this year — 49.2 bu. per acre, and to continue rising through the projection period, ending at 52.7 bushels per acre in 2032/33.

Domestic and International Crop Demand are Expected to Grow

In the next decade, domestic demand for corn, soybeans, wheat, and cotton are all expected to grow over the next decade. Also, exports of the four crops are expected to increase over the next decade, reaching record highs for upland cotton and near record levels for corn and soybeans.



Corn:

- Driven by growth in pork, chicken and beef sectors, domestic corn use is expected to grow from 12.5 billion bushels in 2023/24 to 13.4 billion bushels by 2032/33. Use of corn for food, seed and in industrial applications, including ethanol, is projected to decline slightly over the same period.
- U.S. corn exports are expected to rise nearly 20% from 2023/24 to 2032/33, ending at 2.7 billion bushels, which would be the second-highest corn export volume on record.

Soybeans

- Soybean crush is expected to rise from 2.3 billion bushels in 2023/24 to 2.5 billion bushels in 2032/33.
- Soybean exports are expected to rise 8% over the projection period.

Wheat

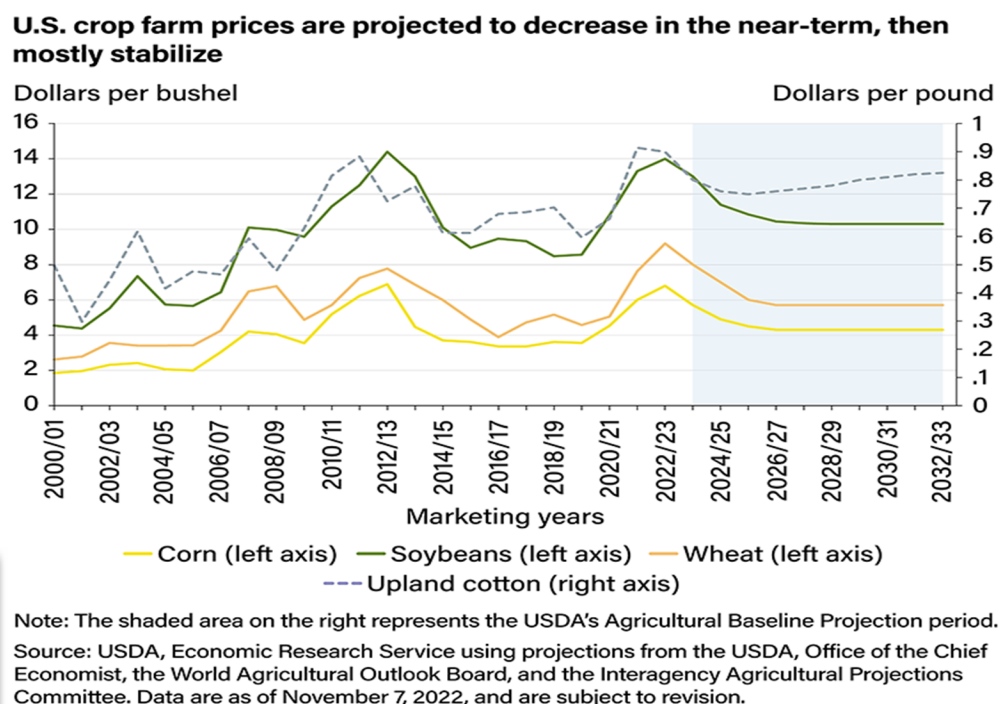
- Domestic use of wheat is projected to remain relatively steady, rising 2.4% through 2032/33.
- U.S. wheat exports are projected to jump 15% in the next decade.

Crop Prices Go Down, then Stabilize After hitting near-record highs last year, corn, soybean and wheat prices are all expected to decline in the short term.

Corn prices are expected to drift down to \$5.70 per bushel this year and continue drifting down before stabilizing at \$4.30.

Soybean prices follow a similar trend, falling to \$13 a bushel this year and continue dropping until prices stabilize at around \$10.30 per bushel.

- Wheat prices are expected to drop from a record \$9.20 a bushel in 2022/23 to \$8 in 2023/24. By 2032/33, prices are projected to settle near \$5.70 per bushel.

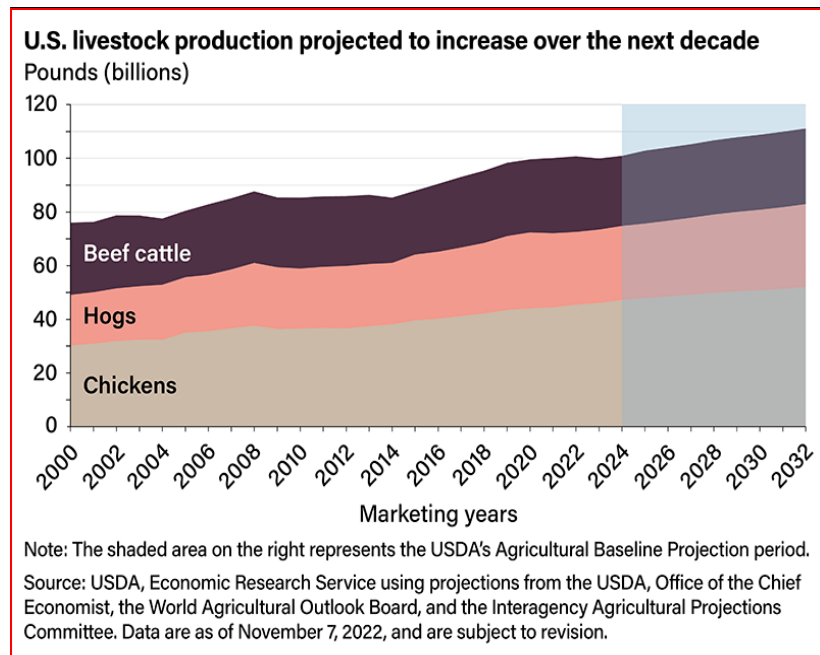


Livestock Production Set to Expand

Beef production is projected to grow through 2032, after contracting in 2023 and 2024. Commercial slaughter volumes and weights are expected to increase, expanding production to record levels by 2032. Beginning at 26 billion pounds in 2024, production is estimated to grow to 28.1 billion pounds in 2032.

Pork production is also projected to increase over the 10-year projection period, driven by rising hog inventories as producers increase supply to meet processor demand. Total commercial production of pork is projected to grow from 27.6 billion pounds in 2024 to a record 30.9 billion pounds in 2032 — a 12% increase.

Chicken production is expected to follow a similar pattern, growing 10% over the projection period to a record 52 billion pounds in 2032.



Did You Know? The U.S. sends a surplus of higher value cuts of feedlot-finished beef to Europe and Asia and imports lower value lean beef to supplement the domestic production of ground beef.

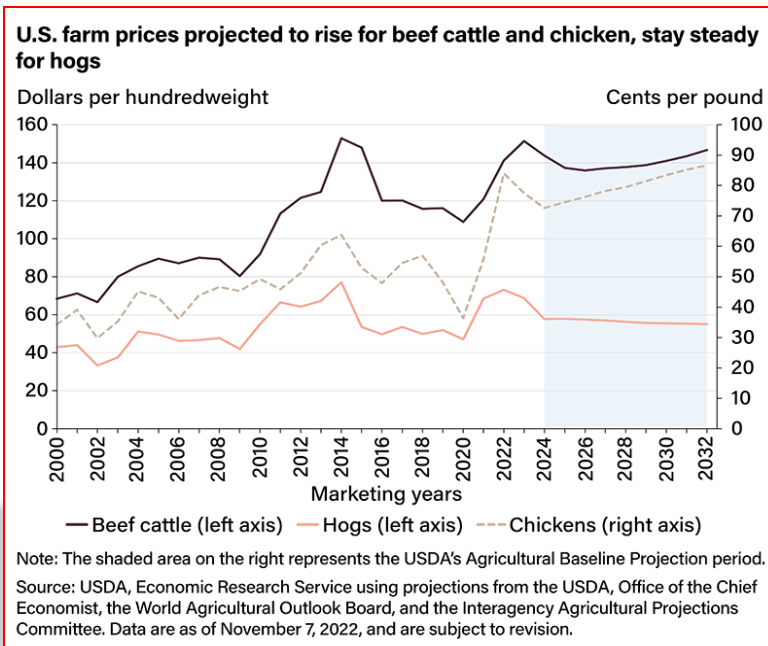
A Mixed Bag for Livestock Prices

In the near term, farm prices for all animals and animal products are projected to fall from recent record or near-record levels set in 2022.

- **Cattle:** After an initial decline, cattle prices are expected to rise steadily after 2026.

- **Pork:** Hog prices are expected to decline through most of the projection period, with the farm price for hogs in 2032 almost 5% lower than in 2024.

- **Chicken:** By the end of the projection period, chicken prices are expected to approach record levels, with farm prices for broilers (young chickens) rising 19%.



How the War in Ukraine is Affecting Food Supplies, Prices Around the World

Mycentraloregon.com, 2/24/2023

(NEW YORK) — To call Ukraine home is to embody the love of food and sharing it with others — a tradition the country has historically embodied in the role it plays in feeding the world.

The fertile soil in the region, known as the “breadbasket of the world” due to its abundance in grains like wheat, barley, corn, soybeans — and other food including sunflower oil and poultry — had ensured in decades past that Ukraine would remain one of the top food producers and exporters in the world. An estimated 70% of land in Ukraine is used for farmland.

The Russian invasion one year ago may change all of that. Ukraine’s role as the breadbasket of the world is in jeopardy as war rages on, tearing apart the country’s agricultural lands and leaving behind dangerous obstacles, further hindering the cleanup and rebuilding that must take place in order to restore the fields.

The war is exacerbating an already delicate food system that could have consequences for decades to come, experts told ABC News.

Here is how the war in Ukraine has complicated issues of food security around the globe:

Food prices have stabilized, but global food supplies are at risk, experts say

Within about a week of Russia crossing into eastern Ukraine in the dawn of Feb. 24, 2022, prices for grains like soybeans and some vegetable oils spiked about 50% to 60%, Joseph Glauber, a senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute, told ABC News.

Experts on global food systems almost immediately began warning of the repercussions the war could have on food shortages and the subsequent malnutrition that vulnerable populations in places like the Horn of Africa and Yemen could face.

“Maybe people don’t even know about Ukraine there, but they feel that they cannot afford to buy food anymore,” Anna Voloshyna, a Ukrainian chef who now resides in San Francisco and has worked with the World Food Programme to bring light to the issue, told ABC News.

Those prices have since stabilized to pre-war levels by the end of summer, as surplus goods from the rest of the world made up for the difference in what Ukraine was no longer able to export, Glauber said. The Food Price Index, a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities released by the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization, showed a spike in March 2022, but then dropped back down to pre-war levels several months later.

The global food supply “dodged a bullet” after places like the U.S., Canada, European Union and other big exporting regions saw “fairly decent” crop production, Glauber said. There was concern that Russia’s output would be affected, but Russia ended up exporting much more wheat than anticipated, he added. Australia also saw a “record” wheat crop, Glauber said.

The implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, an agreement between Russia and Ukraine made with Turkey and the United Nations to ensure the safe transportation of grain and foodstuffs out of Ukraine, has been “critical” in keeping food prices stable since it went into effect in July, James Elder, UNICEF spokesperson in Ukraine, told ABC News.



However, Voloshyna, who uses sunflower oil almost exclusively in her cooking, said she can no longer find the staple at reasonable prices.

She said that she used to turn the bottle over and see, “Made in Ukraine.” Ever since the war started, those bottles of sunflower oil now mostly come from Mexico, she said.

Food prices have not returned to pre-pandemic levels

While food prices have returned to pre-war levels, they have not returned to pre-pandemic levels, when prices were “considerably lower,” Glauber said.

The Food Price Index declined during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, which reflected uncertainties faced by commodity markets, according to the U.N.’s Food and Agriculture Organization’s 2022 World Food and Agriculture Report. However, between May 2020 and March 2022, the index surged to its highest-ever value at 159.7 points.

However, Glauber pointed out that only about 25% of the food prices at the grocery store are directly attributable to the underlying commodity price, meaning that if the price of corn goes up, then so will the cost of feeding the chickens and pigs that are later slaughtered for meat or the cows that produce milk that is later sent to the grocery store.

The surge was sparked more by the pandemic’s effect on the supply chains before rising in conjunction with the rebound in activity and demand experienced in 2021, according to the report. The disruption to exports of cereals and vegetable oils from war in Ukraine finished off the spike in 2022, according to the report.

In January 2023, the Food Price Index stood at 135.6. In 2020, before the spike began, the Food Price Index was 98.1, according to the U.N.

Inflation is also to blame. December 2021 and January 2022 saw some of the highest meat prices ever recorded, which was driving the food inflation at 5% to 6%, “really high levels” compared to the typical 2% to 3% increases in food inflation, Glauber said.

“We’ve had very few times when we’ve seen food inflation much higher than that,” he said.

The fact that the dollar has remained strong means that Americans have not felt the full scale of food price increases around the world, Glauber said.

But that could change. There is not a lot of crops in reserve, leaving the world food supply without a cushion,

“We’re in a phase of the market where, at least for the time being, it’s too early to say that we’re out of the woods,” he said.

The war adds complicated dimensions on energy and fertilizer prices, goods that Russia is a large exporter of, is also indirectly affected food prices, Glauber said.

Continued disasters will have large-scale affect on human health

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine shows no signs of stopping, which will affect the ability for millions around the world to obtain proper nutrition, experts say.

The rise in food prices — as well as increases in fuel costs — have plunged millions of more vulnerable families into food insecurity, Elder from UNICEF, told ABC News.

“Normally, that means someone in the family is missing out on meals,” Elder said.

The price of nutritious foods — think foods that contain a lot of vitamins, minerals and micronutrients such as fruits and vegetables, eggs and fish — have increased the most, Saskia Osendarp, executive director of the Micronutrient Forum and co-coordinator of Standing Together for Nutrition, a consortium of nutrition, economics, food and health experts.

Acute malnutrition is life-threatening, as lacking these foods diminishes children's ability to grow and develop and adults' ability to function optimally, Osendarp said.

The International Food Policy Research Institute estimates that a 5% increase in food prices will lead to 9% children who suffer from wasting, a form of acute malnutrition.

Just over 13 million children suffer from what we call severe wasting, Elder said.

"With a worsening climate, we'll keep hurting these children who really don't have a carbon footprint, and we're going to keep seeing that number increasing," Elder said.

The world is on its way to a "raging food catastrophe," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres told world leaders at the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, in November.

The global food supply is in a "tight market" in the coming year, especially as the war continues, Glauber said. Plantings in Ukraine are down 35% to 40%, meaning that one of the major exporters in the world is going to produce far less again this year, he said.

"That means that if the world wants to keep prices moderate, it's going to have to find that production from somewhere," he said, adding that there is very little margin for poor crop elsewhere.

Climate change could also soon affect other major food producers around the world, Osendarp said.

There is continued drought in the Horn of Africa, and flooding rains have been ruining crops in South Asia, Osendarp added.

"All of these crises combined have led to these high food prices," Osendarp said.

Cleanup from the war will take years

Much of the agricultural land in Ukraine has been destroyed or contaminated, Osendarp said.

"It will take us 10 years to remove all the dangerous bombs and mines and the stuff that our friendly neighbor left us," Voloshyna, whose family has a farm in southern Ukraine, said. "Most of those minds are in the fields, so people cannot go and harvest crops. And they cannot plant new crops."

The country's agriculture sector lost \$4.3 billion as a result of the war, according to the Kyiv School of Economics.

Even if the war ended tomorrow, it could take up to a decade or more for much of the agricultural land to be restored, Osendarp said. In addition, many farmers have fled the country, she added.

"The long-term impact on production has been devastating," Glauber said.

Ukraine is in desperate need for money to clear the fields and buy new farming equipment, Voloshyna said.

"The only way to provide that security for farmers is to win the war," she said.

The economic fallout in the future could be swift as well, Osendarp said. The World Bank is warning countries, especially poorer countries, could soon face debilitating debt after absorbing the increase in food prices to protect their citizens.

"Moving forward, the situation still looks rather grim," Osendarp said.



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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jaime Lopez".

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