

THE FARMER'S REPORT

The  Mendota Reporter

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Wednesday, June 28, 2023



USDA: Food costs to remain on upward trajectory

By DAN GRANT
FarmWeek

Food costs will continue to eat away at consumers' pocketbooks this year.

USDA estimates food price inflation could increase another 8% this year after racing to its highest level last year (9.9%) since 1979.

"In the next year, we expect prices to continue to increase, although substantial uncertainty exists," said Matthew MacLachlan, economist at USDA's Food Economics Division.

Grocery purchases, or food at home, could experience the highest inflation this year at 8.6%, down from 11.4% in 2022. Meanwhile, prices of food away from home could increase 8.3% in 2023, up from 7.7% last year.

"We're predicting food-at-home prices will continue to increase, albeit at a slower rate than last year. Food-at-home prices at this level (in 2022) had not been observed since 1974," MacLachlan said at USDA's 99th annual Ag Outlook Forum.

The higher prices will continue to affect pretty much anything shoppers put in their carts or order out. No segment of the food market will be spared from historically high inflation again this year, according to USDA.

"This is a very high level of inflation. It isn't attributable to any category, but rather it's driven by higher prices across the board," MacLachlan said. "Prices for all food categories increased at least 5% in 2022."

After posting some of the highest price increases in 2020-21, inflation for beef/veal and pork eased to 5.3% last year. Egg prices posted the highest gain at 32% in 2022.

Even with the higher costs, food expenditures remain about the same portion of spending (12%) for U.S. consumers compared to other years when food prices increased closer to the historical rate around 2%.

"This roughly aligns with past expenditures," MacLachlan said. "But this represents the 'average' household and not necessarily those with low income, which food is a much larger share of their expenditures."

The higher prices reflect the increasing cost of inputs along the entire food chain, MacLachlan noted.

Along with higher costs for everything from transportation to packaging, the food sector continues to struggle with labor issues, according to Andrew Harig, vice president of tax, trade, sustainability and policy development for FMI – the Food Industry Association.



USDA estimates food price inflation could increase another 8% this year after racing to its highest level last year (9.9%) since 1979. (FarmWeek file photo)

Annual employee turnover at grocery stores averaged about 50% pre-COVID but currently remains above 60%.

"It looks like a year in flux. Challenges will persist," Harig said. "These (food) prices don't look like they'll come down any time soon."

The average weekly grocery scan of food purchases increased from an average of \$121 in February 2020 to \$151 last month. The

average grocery purchase peaked at \$161 per week at the beginning of the pandemic as many consumers went through a "stockpile" phase, Harig noted.

But the higher cost of the average grocery purchases doesn't reflect the whole story. Consumers are also cutting back on total purchases to deal with inflation.

"Consumer worries continue to rise," Harig said. "What we've seen in the past year is volumes are down."

A recent survey found 59% of consumers are currently shopping for more deals, 45% are buying more store brands and 41% are buying fewer items overall, according to FMI.

"Consumers are feeling this more than estimates show," said Harig, who noted grocers and retailers have been caught in the crosshairs. "Your last trip to the store often shapes how you feel about the food industry."

While some consumers often blame the point of purchase for high costs, Harig noted high food prices are the result of inflation across all sectors. Higher prices actually erode margins for food retailers, whose profit margins hover around 2-3%.

"People really don't know where their food comes from or how it's produced, so when the price changes, it's a bit of a mystery," he added. "We've seen the supply chain already stretched, and it would normally bounce back. But, it hasn't and a lot of it still traces back to COVID. We're still feeling the effects today."

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)



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Welcome To The LaSalle County

4-H SHOW & JUNIOR FAIR

Thursday, July 13 – Sunday, July 16, 2023

LaSalle County Junior Fairgrounds • Ottawa

Thursday, July 13

8:00 am 4-H General Project
Exhibition judging day
begins, Exhibit Halls I, 2
and 3

2:00 pm Style Revue, Exhibit Hall
3

5:00 pm Dog Show – Show arena

Friday, July 14

8:00 am Swine Judging

8:00 am Poultry judging

1:00 pm Goat Show

4:00 pm Cat Show

4:00 pm 3X3 Basketball

5:00 pm Public Presentation &
Talent Show

Saturday, July 15

8:00 am Horse Show

8:30 am Beef Showmanship
Contest followed by
Purebred & Market Beef
Showmanship

8:30 am Rabbit Show

11:00 am-2:00 pm Rabbit Show

11:00 am-2:00 pm 4-H Pop Up Tent
Activities

1:00 pm Bicycle (1pm- 5-8 year
old, 2pm-9-12 year-old)

4:00 pm Basketball Court Games

4:30 pm FAIR AUCTION-
Sponsored by, Friends of
Extension and 4-H

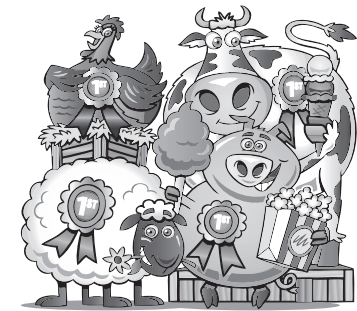
Sunday, July 16

8:00 am Horse Show

8:00 am Sheep Show

10:00 am or after Beef Show, Master
Showmanship

2:30 pm (approx.) Closing Ceremonies
honoring 4-H and
Cloverbud graduates, Hall
of Fame Recognition and
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Helping livestock beat the heat this summer

The best place to be when the sweltering summer weather arrives is inside with air conditioning, yet livestock outside of air-conditioned barns often need other ways to beat the heat.

Dr. Isabelle Louge, a clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, says that while all livestock can cool down using shade, water, and fans, cooling strategies for livestock vary depending on the species and breed.

For example, shade is a common way to provide animals relief from the sun, but some benefit from the shade more than others.

“Access to shade particularly helps light-skinned animals from getting sunburned in areas with very little hair, such as the nose and around the eyes; white pigs, especially, should be kept under shade during the day since they are prone to sunburns,” Louge said. “Trees, run-in shelters, and open-sided canopies and roofs can serve as great sources of shade, or owners can consider only letting animals out to graze at night.”

While drinking water can significantly cool down animals as well, owners should be aware of how animals use water differently.

“Cows sit in watering holes to help them cool off, yet this method of cooling off can increase the moisture in a cow’s hooves, which make them soft and can lead to lameness from foot diseases like foot rot and abscesses,” Louge said. “It is better to discourage this behavior and provide other means to cool down animals with water.”

One effective way to cool down animals is to wet them periodically with cool – not cold – water, because, as Louge points out, cold water shocks the system and causes

blood vessels near the skin’s surface to contract, reducing an animal’s ability to release heat.

“Most livestock species – with the exception of horses and donkeys – do not sweat to cool down, and because they can’t take advantage of this evaporative cooling naturally, physically wetting down animals and using a strong fan can create a breeze that encourages evaporation, mimicking sweating and cooling the animal,” Louge said.

Fans, in general, are a good addition to cooling strategies because the increased airflow helps animals lose heat through their skin, but Louge advises owners to take care when considering the presence of fans around their animals.

“It is important to make sure the animals do not get access to the fan blades or electrical cords, as these can be hazardous,” Louge said. “Owners should also make sure the fans are designed for high outdoor temperatures, as the motor can overheat and catch fire if they are not made for such temperatures.”

Other methods of cooling can be tailored more specifically to animals as well.

Animals with fiber or long hair – including woolly sheep, llamas, alpacas, angora goats, cashmere goats, and highland cattle – can keep cool easier once their hair is removed.

“The more hair or fleece a large animal has, the more likely it is to get heat stressed,” Louge said. “So, for animals with very thick wool or hair, it is a good idea for owners to shear them multiple times in the summer to make sure they do not get too shaggy.”

Because of this, if possible, Louge suggests owners who live in warm areas not purchase animals that naturally

have a lot of hair or wool; instead, owners should select a breed that is well-adapted to the local climate.

Finally, animals that rely on fermentation to digest their food – including cattle, goats, llamas, alpacas, horses, and donkeys – should not eat during the hottest part of the day, as this can overheat the animal.

“When these species eat a meal, the bacteria in their gut break down the food and produce heat as a by-product,” Louge explained. “Because of this, it is best to feed animals early in the morning and in the evening when the sun is going down.”

No matter the animal, however, owners should bring their animals into the shade and provide water and a fan if they notice signs of overheating, such as fast breathing, panting, decreased activity level, slobbering, stumbling, and incoordination. Heat stress can worsen quickly, so Louge also strongly recommends calling a veterinarian to assess the animal and ensure they do not require more extensive supportive care to resolve the overheating issue.

Extreme heat can cause stress for livestock, and it is an owner’s responsibility to maintain their animal’s health. By personalizing cooling strategies to an animal’s species and breed, owners can ensure their livestock are able to withstand the stifling heat and remain comfortable throughout the summer.

(Pet Talk is a service of the School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M University. Stories can be viewed on the web at vetmed.tamu.edu/news/pet-talk. Suggestions for future topics may be directed to vmbs-editor@tamu.edu.)

IFB President: Farmers prepare for another busy summer

By RICHARD GUEBERT JR.
Illinois Farm Bureau President

Illinois farmers have wrapped up planting the #1 and #2 crops Illinois is known for, soybean and corn. While farmers’ markets and u-pick operations pick up their production, corn and soybean farmers wait for timely rains to grow the crops.

For Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB), summer is an extremely busy time for farmers, university researchers and members of the community who engage one another through our many educational events.

Americans are more curious than ever about where and how their food is grown. They want to know whether the meat, fruits, vegetables and other food products are sustainably grown, and about farmers’ efforts to preserve and care for the land.



Guebert

We are proud to work with those family farmers, and the fact that 96% of farms in Illinois are family owned.

That’s why IFB and its partners continue to invite our friends and neighbors to events, such as our upcoming summer Nutrient Stewardship Field Days. These state events, funded through IFB’s Nutrient Stewardship Grant Program, demonstrate ongoing research and agricultural conservation practices. They are opportunities for farmers to network with agribusinesses and university researchers, and for consumers to learn more about agriculture’s role in the environment.

As weather heats up, you might notice more insects buzzing around. Butterflies, honeybees and even wasps play an important role in our environment, pollinating the many fruits and vegetables farmers grow. June 19 marks the start of National Pollinator Week when we celebrate pollinators and find new ways to protect them.

This year, Cook County Farm Bureau (CFB) and IFB partnered with Lincoln Park Zoo on June 23 for a fun-filled day of pollinator education. Zoo attendees had

the chance to interact and meet with Cook County farmers, master gardeners and other agricultural representatives while learning more about farmers’ efforts to protect pollinators.

In addition to putting a focus on sustainability and pollinators, IFB partners with many organizations to find solutions to address hunger and nutrition.

Illinois dairy farmers and Illinois Milk Producers Association recently donated 9,936 pounds of milk, including lactose-free, to two local food banks to help communities experiencing food insecurity. The donation is in partnership with Prairie Farms, Illinois Corn Growers Association and Illinois Soybean Association.

We know that more families are struggling with higher sticker prices at the grocery store. While farmers are price takers and not price makers, we can and should help our communities struggling during these challenging times.

Creative solutions such as the Farm to Food Bank Initiative seek to connect farmers, food banks, and our most vulnerable communities with fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese, milk, eggs and other food products while cutting food waste.

IFB partnered with Feeding Illinois, Illinois Farmers Market Association, Illinois Specialty Growers Association, University of Illinois Extension and the Prairie Research Institute’s Illinois Sustainable Technology Center on the Farm to Food Bank pilot program, which officially launched in 2021.

We are pleased to see that program has paved a path to trim food waste and build food bank inventories with fresh, healthy food directly from farmers, and a new bill establishing the official program within the Department of Human Services awaits Gov. JB Pritzker’s signature.

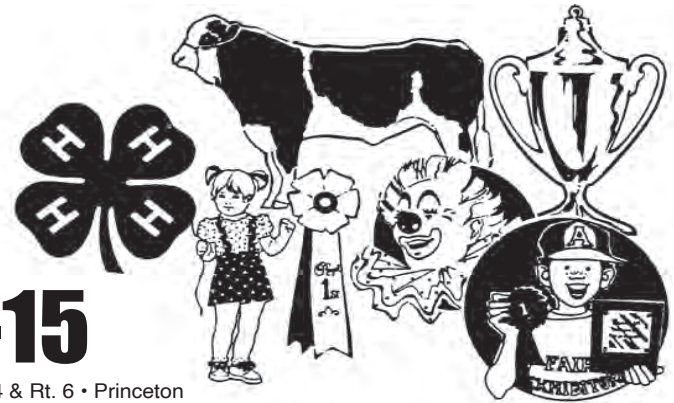
Summer is an exciting and busy time of year for many people, not just for farmers. I encourage and invite you all to join us during one of our many educational events and learn more about Illinois agriculture.

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)

COME TO THE BUREAU COUNTY 4-H FAIR

July 13-15

Bureau County 4-H Fairgrounds • Rt. 34 & Rt. 6 • Princeton



Please note: Times are subject to change based on judge availability and Fair Entry selections. Exhibitors will be asked to remain outside of the judging hall until judges are ready for their designated group.

Monday, July 10

4:00 pm – Clothing and Textile Judging at University of IL Extension Office

Thursday, July 13

9:00 am – All general projects in place
9:00 am – Foods Judging Begins
9:00 am – Crops Judging
9:00 am – Horticulture Judging
9:00 am – Natural Resources Judging
10:15 am – Wildlife Judging
10:30 am – Floriculture Judging
10:30 am – Weather Judging
12:00 – 1:00 pm Judge/Superintendent Lunch Break
1:00 pm – Woodworking Judging
1:15 pm – Photography Judging
1:15 pm – Computer Judging
1:15 pm – eSports Judging
1:15 pm – Exploratory Judging
1:30 pm – Communications/Journalism Judging
1:30 pm – Video/Filmmaking Judging
1:30 pm – Animal Science Judging
1:45 pm – Vet Science Judging
1:45 pm – Theatre Arts Judging
1:45 pm – Robotics Judging

1:45 pm – Electricity Judging
1:45 pm – Interior Design Judging
2:30 pm – Health Judging
5:00 pm – Dog Show/Dog Obedience Show
7:00 pm – Fashion Revue

Friday, July 14

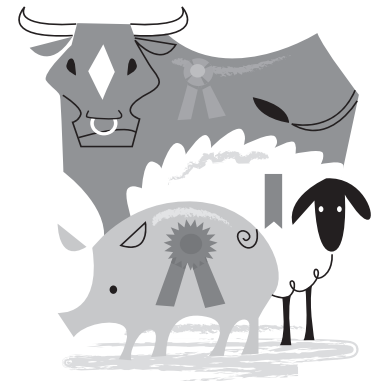
8:30 am – Visual Arts Judging Begins
12:00 – 1:00 pm Judges/Superintendents Lunch Break
Visual Arts Judges will meet after lunch to determine trophy winners/state fair delegates.
1:15 pm – Cloverbud Judging Begins
1:30 pm – County Only Projects Judging Begins
1:30 pm – Aerospace Judging Begins
2:00 pm – Intercultural/Childcare Judging Begins
2:30 pm – Welding Judging Begins
2:30 pm – Cat Show – Hospitality Building
2:45 pm – Leadership Judging Begins
3:00 pm – College & Career Readiness Judging Begins
3:00 pm – Aerospace Launch – weather permitting
3:00 pm – Tractor Judging Begins
3:00 pm – Bicycle Judging Begins
3:00 pm – Sheep & Goat Weigh-In
3:30 pm – Swine Check-In
4:00 pm – Sheep & Goat Show
4:30 pm – Beef Weigh-In
6:00 pm – Swine Show
Master Showmanship Contest following Swine Show

Saturday, July 15

8:00 am – All livestock due in pens
8:30 am – Dairy Show
9:00 am – Horse Show, Poultry Show, Rabbit Show
9:30 am – Market Beef Show
11:00 am – Breeding Beef Show, Bucket Calf Show, Beef Showmanship
1:00 pm – Waterfowl & Pigeon Show
5:00 pm – Awards ceremony

All projects must remain in place until the completion of the awards ceremony on Saturday.

All judging will be Conference (interview) judged. 4-H'ers must be present during the judging, unless a Special Accommodation Request has been made prior to the Fair.



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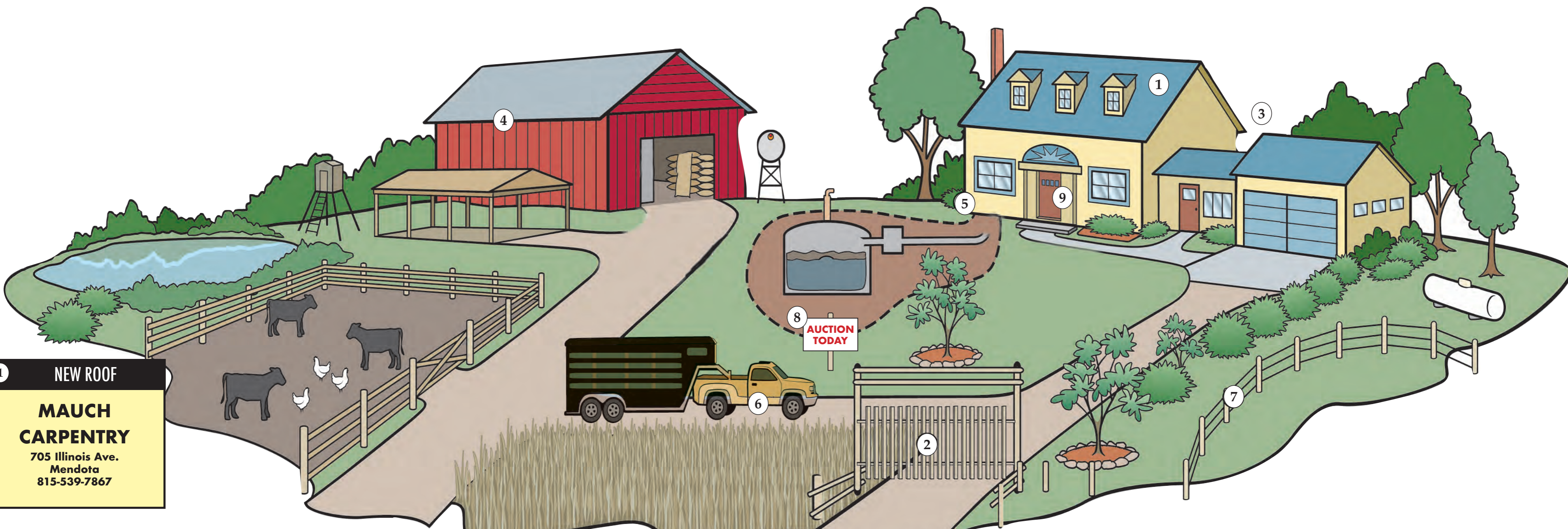
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EPA emissions proposal includes stricter limits for pickups, heavy-duty vehicles

By **TIMOTHY EGGERT**
FarmWeek

Fewer vehicles essential to farmers and the ag industry, like pickup trucks and freight haulers, would be powered by internal combustion engines over the next 10 years under a set of proposals introduced April 12.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed stricter vehicle emission limits that would mandate up to two-thirds of new U.S. models be electric by 2032. Half of heavy-duty vehicles sold would need to be “zero emission.”

EPA’s rule would establish tailpipe emission standards for the 2027 through 2032 model years of light- and medium-duty vehicles, such as passenger cars, trucks and SUVs.

EPA also proposed a separate emissions rule for the 2027 through 2032



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed stricter vehicle emission limits that would mandate up to two-thirds of new U.S. models be electric by 2032. Half of heavy-duty vehicles sold would need to be “zero emission.”

model years of heavy-duty “vocational” vehicles, like garbage trucks and school

buses, as well as tractor-trailer trucks used for hauling freight.

That rule would require up to 50% of heavy-duty vocational vehicles and

up to 25% of long-haul tractor-trailer trucks be “zero-emission” by 2032.

Taken together, the proposed regulations represent the strictest limits ever proposed by EPA.

They also serve as a mechanism to fulfill President Joe Biden’s promise to cut in half U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and are backed by tax credits contained in the Inflation Reduction Act.

EPA Administrator Michael Regan in a statement called the proposed rules the “most ambitious pollution standards ever.”

And asked later at a news conference if the rules would effectively jeopardize the future of internal-combustion engine manufacturing, Regan said they instead “create a conversation” around alternative fuel technologies and give the auto industry “options to choose from.”

“We’re not prescribing mandates, and we’re not driving any particular technology out of business, so to speak,” Regan said.

That perspective largely contrasts with liquid fuel advocates, who said the proposed rules ignore advancements made in lowering the carbon emissions of renewable fuels, like biodiesel or gasoline blended with ethanol.

“As this administration’s own research shows, high-octane, low-carbon renewable fuels like ethanol can immediately deliver dramatic improvements in fuel efficiency and carbon performance when paired with the right engine technologies,” Renewable Fuels Association President and CEO Geoff Cooper said in a statement.

“But today’s EPA proposal unfortunately ignores

the ethanol opportunity and instead declares EVs as the winner, despite mounting evidence that a headlong rush into electrification could lead to a host of unintended environmental and economic consequences,” Cooper said.

EPA is also facing doubts that its proposals are over-projecting the number of sales of electric vehicles and zero-emission vehicles expected by 2032.

The agency in its proposal for light- and medium-duty vehicles said it estimates at least 60% of new passenger vehicles sold in America would be electric by 2030 and up to 67% by 2032. Sales of new electric medium-duty trucks, the agency projects, would reach 46% by 2032.

In 2022, sales of electric vehicles made up only 5.8% of total new vehicle sales in the U.S., although they did account for 7.2% of sales in the first quarter of 2023.

EPA further expects the proposed rules for light-duty vehicles to result in a 56% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions compared to model year 2026, and for medium-duty vehicles to result in a 44% reduction.

Those proposals, combined with the proposals for heavy-duty vehicles, would together avoid the release of 10 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions through 2055 and reduce U.S. usage of oil imports by 20 billion barrels, according to the agency.

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)

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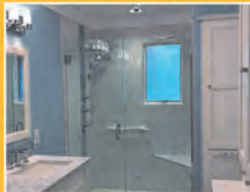
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2023 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

(Event times and dates are subject to change)

For more information, call Lee County Fair Association (815) 857-2603. www.leeconomy4hcenter.com

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

3-8 p.m. Livestock may enter fairgrounds
 4-9 p.m. Open Show Project check in-Commercial Building
 5-9 p.m. Rabbit Department Check-in - Rabbit Barn
 6-7 p.m. Horse Department Check-in - Fair Office
 7-8 p.m. Vet available to stamp health papers - Fair Office
 10 p.m. All rabbits need to be in place - Rabbit Barn

THURSDAY, JULY 27

8-11 a.m. Non-livestock project check in
 9-11 a.m. Swine Weigh-In
 11 a.m. All Livestock must be in place
 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Vet available to stamp health papers - Fair Office
 12-7 p.m. Selfie Scavenger Hunt - visit Fair Office between 5 & 7 p.m. to claim prize
 Noon Gate opens to public; Jr. Show Crops Judging - Commercial Building; 4-H Healthy Living & Nutrition Judging - Commercial Building; Rabbit Judging - Rabbit Barn
 12:30 p.m. 4-H Crops Judging - Commercial Building; 4-H Floriculture / Horticulture Judging - Commercial Building
 2 p.m. Goat Judging - Show Barn
 2:30 p.m. Cat Judging - Auditorium
 4 & 4:30 p.m. Learn to Dance w/ Starlight Dance Studio - Entertainment Tent
 4 p.m. Pony Rides & Petting Zoo & Midway Open - Midway
 4:30 p.m. Bingo - Vendor Tent
 5 p.m. Watermelons w/Wyffels Hybrids - Patio
 5:30 p.m. Starlight Dance Studio - Entertainment Tent
 6 p.m. Garden Tractor/Tractor/Truck Pull - Track
 7 p.m. Big Wheel Races - Show Barn

FRIDAY, JULY 28

7 a.m. Gate Opens to Public
 9 a.m. Swine Judging - Show Barn; 4-H Creative Arts: Visual Arts Judging - Commercial Building; 4-H Creative Arts: Photography & Communication Judging - Auditorium; Jr. Show Woodworking Judging - Commercial Building
 10 a.m. 4-H Creative STEM (Clothing & Interior Design) Judging - Auditorium; 4-H Animal Science Judging - Auditorium
 11 a.m. Kids' Korner - Entertainment Tent
 1 p.m. Petty Zoo and Midway open
 1 p.m. Poultry Judging - Poultry Barn
 2 p.m. Dairy Judging - Show Barn
 2 p.m. Kids' Korner - Entertainment Tent
 4 p.m. Pony Rides Open - Midway; Magic by Cory Show - Auditorium
 4-7 p.m. Pie Sale - Auditorium
 4-8 p.m. Whoop Your Axe Throwing - Midway
 5-7 p.m. Pork Chop Dinner by Lee Co. Pork Producers - Patio
 5 p.m. Awards Ceremony and Ambassador Announcement - Auditorium
 5 p.m. Farm Scene Contest Set Up - Commercial Building
 6 p.m. Quality Meats & Baked Goods Auction - Auditorium
 6:30 p.m. Lee Co. Fair & Illi State Pullers Tractor/Truck Pull - Track
 8 p.m. Pin Dodge Ball - Show Barn

SATURDAY, JULY 29

7 a.m. Gate opens to public
 8 a.m. Horse Performance & Halter Judging - Arena; Jr. Show Mechanical Sciences Judging - Auditorium
 9 a.m. Sheep Judging - Show Barn; Jr. Show Visual Arts Judging - Commercial Building; 4-H Environmental Sciences Judging - Commercial Building; 4-H Global Civic Engagement, Career, & Leadership Judging - Auditorium; 4-H STEM: Mechanical Sciences Judging - Commercial Building; 4-H

10 a.m. Woodworking Judging - Commercial Building
 10 a.m. Beef Show - Show Barn
 10 a.m. Farm Scene Contest Open - Commercial Building; Cloverbud Judging - Auditorium
 11 a.m. Kids' Korner - Entertainment Tent
 12 - 8 p.m. Axe Throwing - Midway
 1 p.m. Petting Zoo & Midway Opens - Midway
 2 p.m. Kids' Korner - Entertainment Tent (mud pies)
 4 p.m. Pony Rides Open - Midway
 4 p.m. Cincinnati Circus Show - Midway
 5 p.m. Awards Ceremony & Cloverbud Graduation - Auditorium
 5-7 p.m. Steak Sandwiches by Lee County Farm Bureau Young Leaders - Patio
 6 p.m. Master Showmanship Contest - Show Barn
 7 p.m. Rodeo with T&A Bucking Bulls - Track

SUNDAY, JULY 30

7 a.m. Gate opens
 8 a.m. Horse Novelty Classes - Arena; Shooting Sports w/ Rock River Chapter of NWT
 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Marketplace Vendor Fair
 10:30 a.m. Pedal Pull Registration Begins - Show Barn
 11 a.m. Petting Zoo, Pony Rides and Midway open - Midway; Pedal Pull - Show Barn
 12 p.m. Release Time (open show) - Commercial Building
 1 p.m. Cincinnati Circus Thrill Show - Grandstand
 2 p.m. Release Time (Farm Scene) - Commercial Building
 3 p.m. Release Time (non-livestock)
 4 p.m. Release Time (livestock & small animals)

Barrel Train - Running Daily - Check the Train Station for time!

County Fair Speedway

Join us for the races:

Thursday: 3 & 5 p.m.

Friday: 12, 2, 4 & 6 p.m.

Saturday: 12, 2, 4, & 6 p.m.

Sunday: 12 & 2 p.m.

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ISA Field Day set July 12 in Rochelle

BLOOMINGTON—The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) Agronomy Team is coming to a field near you to present “ISA Field Days,” designed to deliver you the latest insights in agronomy to help you drive profit and sustainability. The ISA Agronomy Team will be joined by an expert lineup, covering the threats and opportunities Illinois farmers are facing this growing season including crop management, insect issues, nutrient management, weed control and more.

• Wednesday, July 12 – ISA Field Talk: FMC – Rochelle: Sponsored by FMC, attendees will learn critical information related to herbicide development and the screening process, weed management, as well as pesticide policy updates. Complimentary lunch will be provided.

To register, visit ILSoyAdvisor.com and click on the individual Field Day Events you wish to attend. The first

50 people to register will receive a FREE ISA bag chair. CCA credits will be available for guests who attend any of the ISA Field Day events.

(The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff and membership programs represent more than 43,000 soybean farmers in Illinois. The checkoff funds market development, soybean production and government relations efforts, while the membership program, Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) and the Illinois Soybean Growers PAC actively advocates for positive and impactful legislation for farmers at local, state and national levels. ISA upholds the interests of Illinois soybean farmers through promotion, advocacy, research and education with the vision of becoming a trusted partner of Illinois soybean farmers to ensure their profitability now and for future generations.)

Japan to increase access to U.S. ethanol

By TIMOTHY EGGERT
FarmWeek

A rule proposed by the Japanese government could open the gate for more imports of American ethanol, according to U.S. officials.

Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry on March 30 released proposed language related to its Act on Sophisticated Methods of Energy Supply Structures that calls for improving the carbon-intensity score of corn ethanol produced in the U.S.

If approved, the rule would remain in place through 2028 and largely allow the U.S. ethanol industry to fully access the Japanese bioethanol market, which previously limited American access to 66% in 2021.

“We applaud Japan for publishing its new biofuels policy, which will help promote a cleaner, more sustainable energy future,” USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a March 31 statement.

“This new policy is also a big win for American farmers and our rural economy, as it will expand U.S. biofuel producers' access to the Japanese market,” Vilsack said.

According to figures provided by the Office of the United States Trade Representative, the changes could increase annual exports of U.S. ethanol to Japan by more than 80 million gallons, valued at an additional \$150 to \$200 million.

Japan's target volume for bioethanol use is set at 217 million gallons per year, with an ethanol blend level of 1.9% in the form of ethyl tert-butyl ether (ETBE).

The U.S. Grains Council estimates U.S. ethanol totaled about 140 million gallons of ETBE during the 2021-22 marketing year.

It released a joint statement along with the Renewable Fuels Association and Growth Energy celebrating the policy change and committing to “engage” with Japan on expanding its use of on-road ethanol and sustainable aviation fuel.

“Countries around the world are recognizing that biofuels like ethanol are a simple, inexpensive and effective solution they can deploy today to help them lower their carbon emissions and meet their climate goals,” the groups said.

USTR Ambassador Katherine Tai in a statement framed the proposed rule as the “latest sign of a strengthened partnership between our two countries,” with her office adding it came about through “extensive engagement” by the Biden administration.

The rule also comes after U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Hoffman Estates, in February led a delegation to Japan and met with auto manufactures, and other business and government leaders to advocate for U.S. biofuels.

Duckworth in a statement to FarmWeek said she was “pleased with Japan's decision to expand access for all U.S. biofuels in the Japanese market” following those conversations.

“This change will help promote cleaner and more sustainable energy while helping support our farmers and growing the U.S. — and Illinois' — economy,” Duckworth said.

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)



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Implementing California's Prop 12 comes with challenges, expenses for Illinois hog farmers

By **TIMOTHY EGGERT**
FarmWeek

Illinois pork farmers say a litany of uncertainties remain about how California's Proposition 12 will be implemented or enforced after the U.S. Supreme Court found the law constitutional.

Led by Justice Neil Gorsuch, the court recently upheld the state's animal welfare law, ruling 5-4 that "while the Constitution addresses many weighty issues, the type of pork chops California merchants may sell is not on that list."

But according to Illinois livestock producers, preserving the law could spell major costs for farmers, leading to higher pork prices for consumers, and might cause more negative health outcomes for hogs raised under its standards.

"There's some big macro, even global, consequences to this, and then there's consequences that impact day-to-day pork production and pig farmers like myself," said Illinois Farm Bureau Vice President Brian Duncan, who raises hogs in Ogle County. "We're just not sure what happens now."

Adopted by 63% of California voters as a 2018 ballot initiative and set to take effect July 1, Prop 12 prohibits sales in the state of pork, veal and eggs from livestock whose confinement do not meet certain minimum space rules.

Those rules mandate hog spaces be large enough for an animal to turn around, lie down, stand up and extend its limbs. They specifically set sow confinement dimensions at 24 square feet, which is 7 square feet larger than the industry standard.

The National Pork Producers Council and American Farm Bureau Federation contend the requirements

violate the Commerce Clause because California represents less than one-sixth of domestic demand and sources most of its pork from other state producers.

The organizations also argued the law would compel farmers to adopt group housing and open pen gestation, which in turn would result in worse health outcomes for sows.

"There's a higher cull rate due to injury," said Duncan, who, with certified veterinarians, manages a sow farm that uses pen gestation.

"There's more abrasions, there's more fighting, there's more biting," Duncan said of open pen gestation systems. "All the things you would expect when you have animals that are aggressive let loose with each other."

To meet the law's space requirements, hog farmers will likely need to cull as many as 30% of their sows, according to Chad Leman, president of the Illinois Pork Producers Association. He owns Leman Farms Inc. in Woodford County.

"This alone will come at a significant cost," Leman told FarmWeek, adding he has no immediate plans to change any of his hog barns or production systems until there's more direction within the industry.

The law's mandates are estimated to increase production costs at the farm level by 9.2%, with producers expected to spend between \$290 million and \$348 million to update sow housing to comply with the law, according to NPPC and AFBF.

"Currently with building and construction costs and the dynamic of our farm, it'd be very cost prohibitive and hard to justify making those



To meet the law's space requirements, hog farmers will likely need to cull as many as 30% of their sows.

According to Illinois livestock producers, preserving the law could spell major costs for farmers, leading to higher pork prices for consumers, and might cause more negative health outcomes for hogs raised under its standards.

changes for an unpromised premium," said Thomas Titus, a former IPPA president who manages Tri Pork Inc., a farrow-to-finish farm in Logan County.

There are also questions around how California regulators will enforce the rules in other states. Do packers certify the pork product came from an animal housed according to the law? Will there be third-party audits and inspections?

While farmers might be tasked with tracking Prop 12-compliant hogs on their

farms, Titus said packers might also have to keep pigs segregated when they come in, separated in freezers and coolers and affixed with specific labels.

"(The law) definitely adds not just another layer of compliance challenges for the producer, but also for the processor, too," Titus said. "Labor around that is also a concern."

And there's uncertainty whether the market will even offer more for pork raised in the environment the law mandates.

Duncan, Leman and Titus said the farmers who implement changes to comply should be compensated more for their meat products, such as a per-head premium.

"We have no problem if there's some sort of voluntary program where producers who choose to raise pigs this way would be paid a premium for their products and could make a business decision to try to capture that market," Leman said. "What we've got a real problem with is this involuntary regulation being forced on all of us who raise pigs."

Illinois hog farmers are further concerned the ruling on the law will empower "states with high people populations and low pig populations" to craft similar regulations, Leman added.

Duncan agreed, forecasting consequences that a patchwork of U.S. laws could have on international trade.

"What good is an agreement that I may negotiate ... if I can't assure (a trade partner) the access to my markets is going to be uniform across the country?" Duncan said. "It raises all sorts of questions about what trade agreements look like going forward if a state can slap extra burdens on an importer."

(FarmWeek's Daniel Grant and RFD Radio contributed to this story.)

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)

USDA: Large crop estimates to pressure prices

By **DANIEL GRANT**
FarmWeek

USDA projects some record-large crops in the U.S. and South America this year and into 2024.

If realized, ending stocks are expected to rise while crop prices could plummet in the coming year based on the Ag Department's May world ag supply and demand estimates.

USDA projects this year's corn crop, which U.S. farmers are still planting, could produce a record 15.3 billion bushels (up 10% from last year) with an average yield of 181.5 bushels per acre (up 8.2 bushels from last year).

Meanwhile, U.S. soybean production was pegged at 4.51 billion bushels this season, up 5% from last year.

The hefty crop production estimates pushed 2023-24 ending stocks estimates to 2.2 billion bushels for corn (up 805 million bushels from 2022-23) and 335 million bushels of beans, up 120 million bushels from the revised 2022-23 forecast. Ending stocks of wheat, though, could slip 11% to the lowest level in 16 years.

"We got the first look at the 2023-24 balance sheets and they were bearish for corn and soybeans," Joe Camp, market analyst with CommStock Investments, told the RFD Radio Network. "Ending stocks were up a bit more than anticipated."

USDA's season-average price estimates reflected the bearishness of the big crops with 2023-24 projections at \$4.80 per bushel for corn (down \$1.80 from 2022/23), \$12.10 for beans (down \$2.10) and \$8 for wheat, down 85 cents from last year's record.

This season's crop production estimates,

of course, are based on weather-adjusted trends assuming normal planting progress and summer weather.

"We know we're going to go back to trading weather here pretty quickly," Camp said as most crop markets were in the red following the May 12 release of the latest estimates. "That will be the big determinant of what the next crop looks like."

Elsewhere, USDA pegged 2022-23 production in Brazil at a record 130 million metric tons (mmt) of corn, up 5 mmt from last month, and 155 mmt of beans, up 1 mmt.

Soy production in Brazil for 2023-24 could soar to a record 163 mmt, according to USDA. Planting for that crop will begin in October.

"We didn't see any major changes on the global balance sheet," Camp said. "They're still sticking with big numbers in Brazil and a damaged crop out of Argentina."

As for demand, USDA projects total corn use could increase 5% in 2023-24, with food, seed and industrial use up 55 million bushels, exports projected to rise by 325 million bushels to 2.1 billion and corn used for ethanol to edge 1% higher.

Meanwhile, demand for soybean oil as a biofuel feedstock was projected to accelerate by 900 million pounds to 12.5 billion pounds in 2023/24. But, U.S. soy exports could slip by 40 million bushels to 1.98 billion in the next year due in large part to competition from South America.

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Gary Schnitkey, Ph.D., left, University of Illinois, receives the Service to Agriculture award from Russell Hiatt, AFM, ARA., president of the Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers, at the 2023 Illinois Land Values Conference held recently in Bloomington. (Photo contributed)

U of I professor cited with service to ag award

BLOOMINGTON—The Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers have presented the 2023 Service to Agriculture award to Gery Schnitkey, Ph.D., University of Illinois. The presentation was made during the 2023 Illinois Land Values conference, which is sponsored by the organization and was held in Bloomington.

In making the presentation, ISPFMRA President

Russell Hiatt, AFM, ARA, cited Schnitkey's continuing role communicating with agricultural producer and industry personnel but also with the general public.

Schnitkey is a professor and farm management specialist in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Economics at the University's Champaign/Urbana campus. His activities focus on farm management and risk management.

Farm management work is focused on examination of issues impacting the profitability of grain farms including corn/soybean rotations, machinery economics, and factors separating profitable from unprofitable farms.

Risk management activities focus on crop insurance evaluations.

In addition to his teaching and authoring responsibilities, he conducts over 40 meetings with farmers annually on risk-related projects.

He grew up on a grain and hog farm in northwest Ohio and received his bachelor's degree from the Ohio State University and his Masters and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. He was on the faculty at Ohio State from 1987 through 1998. He has been employed at the University of Illinois since 1998.

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