

THE FARMER'S REPORT

The Mendota Reporter

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The Amboy News
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Wednesday, May 25, 2022



Weather has major impact on planting season

Rain, sun, cold, heat are contributing factors

By **BRANDON LACHANCE**
Staff writer

Every year brings new challenges to farmers.

Some planting seasons are easy, and the weather cooperates to the plan they brainstorm, proofread, and manufacture during the winter.

Then there are springs like the one the corn and soybean farmers in La Salle and Lee counties are experiencing in 2022.

"I can't speak for the entire state of Illinois, but I can speak for La Salle County," said Dave Issermann, a full-time farmer who has been involved with

the La Salle County Farm Bureau for eight years and the president of the La Salle County board for five years. "We are definitely behind.

We're probably behind 3-4 weeks more than we'd like to be. This stretch of nice weather that we're having now is finally letting people get back into the fields.

"But then everything has

to happen at once, which is difficult. There is usually a progression where you have some time to get your fertilizer applied, you plant some of the dryer fields, and then move on to the wetter fields.

"The service companies that do the fertilization and put the chemicals on are overwhelmed because everyone wants them at their farm right now and there just isn't enough capacity to do it."

April and the first week of May were extremely wet as it seemed there was never going to be a dry day in northern Illinois.

Then immediately, the week of May 9 had blistering temperatures and thick humidity.

Lee County Farm Bureau manager Danelle Burrs said both of the weather extremities were helpful but unaccommodating at the same time.

"It's been a wet spring until it was scorching hot.



A farmer kicks up a cloud of dust while working a field in preparation for spring planting, which is running about three to four weeks behind from a normal year. (Reporter photo by Brandon LaChance)

The wet spring has put planting behind, but at the same token, was welcomed by area farmers because our winter was dry," said Burrs, who has been with the Lee County Farm Bureau for 14 years. "The farmers were excited to see moisture returning to the ground to help this year's crops.

"But it did put planting further behind than anyone

would have liked."

Burrs also mentioned this is about the time farmers may change their plans if they can't get into their fields as much as they want or if weather patterns continue to change.

"The crops that we grow in our area are predominantly corn and soybeans. Those crops are planted in the spring, grow and mature

all summer, and then they're harvested in the fall (late September into October)," Burrs said. "This time of the year, farmers are always calculating when we have a wet spring like we did this year, whether or not the plan they made prior to spring is going to allow that crop to reach maturity by harvest or if they need to switch to a different variety of seed that would have a shorter growing season.

"When I say a shorter growing season, I'm not talking about months shorter, I'm saying that sometimes they say certain varieties need a few weeks longer than others. Those are things farmers take into account when it has been a wet spring."

Issermann compared this year's planting season

to the start of the Boston or Chicago marathons.

The start of the race is always mass chaos as runners are trying to break away from the pack or get jumbled together. The farmer added planting has been the same way as all farmers are trying to race to their fields and get everything planted as fast as they can while the weather is allowing them.

As of May 11, Issermann said only 5% of fields were planted in La Salle County. On May 13 planted farms had risen to 10-15 percent and by the next week he predicted the county would be around 25-30 percent.

"I haven't seen a field up yet and we're going on three weeks where anything could be up, which is not good," said Issermann, who added corn is usually planted around April 15 and is done by May, but this year the farmers are just starting the planting in the middle of May. "We're kind of worried

about the few fields that did get planted just because the weather did not turn out. But the warmer temperatures are helping and if we can get away from the inch or inch and a half rains – a quarter or half inch rain and a farmer can get back in the fields in 24 hours – hopefully, this pattern has changed.

"The cold temperatures were a significant factor. Even if the fields had dried out, we would have planted but things would have been delayed. With the wet and the cold, it has been the worst possible situation we could have."

Although the weather hasn't cooperated, Burrs is confident in area farmers.

Every year they have their challenges.

See Weather, Page 3



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Weather

Continued from Page 2

And every spring, the farmers find ways to get their crops planted.

"Farmers are very adaptive people by nature because they have to be. Mother Nature throws all kinds of circumstances at them," Burrs said. "When there is wet weather, they're patiently waiting for the ground to be in proper conditions so they can get into the field.

"The heat that we're having is a good thing for the crops from the standpoint that after all of this wet weather there is a chance for the farmers to work. The wind and the warmth are drying the ground. They have been out there planting this week (week of May 16). If you've been out on the roads, you've seen tractors on the fields. They're taking advantage of the dry, warm weather.

"Farmers are very in-tune to the weather because their livelihood depends on it."

Burrs and Issermann reiterated the importance of road/driving safety as farmers are moving large farm equipment from field to field.

They ask drivers to please be patient, use caution, and understand this is planting season and you will arrive to your destination safely if you're following the proper rules to the road.

If there is a farmer in the middle of the road, it's because there is a reason and they are using safety protocol. As soon as the farmer can move to the side of the road for drivers to pass, they will for you to pass.

Five trends impacting the future of the global soy market

BLOOMINGTON – Last year, U.S. soybean farmers grew nearly one-third of the soybeans in the global market. To ensure U.S. Soy retains access to a quickly changing, consumer-driven market, five state soybean checkoff groups jointly funded an effort designed to help soybean farmers make smart and informed decisions that will increase opportunities for future success. The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) joined soybean checkoffs from the states of Iowa, Missouri, Indiana and Ohio to conduct the Future State of Soy exercise that identified the most impactful trends for soy in the coming years.

"We uncovered five major trends that will impact the global soy market and U.S. soybean farmers in particular," said Steve Pitstick, ISA Chairman. "These trends help uncover how the global demand for soybeans will change over the course of the next several decades, giving farmers valuable insight now to make decisions that will better position them for the future."

The five trends identified in the Future State of Soy exercise include:

- A rising focus on high-quality soybean oil and meal
- Changes in fuel demand, including alternative fuels, and emerging fuel uses
- The rising need for protein given a growing global population – both in animal and plant form
- The increasing global competition for soy and how infrastructure can provide an impactful advantage
- Emerging and diversified revenue streams that will offer farmers more opportunities

"We know that every farmer and every farm is unique," said Pitstick. "Identifying these trends enables farmers to determine if their farm is set up to take advantage of one over another, or if it can support a multitude of changes to take advantage of several trends. The ultimate purpose for this exercise is to help farmers navigate changes now so they are set up for the future of this industry. Proactively addressing how the market is shifting means we won't be left scrambling to meet market demands later, which will keep U.S. Soy in high demand around the world."

The soybean checkoff is already investing in several programs at both the national and state levels to find new markets, new uses and new characteristics of soybeans that will align with these five trends. The soybean checkoff will also use these trends as a litmus test when determining if future investments will result in strong returns for U.S. soybean farmers.

At ISA, the organization is committed to investing in programs that help expand the export footprint of Illinois soybean growers to support robust demand. Additionally, ISA supports initiatives that support the global utilization of soy through human consumption and is working to better understand the emerging requirements of the food industry and exploring how soy can connect with food companies to deliver high quality protein that enables them to deliver on food innovation. ISA also prioritizes growing demand for soy-based fuels such as biodiesel and encourages farmers to use it on their own operations to boost their bottom line. As the soybean

checkoff continues to position U.S. Soy for the future, this work will help influence how the world perceives the value of domestic soy and soy products.

For more information about the Future State of Soy exercise and to see how ISA is investing in projects to support these trends, visit FutureStateOfSoy.org or ilsoy.org

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff and membership programs represent more than 43,000 soybean farmers in Illinois. The checkoff funds market development and utilization efforts while the membership program supports the government relations interests of Illinois soybean farmers at the local, state,

and national level, through the Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG). ISA upholds the interests of Illinois soybean producers through promotion, advocacy, and education with the vision of becoming a market leader in sustainable soybean production and profitability. For more information, visit the website www.ilsoy.org and ilsoygrowers.com.

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Where you come first



One solution to food price spikes - reduce waste

By DANIEL GRANT
FarmWeek

Consumers should think twice before throwing out those last few pieces of bread, lightly bruised fruit or milk barely beyond its sell-by date.

Food waste and loss is a key contributor to sub-optimal diets, environmental issues and inflationary pressure currently gripping most countries in the world — some more severe than others.

USDA recently forecast grocery store prices could increase another 3% to 4% this year while eating out at restaurants could take another 5.5% to 6.5% bite out of Americans' food budgets. This after the consumer price index (CPI) jumped 8.5% from March 2021 to 2022.

"Food prices are going up around the world," said

Rob Vos, director of markets, trade and institutions division for the International Food Policy Research Institute. "It could cause millions of poor people to fall into hunger or food shortages."

Vos and other food industry experts discussed the growing concern of food price inflation, malnutrition and widespread food waste and loss during an online panel discussion hosted by the Farm Journal Foundation.

Recent issues accelerating food price inflation include the war in Ukraine, which could reduce global supplies of some commodities, and the outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in the U.S. Wholesale wheat prices are projected to rise 12% to 15% while USDA predicts poultry prices could climb 6% to 7% this year.

But, a long-term issue contributing to food shortages in some areas remains waste. Patrick Webb, professor of food policy at Tufts University, reported about 14% of all food is lost and another 6% is wasted globally each year. Other estimates suggest up to a third of all food is lost and wasted annually.

"Food waste and loss represents a significant contributor to planetary challenges of nutrition (and environmental concerns)," Webb said.

"It's really, really important to focus on this low-hanging fruit. It (the issue of food waste) still isn't receiving the traction it deserves," he noted. "The goal is a food system that nourishes people and the planet."

Some of the reasons for food waste differ depend-

ing on the country. More food losses generally occur due to inadequate storage and transportation issues in developing countries while some waste in high-income countries occurs due to discarding beyond sell-by dates and excess purchases. But, regardless of the cause, the rate of overall food waste is eerily similar in all countries across the world.

"I was surrounded by hunger (growing up in Alabama). It's always so shocking for people to hear in America," said Olivia Fuller, Alabama Cooperative Extension agent. "It's important we realize this is a domestic situation. It's not just something happening in developing countries."

On the bright side, there's many steps people can take to reduce food waste, even



As costs continue to rise, farm and food businesses are looking for ways to bring healthy, fresh food to consumers at affordable costs. Improving refrigeration efficiencies and access to infrastructure and markets are among the opportunities to reduce food waste in the U.S. (Illinois Farm Bureau file photo)

if it doesn't diminish food price inflation in the near-term.

Webb suggested improving access to infrastructure and markets, upgrading storage technologies and handling to reduce food damage and spoilage, improve packaging to keep food fresher, make cosmetic standards more amenable to selling "imperfect" food with irregular shape or blemishes and improve access to storage facilities.

Tim Fox, fellow and chair of The Climate Change Adaptation Working Group, Institution of Mechanical Engineers, reported about 70% of food in U.S. supermarkets was transported there via a climate-controlled cold chain process.

There are opportunities to improve refrigeration efficiencies in the U.S. and add those opportunities

elsewhere. He noted up to 40% of fruits and vegetables are lost due to spoilage in India, where there's a deficit of about 53,000 refrigerated trucks to move products.

"We need a better, integrated food supply chain," Fox said.

Webb agreed as he noted, "the quality of food matters as much as the quantity. If it's not good, it's not contributing to good nutrition."

On the farm, Fuller believes it's important to take advantage of research and resources so farmers can grow the most food they can with the least amount of resources.

(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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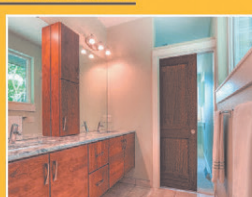
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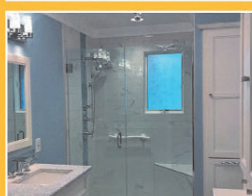
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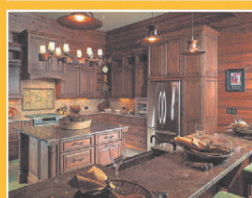
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EU, UK are targets for more U.S. ag trade

By **TIMOTHY EGGERT**
FarmWeek

Creating and marketing a high-value, top-quality good will be vital for Illinois farmers to increase the number of their products in the hands — and mouths — of European consumers.

That was a major takeaway from meetings between a 12-member Illinois Farm Bureau delegation and international agriculture officials, industry groups and European farmers during a recent Market Study Tour.

In France and its primary city, Paris, food and the framework around eating are ritualistic and idolized.

Parisians, for instance, place a high emphasis on the freshness and quality of their food, as well as the means — strictly organic or blocks away in an urban garden — through which it was grown. They're also willing to pay more for it.

Those attitudes were on display in various restaurants and open-air, street-level food markets across the city, where producers sell their products directly to consumers.

They were also present at the Paris International Agricultural Show, where a slurry of food and drink vendors offered endless samples of meats, cheeses, breads and wines to patrons.

"They're direct marketing to consumers, to the end users," said Molly Rosentreter, Macoupin County Farm Bureau director. "They have specialized products ... and the marketing they use here really is a notch above what we use at home."

The value of those products is protected under an EU food quality policy,



Martha King, vice president of programs and projects with Farm Foundation, samples produce sold at marché d'Aligre, a street-level, fresh food market in Paris. (Photo by Timothy Eggert of FarmWeek)

called geographic indicators (GI), which establish intellectual property rights for specific products, whose qualities, ingredients or production methods are linked to a specific region.

By EU law, GI must be labeled on a packaged agricultural product or displayed when it is sold at a street market or grocery. There are more than 5,000 EU and non-EU GIs protected in member states.

EU law also dictates that GIs be recognized in trade agreements with other countries, like the United States.

A 2021 study from the European Commission found that although the GIs serve as an important marketing tool for the global ag market, there are serious issues with the scheme.

"Main limitations are the low consumer awareness and understanding of the schemes in some member

states, the complex and long registration procedures and certain weaknesses in controls at the downstream stages of the value chain," the report said.

Future trade with the EUGIs and other trade schemes could dictate the requirements of a future agricultural trade deal between the U.S. and the EU, said Mark Gebhards, IFB executive director of governmental affairs and commodities.

There is currently no dedicated free trade agreement between the two partners, despite the U.S. exporting about \$12 billion in ag products to the EU in 2020 and importing \$30.6 billion from the EU the same year.

Negotiations over the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) launched in 2013 were dead by 2016 and formally closed in 2019.

Many groups the IFB delegation met with at the Paris International Agricultural Show voiced support for renewed talks around the TTIP, or a similar deal.

"We do not spend enough time talking between European and American growers," said Franck

Laborde, secretary general of the General Association of Corn Producers. "Maybe now is the time to think twice about that and start stronger relationships between the U.S. and the EU."

Since the United Kingdom left the EU in 2020, agricultural trade policy has largely been in limbo, with government officials "struggling to re-align and rewrite EU policies into a domestic context," Gebhards said.

Nonetheless, the delegation had some "great discussions" with U.S. Embassy officials in London, Gebhards said, adding a trade agreement between the U.S. and the UK is "back front and center."

Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced USDA will sponsor an international trade mission to the UK, which in 2020 imported \$2.7 billion in U.S. ag products. The U.S. in 2020 imported about \$1.1 billion in UK ag products.

Vilsack's announcement, and the IFB Market Study Tour, comes as the UK has amassed a collec-

tion of trade deals since leaving the EU. In the past 18 months it has signed more than 70 different trade agreements with other countries.

The UK government also entered into formal negotiations in 2021 to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which the U.S. left under the Trump administration.

IFB Vice President Brian Duncan said he's confident the meetings "forged close bonds" with officials and will hopefully lead to more trade opportunities for members.

"The U.S. is a producing nation with the ability to export," Duncan said. "And Illinois Farm Bureau supports any policy that boosts trade and market opportunities in other countries."

(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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Illinois corn and soybean checkoffs partner on water testing initiative

BLOOMINGTON—The IL Corn Growers Association and Illinois Soybean Association are teaming up to offer a new water testing initiative challenge for Illinois FFA chapters to learn about nutrient loss and water quality issues facing agriculture. Through this effort, both corn and soybean checkoff programs seek to help Illinois FFA students understand the importance of water quality and sustainable agronomic practices at a field level.

Illinois FFA chapters who participate will be sent all the necessary supplies

to complete this challenge, including resources to interpret their data collection, and to understand what best management practices would be for those tested across moving forward.

Each chapter must sample water from a minimum of two agricultural sources and a minimum of five different locations with at least three different cropping practices. Chapters need to create a summary report including timing of sampling, field characteristics, and any recent precipitation events. The report should include initial hypothesis,

and conclusions drawn after sampling events. It should also include at least one improvement suggestion for one of the fields sampled including best management practices and why those practices should be considered.

Sampling can be conducted all in the spring, all in the fall, or a combination of both. First place prize is \$2,500, second and third place is \$1,250, and fourth through 10th place earns \$1,000 for their chapters.

“This challenge provides both a competitive and educational opportunity

for FFA chapters to learn about water quality, sustainability, and how they can affect crops and soil health,” says ISA Utilization Committee Chairman, Jim Martin. “Partnering with FFA on this initiative allows us to foster an understanding of sustainable production practices in the next generation of farmers and ag professionals.”

“We’re excited to be offering this new program in 2022 and to be partnering with our friends at IL Soybean Association. There’s nothing more fulfilling than helping the youth of



The IL Corn Growers Association and Illinois Soybean Association are teaming up to offer a new water testing initiative challenge for Illinois FFA chapters to learn about nutrient loss and water quality issues facing agriculture.



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FFA discover their talents through hands-on experiences,” says Mark Wilson, Illinois Corn Marketing Board Chair. “As stewards of the land, farmers take conservation seriously so we’re glad the students can explore this firsthand.”

The water testing initiative will be open through Nov. 18, 2022, for Illinois FFA chapters. To participate, contact Megan Dwyer, IL Corn Nutrient Loss Reduction Manager at mdwyer@ilcorn.org.

About the Illinois Corn Growers Association

Illinois Corn Growers Association is a state-based organization that represents the interests of corn farmers in Illinois, maintaining a high profile on issues in Washington, DC, and Springfield. Through grassroots advocacy, ICGA creates a future for Illinois farmers in which they can operate freely, responsibly, and successfully. In order to fulfill this mission, the organization conducts governmental affairs activities

at all levels, market development projects, and educational and member service programs. For further information regarding their work and involvement, visit their website www.ilcorn.org.

About the Illinois Soybean Association

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Soaring fertilizer prices this year have added value to manure.

Farmers with sources of manure have a big advantage this year

By Zeta Cross

The Center Square contributor

SPRINGFIELD – With fertilizer prices soaring, old fashioned manure is a bargain.

Coming off the third year in a row of high-yield harvests, farmers are looking to replenish their soil. Bumper crops have pulled nutrients out and farmers need to replace them. Austin Omer, Illinois Farm Bureau associate director of natural resource policy, said manure can jump-start soil microbial activity.

“Manure is a great source of nutrients – great for soil health,” Omer told The Center Square. “There are a lot of benefits when you apply manure – especially on acreage that previously didn’t have manure.”

Farmers with a local source of manure have lucked out this year. Chemical fertilizer, anhydrous ammonia, is selling for \$1,500 a ton. Diammonium phosphate (DAP) has just topped \$1,000 a ton. In comparison, manure is inexpensive.

It is a great resource for crop producers who have access to livestock, Omer said.

Only 10% of Illinois farmers typically use manure on their fields. The farmers who use it do so year after year, so prices

do not fluctuate.

This year, however, soaring fertilizer prices have added value to manure, Omer said.

“On a per-acre basis, manure can be worth anywhere from \$25 to \$250 per acre when prices are high like this,” he said.

Over the past two decades, the way farmers use manure has evolved. Many different technologies have been implemented in order to apply manure more efficiently.

Manure is injected into the soil to keep it in place until the crop needs it.

“That’s really what we want,” Omer said. “We want that manure to sit there and stay in that field until the crop is planted.”

The vast majority of livestock farmers see manure as an asset, he said. Most livestock producers in Illinois are using their manure and taking advantage of it. Manure is easier to store and apply than it was in the past.

“We’ve made a lot of advancements in storage capabilities throughout the state,” Omer said.

Better storage gives farmers a larger window to get the manure applied when they are working around weather events and delays.

Omer invites farmers to email him at aomer@ilfb.org.



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