

# THE FARMER'S REPORT

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Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2024



## Lawmakers propose 45Z extension, limiting to U.S. feedstocks

By TAMMIE SLOUP  
*FarmWeek*

A bipartisan group of lawmakers are sponsoring legislation to restrict the eligibility of the 45Z tax credit to renewable fuels derived only from domestically sourced feedstock and extending the credit for seven years.

The bicameral and bipartisan Farmer First Fuel Incentives Act is co-led by U.S. Sens. Roger Marshall, R-Kansas, and Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, with companion legislation introduced by U.S. Reps. Tracey Mann, R-Kansas, and Marcy Kaptur, D-Ohio.

Created by the Inflation Reduction Act, the Clean Fuel Production Credit (45Z) for low carbon fuels, including sustainable avia-

tion fuel (SAF), will be in effect from 2025 to 2027, which is not enough time, lawmakers said.

Extending the credit to 10 years would give the ethanol industry the time and financial incentive to build up the infrastructure needed for the U.S. to be less reliant on foreign fuel, open new markets for farmers and increase ethanol production across the Midwest, according to a news release.

"It's very tough in farm country with high interest rates and low commodity prices, which is exactly why we can't have a tax policy that will lower commodity prices even more," Marshall said. "While we support free trade and open markets, we do not believe foreign feedstocks should

be incentivized through the hard-earned dollars of U.S. taxpayers to the detriment of American farmers."

Illinois Farm Bureau President Brian Duncan submitted comments to USDA in July stressing the 45Z tax credit should benefit only producers manufacturing biofuels from feedstocks sourced from the U.S. The department received 260 comments.

"The use of low-carbon commodities provides new market opportunities for U.S. farmers. However, without the proper framework, farmers may face unnecessary barriers limiting access to these markets," Duncan wrote. "It is imperative that the program design and structure for low-carbon feedstocks is done correctly

the first time so there will be optimal participation from farmers across the country."

Illinois' two senators and four representatives, including Nikki Budzinski, D-Springfield; Darin LaHood, R-Dunlap; Eric Sorenson, D-Moline; and Robin Kelly, D-Matteson, previously signed onto bipartisan letters in support of limiting the credit to domestically produced renewable fuels derived from domestically produced feedstocks.

Failure to properly structure the feedstock sustainability criteria associated with 45Z credit will incentivize the use of foreign feedstocks over those from U.S. suppliers, contrary to the intent of Congress, the senators' July 30 letter to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen stated.

Commodity group leaders applauded the recently introduced legislation.

"Corn growers are making every effort to help the airline industry lower its greenhouse gas emissions through the use of corn ethanol," said Minnesota farmer and National Corn Growers Association President Harold Wolle. "We are deeply appreciative of these leaders for introducing legislation that establishes requirements for the tax credit that will level the playing field for America's corn growers."

American Soybean Association President Josh Gackle said farmers who grow the crops utilized in biofuels take pride in reducing greenhouse gas emissions while supporting the U.S. economy and ener-

gy independence.

"However, for continued growth of America's promising biofuels industry, U.S. farmers need the support of a final 45Z rule that prioritizes domestically sourced feedstock," said Gackle, a North Dakota soybean farmer.

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack has said restricting the credit to domestically produced feedstocks could spur retaliation against U.S. ag exports. The ag secretary has also said he is "confident" the clean fuels tax credit will be finalized by January.

*(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](http://FarmWeekNow.com).)*

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A bipartisan group of lawmakers are sponsoring legislation to restrict the eligibility of the 45Z tax credit to renewable fuels derived only from domestically sourced feedstock and extending the credit for seven years. (Photo by Catrina Rawson of FarmWeek)

## Setting 2025 farmland cash rent to be addressed at Farmland Owners Conference

OGLESBY – In recent years, average cash rents published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture have shown significant increases due to above-average farming returns from 2020 to 2022. With 2024 returns projected to be the lowest since 2000, landowners are concerned about setting cash rents for 2025. Cash rents always have a great degree of variability due to factors such as soil productivity, drainage, field size, land access, and the relationship between the landowner and tenant. Navigating this variability in a year with such low returns can be incredibly challenging.

To help landowners navigate these challenges the University of Illinois Extension is offering the 2024 Farmland Owners Conference. This one-day event, designed to empower current and future farmland owners, will be held on Monday, Nov. 25, from 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., at Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby.

“There is a lot that goes into owning farmland, even if you are not the one

working the land. Landowners face their own unique set of challenges and opportunities,” said Emily Hansen, Agriculture Educator and conference co-organizer. “This conference aims to provide landowners with proven, research-based information so they can make informed decisions about their land and its future.”

The 2024 Farmland Owners Conference agenda will cover:

- Negotiating cash rent
  - Understanding current land values and appraisals
  - Soil fertility – protecting your investment
  - Solar energy on your land
  - Maintaining profits while protecting the environment
  - Types of insurance you need for your farm
  - Navigating Farm Service Agency forms and requirements
  - Estate planning
  - Organic production and more
- The conference offers a valuable

opportunity for landowners to connect with industry professionals, peers, and potential partners. Attendees will walk away with the knowledge they need to best manage and maintain their land, work with their tenants/farmers, and plan for the future legacy of their land.

Registration fee of \$65 includes lunch and refreshments throughout the day.

Visit [go.illinois.edu/Landowner2024](http://go.illinois.edu/Landowner2024) to register today.

If you need an accommodation to participate, please contact Emily Hansen at [emhansen@illinois.edu](mailto:emhansen@illinois.edu) or 815-224-0896. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

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Extension offices are located in Princeton, Ottawa, Henry, and in Oglesby on the IVCC campus. The Mission of University of Illinois Extension is to provide practical education you can trust to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

## Crop marketing program planned Nov. 20 in Rock Falls

ROCK FALLS – The Lee, Carroll, Ogle and Whiteside County Farm Bureaus along with COUNTRY Financial will host a crop marketing outlook at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20 at the Days Inn in Rock Falls.

“Managing Tight Crop Profit Margins” is a two-hour seminar designed specifically for producers to help them manage risk associated with the current commodity markets and identify market conditions to capture profit margins through this year into next.

Dr. Steve Johnson, Iowa State University Extension Farm Management Specialist, will facilitate the program. He has served as the Farm & Ag Business Management Specialist in Central Iowa for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach since 1999.

He specializes in topics related to government farm programs, crop insurance, crop marketing, grain contracts, farmland leasing and other crop risk management strategies. In the past year, he has conducted more than 120 meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences across the Corn Belt with nearly 15,000 in attendance.

Johnson uses websites such as ISU Ag Decision Maker and Polk County Extension Farm Management along with various print and electronic media. Annually he reaches more than 200,000 producers, landowners and other agribusiness professionals.

During the program, producers will examine the following topics:

- Global Supply/Demand & Crop Price Outlook
- Utilizing Futures Price & Crop Insurance
- Implications for US Elections & Farm Bill
- Implementing a '24-'25 Marketing Plan
- Estimating '24 Crop Profit Margins
- Feature seven Strategies to Manage Tight Margins

This presentation will assist producers in designing and implementing a marketing plan that is specific to their own operation. It will present producers with various options they can effectively utilize to capture market profits, manage market risks in this volatile market, minimize cost increases and make informed decisions on input pricing, storage options and position their marketing plan for profit protection. Market, global and recent economic factors will be examined and producers will learn to identify where profit opportunities and pitfalls lie for their farm operations.

Pre-registration is required. To register for the program, call 815-732-2231 or email [cfb@ogle.comcastbiz.net](mailto:cfb@ogle.comcastbiz.net)

## Innovations shine at the 2024 Farm Progress Show

BOONE, IOWA — The 2024 Farm Progress Show in Boone, Iowa, was a great success, with thousands of domestic and international visitors traveling to the showgrounds to see the hundreds of exhibitors on site.

“We were excited to see such a fantastic turnout,” said Don Tourte, Farm Progress senior vice president of sales and events. “Each year, we unite the global agricultural community to honor innovation and the future of farming.”

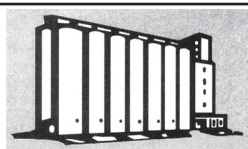
The event saw the introduction of two large-capacity combines, in addition to new lines of tractors and other

combines. Attendees also explored crop shredders, vertical tillage attachments, drones, electric trucks, row cleaners and new side-by-sides.

Over the three-day event, visitors had the opportunity to experience the latest ag tech firsthand, interact with representatives about seed selection, crop inputs, and more, and witness equipment in action during field demonstrations. Highlights included ride-and-drive opportunities, a daily autonomous showcase, and a visit from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, enhancing the event's educational value.

“The Farm Progress Show provides a unique experience for farmers,” said Matt Jungmann, Farm Progress national events director. “The chance to explore the latest technology in one place before investing is invaluable. We look forward to continuing to offer these experiences and connections for many years to come.”

The 2025 Farm Progress Show will be held in Decatur, Ill., from Aug. 26-28, 2025. For more information and updates on next year's show, visit the official website at [www.FarmProgress-Show.com](http://www.FarmProgress-Show.com).



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## Equipment sector better prepared for downturn

By RHIANNON BRANCH  
FarmWeek

Ag machinery sales are taking a hit as farmers' balance sheets tighten, but the equipment industry has been preparing for the downturn.

"Over the course of history, the price of corn and the sale of tractors over 40 horsepower tend to track one to one," Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) Senior Vice President Curt Blades told FarmWeek. "And we know corn prices are down right now, so it is to be expected."

AEM's August equipment sales report showed total sales of ag tractors in the U.S. dropped 19.4% and combine sales fell 19.6% from a year ago.

Blades said the industry learned some hard lessons from the most recent economic downturn and is better prepared for this next phase in the cycle.

"Manufacturers have been working closely with the dealers to understand what the supply chain needs and what the market demand is," he said. "The last thing you want is too

much inventory at the dealer lot because that has a negative impact on the dealer, used prices and the rural economy."

A report by Moody's Ratings suggests the three largest agricultural equipment manufacturers (AGCO Corp., CNH Industrial and Deere & Company) are better positioned to deal with weakening demand compared to the 2014-16 downturn.

"We expect that, even in the face of significant declines in revenue, EBITA (earnings before interest, taxes and amortization) margins in 2024 will remain in the 9-20% range for all three companies, thanks in part to key operational changes, good cost management and more flexible manufacturing processes," the report said.

The report showed the top three manufacturers are cutting back sharply on production in 2024 to decrease inventory levels in preparation for 2025.

Blades said the manufacturing industry is also focusing on options that farmers want and the variety of advantages they look at when considering equipment.



Farm Progress Show attendees check out the vast lineup of equipment in Boone, Iowa, as part of this year's on-line auction held in conjunction with the show. (Photo by Rhiannon Branch of FarmWeek)

For example, Blades said this generation of machines is 20% more fuel efficient than the previous generation, allowing farmers to reduce diesel costs.

"Farmers see these as business decisions, not just emotional decisions, and they are investing in technology to make sure that they are as operationally efficient as they possibly can be to survive those downturns," Blades said.

Seth Crawford is the general manager of PTx, a business unit of AGCO.

He told FarmWeek that investing in companies like Precision Planting and Trimble has helped them remain innovative and focus on farmers' needs.

"They're the innovators that feed that dedicated channel which helps us gain traction with those innovations, so it's a nice reinforcing cycle," he told FarmWeek. "We've been able to operate (PTx) inde-

pendently, and it's helped our growth."

Crawford said the Precision Planting division allows the company to bring technologies to market that help farmers enhance their existing fleet of equipment.

"So they don't need to make that big capital investment. They can make a small investment with a fast payback that can bring them an almost instant return in one operating cycle," Crawford said. "And we do that in a scalable way to help the farmers achieve profitability even in the most difficult times."

(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](http://FarmWeekNow.com).)

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## Illinois commercial pumpkin crop OK despite wet season

By RHIANNON BRANCH  
FarmWeek

Pumpkin harvest is in full swing in Illinois, the top pumpkin-producing state.

While many families across the state make plans to visit local ornamental pumpkin farms to pick their own treasure for decoration, mass quantities of commercially produced pumpkins are being harvested for grocery store favorites like canned pumpkin.

For nearly 25 years, Brad Sauder has been growing about 300 acres of commercial pumpkins annually on his farm in Tremont, which are harvested and processed by Nestle.

He told FarmWeek while there were some challenges earlier in the season, harvest started on time.

"Pumpkins like it a little drier," he said. "This year we had a little too much rain early on and we suffered some fruit rot, so our production is off a little bit, but it's an average crop for us so far this year."

He said dry weather during harvest has been helpful since the factory can't always work around the weather to transport the crop.

"Sometimes they are in my field picking up pumpkins after a heavy rain and that leaves the fields in rough shape," he said. "But this year, so far fields have been nice and dry and we're grateful for that."

The Nestle pumpkin processing plant is based in Morton. Illinois produces an estimated 85% of the world's canned pumpkins. Sauder said they plant varieties of pumpkins that are ideal for processing, so they look different than the typical jack-o-lantern.

"Our pumpkins are a pale orange or yellow, oblong to round in shape and we like to see them in the 12-to-15-inch diameter size," he said.

Data from USDA estimates almost 80% of pumpkin acres in Illinois are devoted to varieties destined for pie filling or other processing uses.

The most recent Census of Agriculture data shows Illinois maintained its leading position in pumpkin acreage in 2022, harvesting more than twice as many pumpkin acres as any of the other top states, at 17,600 acres.

Also leading in yield, Illinois produced 634 million pounds of pumpkins in 2022, more than the next five most productive states combined.

In 2023, 96% of the value and more than 98% of the tonnage (645.8 million pounds) of processed pumpkins came from Illinois.

Sauder noted that 2023 was a near record year for pumpkin production on his farm.

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Pumpkins are loaded for transport to the Nestle processing plant in Morton where they will be canned for pies and other goods. (Photo by Catrina Rawson of FarmWeek)

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## U.S. hog inventory on the rise; margins remain tight

By **RHIANNON BRANCH**  
*FarmWeek*

The latest quarterly hogs and pigs report from USDA showed an increase in U.S. numbers.

Inventory as of Sept. 1 was pegged at 76.5 million head, up slightly from September 2023 and up 2% from June 1. In Illinois, all hogs and pigs totaled 5.6 million head, down 3% since June but up 2% compared to last year.

During a webinar hosted by the National Pork Board after the report was released Sept. 26, Brett Stuart with Global AgriTrends said there is potential for swine numbers to continue to rise.

“The WASDE (World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates) report

shows 2024 pork production up 2.7%,” he said. “If we were up 1.1% in the first half, that means to get to the WASDE number, we’re going to be up 4.3% in the second half of the year.”

Stuart said given those estimates, the hog industry could be looking at larger production going into the fourth quarter.

The September report placed breeding inventory at 6.04 million head, down 2% from last year, but up 1% from the previous quarter. The breeding inventory in Illinois, 650,000 head, was down 20,000 from last year.

Market hog inventory (70.4 million head) was up 1% from last year and 2% from last quarter nationwide and up 2% in Illinois at 4.95

million head.

The report also showed increases in some of the higher weight classes for market hogs.

“I think it’s important to keep in mind as we’re seeing cheaper feed costs, that could have implications for continuing those higher weights,” said Lee Schulz, economist at Iowa State University. “And we may see some adjustments when we think about market timing as we go forward.”

Schulz said ISU profitability models are patchy as the industry comes off several months of modest profits.

“As you look at some of the seasonally higher prices, our model shows the next couple of months

could continue to see some modest profits to break-even levels,” he said. “But getting into some red ink as we get into the fourth quarter and into winter.”

Profitability could then resume next spring.

“On average for 2025, we

see some modest profits but there is still significant variability across those profit levels, providing a lot of risk for producers,” Schulz said. “But I’ll also highlight the market currently is offering some opportunity with some profitable prices at times

remaining this year.”

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USDA’s September hogs and pigs report pegged the inventory at 76.5 million head, up 2% since June. (Photo by Catrina Rawson of FarmWeek)



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## The road to safety: Be aware of farm equipment during harvest season

By **CARRIE MUEHLING**  
*Illinois Farm Bureau Partners*

In areas where population growth blurs the lines between urban and rural, sharing the road safely becomes everyone's responsibility. Illinois farmers who live near Chicago, St. Louis and other metro areas know this all too well, but they implore their suburban neighbors to understand it, too.

Former McHenry County Farm Bureau President Dan Ziller operates a dairy, livestock and grain farm near Huntley, a town that has grown from 2,500 people in 1990 to more than 27,000 in 2020.

"It's hard to get people to be patient until we can get out of their way or until they can get around us in a safe manner," Ziller says. "When a huge piece of machinery is coming down the road, people don't want to give it any room to get by, but if an ambulance is right behind it, they'll get off the road."

Renee Deterding farms 350 miles south of Ziller, only 35 miles southeast of St. Louis, and deals with similar frustrations.

"Far too many drivers cannot wait to pass or remain behind the farmer until they turn off," says Deterding, who partners with two brothers and their families to operate D&R Huber Farms. "People have passed me on the right side; people have passed me and caused oncoming traffic to slam on their brakes and dodge to the ditch."

Both farmers encourage impatient drivers to consider the size of the equipment and the importance of slowing down when approaching.

"People don't understand this could kill them if

they challenge it in a way they shouldn't," Ziller says.

### Educating drivers

Ziller works with local high schools' chapters and driver's education programs to get the attention of new drivers.

"We take machinery to the school and put vehicles behind it," Ziller says. "We let the kids get in the machinery and ask, 'Can you see that car sitting back there?' And they say, 'No, we don't!' We don't know you're back there, so when you come darting around us and we're not prepared for that, and somebody's coming from the other way, that's a problem."

Ziller has helped develop videos for driver's education classrooms, but adding to the existing curriculum has proven difficult. He says FFA chapters are helping and hopes the message resonates even more when students hear it from their peers.

Deterding would also like schools to teach more about safely sharing the road with farm equipment, as farmers have little choice in traversing the now suburban roadways.

"I wish motorists would understand the typical farmer doesn't care to be on the road as much as the motorists don't like us to be on the road," she says.

Ziller echoes this sen-

timent and emphasizes farmers use main roads only when absolutely necessary.

"We don't want to be there, but because of the development, we no longer have country roads to move machinery on because everyone else is on them, too," he says. "You don't just pack up a farm like a house and move. It's a very serious undertaking, especially with cattle. We're here for the long haul, and we just need to all work together."

Deterding has another concern: who are now learning to drive the farm equipment.

"I want my family to be as safe on the road as anyone else's," she says. "My job is to prepare them for all the things that could happen, just like a parent would when their child goes off in a car. Always check your surroundings and proceed with caution."

She just asks other drivers to do the same.

### Share the Road

Follow these tips to help keep you and farmers safe throughout the harvest season and again in spring when planting starts.

- Most importantly, slow down and be patient.
- Slow down when you see the Slow Moving Vehicle emblem, the orange and red reflective triangle, which warns you a tractor



or combine will be on the road traveling at a slow rate of speed.

- Flashing amber lights on the equipment mean caution, so reduce speed when encountering farm equipment on public roads.

- Keep a safe distance from the farm equipment so farmers can see you. Remember, if you can't see their mirrors, they can't see you.

- Pass wide, large farm equipment only if you know conditions are safe and you are sure the farmer will not be making a left-hand turn.

- It is illegal to pass in a no-passing lane or within 100 feet of an intersection, railroad crossing or bridge.

- Be prepared to yield to

wide equipment.

- Watch for the farmer's indication of a turn. Newer equipment has one or more amber lights flashing rapidly to indicate a turn. Older equipment is typically not equipped with turn signals so watch for the farmer's hand signals.

Source: Illinois Farm Bureau

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