

THE FARMER'S REPORT

The Mendota Reporter

Established in 1854
The Amboy News

Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2024



Who to call in a farm crisis? Plenty of resources available

By **PHYLLIS COULTER**
FarmWeek

The stress of an illness, injury or tight farm finances is daunting, but there are resources to help.

The resources for farmers in crisis webinar offered by the University of Illinois Agricultural Safety and Health Program and farm-doc on Oct. 15 highlighted a few such services.

Farm Rescue

Based on the principle of farmers helping farmers, Bill Gross, a UPS pilot who grew up in rural North Dakota, created Farm Rescue, a nonprofit organization.

Today, 600 volunteers in 49 states come to help farmers with equipment or labor in nine Corn Belt states, including Illinois, when a crisis arises, said Terry Johnston, farm rescue development officer.

The injury, illness or

death of a farmer, a sick child, a family member getting cancer treatment or a natural disaster are reasons to call for help, he said.

To nominate someone, to get help or to inquire about volunteering, visit the website farmrescue.org.

AgrAbility

AgrAbility helps enhance the quality of life for farmers and ranchers with injuries or disabilities, said Haley Jones, Illinois AgrAbility program coordinator with the Illinois Extension. The program helps farmers safely do their work and reduces barriers to continuing with their livelihood.

Farmers or seasonal workers suffering from circumstances as varied as arthritis, a spinal cord injury, a chronic condition, hearing loss, respiratory impairment or an amputation, can qualify for free services.

On request, AgrAbility staff conducts a free on-the-farm assessment and recommends equipment or assistive devices or provides education to help.

The National AgrAbility Toolbox, a public website, has information on 1,000 tools and devices at agrability.org/toolbox.

Helplines and hotlines

Josie Rudolphi, a University of Illinois occupational and environmental health professor, said resources are available to farmers in a crisis by email, texting or telephone.

The suicide and crisis lifeline at 988 is a hotline. "It is a huge relief that it is a three-digit number now," she said of the easier-to-remember number. People can text, call or chat 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Concern Line, a helpline started by Iowa

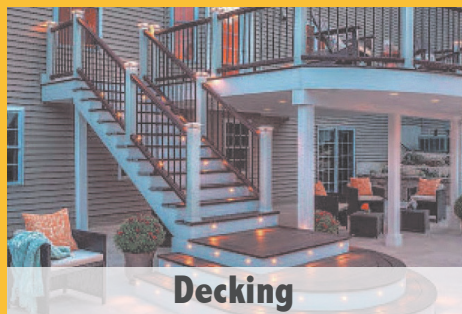


Today, 600 volunteers in 49 states come to help farmers with equipment or labor in nine Corn Belt states, including Illinois, when a crisis arises.

MAZE LUMBER

BUILD IT ONCE. BUILD IT RIGHT. SINCE 1848

BUILD IT ONCE - BUILD IT RIGHT



mazelumber.com | Water Street, Peru | 815-223-1742

06262024

University Extension during a farm crisis, offers legal, financial and disaster resources at 800-447-1985.

The Farm Aid Farmer Hotline has specific hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. The caller is assigned a specific case worker to help them over time. The contact number is 800-327-6243.

The Illinois Mental Health Voucher Program for Ag Producers allows ag

producers and their families to get free help from a certified mental health professional through the Illinois Extension program.

Email Kacie Hulshof for information at khulshof@illinois.edu.

(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.)

UNTZ Truck & Trailer Repair, Inc.

24-HOUR ROAD SERVICE

BRUCE UNTZ
President



3460 Brennen Drive • Peru, Illinois 61354
(815) 224-2675 • Evenings: (815) 223-5381 / (815) 343-8701



**To be a part of the monthly
Farmer's Report, contact
your ad representative at
The Mendota Reporter
or The Amboy News**



703 Illinois Ave. • Mendota, IL 61342
Ph: (815) 539-9396 • Fax: (815) 539-7862
www.mendotareporter.com

Established In 1854

The Amboy News



703 Illinois Ave. • Mendota, IL 61342
Ph: (815) 857-2311
www.amboynews.com

U.S. sets ethanol exports record

By TAMMIE SLOUP
FarmWeek

Already the world's top ethanol producer, the U.S. exported a record 1.75 billion gallons from September 2023 to August 2024 — an increase of 43% from the previous marketing year.

And as more countries begin to shift to cleaner energy policies, that trend is expected to continue.

Leading the ethanol demand was Canada, importing 655 million gallons, followed by the United Kingdom at 227 million gallons, India at 171 million gallons, the Netherlands at 97 million gallons and Colombia with 123 million gallons. This total does not include the 140.5 million gallons shipped to Japan in the form of ethyl tert-butyl ether.

“We applaud U.S. farmers and producers for their outstanding efforts in increasing exports this marketing year, and especially to ethanol producers who continue their trajectory of outstanding growth to meet global market demands,” said Ryan LeGrand, U.S.



Grains Council (USGC) president and CEO.

“While we are all taking time to celebrate the good news from the GIAF (grains in all forms) report, USGC staff members are already well into their work to make marketing year 2024-25 even better for the U.S.

agricultural industry and we look forward to continuing to develop markets, enable trade and improve lives on behalf of U.S. producers.”

While the U.S. agricultural trade deficit is expected to balloon to a record \$42.5 billion in fiscal year 2025, ethanol exports remain a

bright spot. Export volumes are expected to edge up to a record 2 billion gallons, with a value reaching \$4.3 billion, according to USDA's quarterly trade outlook.

U.S. ethanol is generally more price competitive with Brazilian product, the world's second largest supplier, helping to boost global U.S. sales. U.S. industry continues to supply all imports to Canada, which has become the world's largest ethanol importer. U.S. industry is the top foreign

supplier to the EU and the United Kingdom, currently the world's second and third largest ethanol importers. Other important markets, such as India, Colombia, South Korea, the Philippines, Mexico and Peru, are seeing strong-to-record U.S. sales.

The window of arbitrage for U.S. sales to Brazil has remained mostly closed this year due to the 18% tariff on U.S. ethanol imports. And USDA recently announced Brazil has denied

requests to remove its tariff on ethanol imports. In a statement, USDA said it's the second time the Tariff Changes Committee of the Chamber of Foreign Trade rejected requests to reduce the ethanol tariff since its implementation.

Update on small refinery exemptions

Both the Renewable Fuels Association and Growth Energy applauded the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that it will hear arguments for moving small refinery exemption cases to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Fifth Circuit was an improper venue to hear challenges on small refinery exemptions under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) because the Fifth Circuit opinion set up a clear split with several other circuit courts on the question of venue, the organizations wrote in a statement.

“The refining community's abuse of small refinery exemptions destroys demand for biofuels nationwide, which negatively impacts farmers and bioethanol producers regardless of where they operate,” according to the statement. “The economic and environmental impact of this abuse does not recognize state lines. The decision in this case should strengthen the RFS by giving biofuel producers and their farm partners the certainty they deserve.”

(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.)

Peru
Waltham
Mutual
Insurance



Frank McConville
McConville Insurance Agency
Mendota & Tonica, IL
815-539-9714
815-442-3116

Wickert
INSURANCE

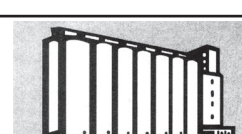
Rock Falls, IL 815-626-6086
Dixon, IL 815-285-1300



Bart Hartauer
Hartauer Insurance Agency
LaSalle, IL
815-223-1795

02262020

VISIT US ONLINE @ PERUMUTUAL.COM



SUBLETTE FARMERS
ELEVATOR

100 W. Main St. • Sublette
sublettefarmerselevator.com

Illinois Soybean Growers 2024 Farm Business Summit set Dec. 17 at Kish

MALTA – The Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) 2024 Farm Business Summit is set for Tuesday, Dec. 17, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Kishwaukee College in Malta.

This event is a must-attend for farmers aiming to stay ahead. With Rob “The Shark Farmer” Sharkey as host and State Senator Andrew Chesney and State Representative Bradley Fritts among the featured speakers, the summit will dive into essential

topics like global grain markets, climate and weather challenges, new innovations impacting the industry and more. Don’t miss this opportunity to learn, connect, and plan for the future.

The cost is free for ISG members and \$35 for non-members. The registration deadline is Dec. 4.

For more information or to register, go online to the Illinois Soybean Association website at www.ilsoy.org.

Agricultural workforce is shrinking, and it has been for some time

The agricultural workforce is shrinking, and has been for some time. The American Farm Bureau Federation estimates there are roughly 2.4 million farm jobs that need to be filled annually, but there has been a drastic decline in workers each year.

There are a number of reasons for the shortages. The AFBF says more than 73 percent of farm workers are immigrants from South America and Mexico. While the United States’ H2-A visa program, which allows employers who meet specific requirements to bring foreign laborers in for temporary work, has increased the number of accepted applications for immigrants to 250,000, this number is still just a drop in the bucket in terms of labor needs.

Another factor is a career in agriculture isn’t always easy or lucrative. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, for every dollar spent on food, a farmer receives only 7.6 cents.

Declining interest in the field has also affected the

number of farm workers. As more farm operators reach retirement age, fewer young farmers are replacing them due to volatile pricing, high real estate and land costs, steep initial machinery investment costs, and other factors. The physical demand of the industry also takes its toll. So what does this mean for the agricultural industry?

Many with knowledge of the industry indicate sweeping changes are warranted. Ellen Poeschi, the project director for the National Association of Agricultural Educators Teach Ag campaign, has said that a lack of agricultural education is contributing to the problem. Increasing availability of ag education courses across the country could build interest in the industry. Connecting students to internships or mentors may help, too.

Another option is to rally for greater economic opportunities in agriculture. The ag industry in general needs to find ways to make the economic benefits more competitive

to other industries, and improve the working conditions and job flexibility. Agricultural industries currently average only 60 percent of what other industries offer in salaries. Farm wages have been rising due to the H-2A program, which requires farm worker pay to be higher than the state/federal minimum wage. More change is needed, but this may have to come at the federal level or be sparked by efforts on the part of agricultural advocacy groups.

Additional strategies farm operators can employ to combat shortages are: scaling back farm operations; integrating ag technology to reduce labor burdens; pivoting to crops that require fewer laborers; leasing portions of land to have extra money; employing temporary guest workers; and moving operations abroad.

Worker shortages continue to be problematic for the agricultural industry. A greater focus on remedying the issue is needed on a grand scale.

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 work-

ing 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 part-

ners. 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 to register today.

If you need an accommodation to participate, please contact Emily Hansen at em-hansen@illinois.edu or 815-224-0896. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

Extension offices are located in Princeton, Ottawa, Henry, and in Oglesby on the IVCC campus. University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. Visit our website at <https://extension.illinois.edu/blmp>. If you have questions or need more information, please call University of Illinois Extension—Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam Unit Office at 815-224-0896.

Agricultural and Commercial Appraisals



Jake Aubry

AUBRY  APPRAISALS

State certified
valuation and
consulting services

(815) 993-4844
AubryAppraisals.com

Study shows tariff-induced trade war would hurt U.S. farmers

By **TAMMIE SLOUP**
FarmWeek

Ratcheting up tariffs on U.S. imports of Chinese products would place a target on both U.S. soybeans and corn and create a ripple effect throughout rural economies, according to a new study.

Considerable discussion has surrounded suggestions of the U.S. escalating tariffs on Chinese products, which prompted the National Corn Growers Association and American Soybean Association to request the World Agricultural Economic and Environmental Services (WAEES) to evaluate the impact a trade war would have on soybeans and corn today.

The conclusion of the study: A reignited trade war would reduce both U.S. soybean and corn prices and the combined production area of the two crops. The study forecasts Brazil and Argentina would claim the lost market share, likely lost to American farmers for decades.

As the top two export commodities for the U.S., corn and soybeans account for about one-fourth of total U.S. agricultural export value.

The study specifically investigated the impacts of another potential U.S. and China trade war in which China responds to U.S. punitive tariffs by imposing retaliatory tariffs on corn, soybeans, and soybean products (meal and oil), as would be expected given the 2018 trade war and overall historical precedent.

“Corn and soybeans are prime targets for tariffs as the top two export commodities for the U.S. As the largest exporting



A tow enters the lock chamber moving upstream at Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Joliet. A new study finds any trade disruptions could prove costly to the ag industry. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District)

state in the country, Illinois farmers can expect to pay an extremely heavy price,” said Jeff Scates, chairman of the IL Corn Marketing Board and farmer in Shawneetown.

ASA Chief Economist Scott Gerlt noted the U.S. agriculture sector is already going through a significant economic downturn.

“This work shows that a trade war would easily compound the adverse conditions that are placing financial stress on farmers,” Gerlt said. “Even when a trade war officially ends, the loss of market share can be permanent.”

Researchers modeled several scenarios that could play out in a new U.S.-China trade war and found a consistent outcome:

- Severe drop in U.S. exports to China. If China cancels its current waiver (from the 2020 Phase I agreement) and reverts to tariffs already on the books, U.S. soybean exports to China would, according to the study, fall 14 to 16 million metric tons annually, an average decline of 51.8% from baseline levels expected for those years. U.S. corn exports to China would fall about 2.2 million metric tons annually, an average decline of 84.3% from the baseline expectation.

- Brazil and Argentina would benefit. Brazil and Argentina would increase exports and gain valuable global market share. Chinese tariffs on soybeans and corn from the U.S. — but

not Brazil — would provide incentive for Brazilian farmers to expand production area even more rapidly than baseline growth.

- No place to turn. While it is possible to divert exports to other nations, the study found there is insufficient demand from the rest of the world to offset the major loss of soybean exports to China to support the farmgate value.

The study found that a new trade war would lead to a steep drop in soy and corn prices, resulting in a ripple impact across the U.S., particularly in rural economies where farmers live, purchase inputs, use farm and personal services and purchase household goods. Other recent studies examining the effects

of tariffs have arrived at similar findings.

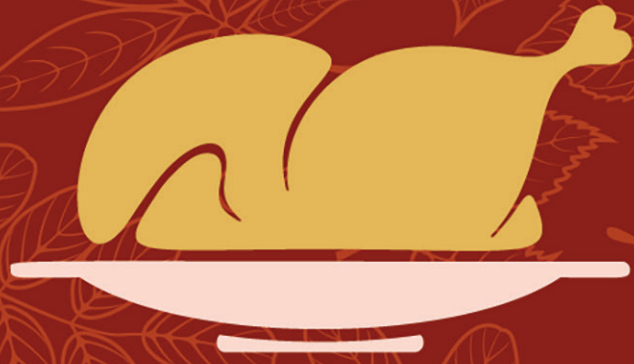
In the 2018 trade war, the U.S. extended tariffs on steel and aluminum to several major trading partners and separately imposed tariffs on an extensive range of imported products from China. In response, China and other nations imposed retaliatory tariffs on numerous U.S. products, including many agricultural and food products. This led to significant reduction in U.S. agricultural exports to those nations. As a result of retaliatory tariffs from the onset in summer 2018 through the end of 2019, U.S. agricultural export losses exceeded \$27 billion, with China accounting for about 95% of the value lost, according to USDA.

“Farmers are definitely concerned about trade,” said Michael Langemeier, an agricultural economist from Purdue University who helps author the Purdue University/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer. “We don’t ask specific questions related to tariffs in the Ag Economy Barometer, but one question we do ask is if they expect exports to increase, decrease or stay the same? Really, this is the most pessimistic they’ve been for about five years with regard to trade.”

(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.)



THANKSGIVING



TIME TO GIVE THANKS

Father, son duo cherish annual combine ride together

By RHIANNON BRANCH
FarmWeek

For 35 years, Gary Brelsfoard spent countless hours in the combine seat during harvest, often with his son, Jason, by his side. Fast forward and their roles have reversed. In 2020, when Gary's health prevented him from climbing the ladder on his own, Jason promised him an annual combine ride together, just like when they were younger. Now retired and dependent on a wheelchair, the elder Brelsfoard looks forward to that day each year.

"I feel like I owe that to him to give him some time in the combine so he can feel like he's a part of the operation," Jason said.

While it takes a lot of time, coordination and help to hoist his dad into the machine, Jason said the smile on his face makes the delay in harvest worth it.

"That crop will be there tomorrow. If I don't get that extra 10 or 20 acres out because we took time to get dad in the combine, there will be another day for that," Jason said. "One of these days there might not be another day to get him in the combine. So, we make that our priority."

The younger Brelsfoard shared a video of his father entering the combine this year on social media. On TikTok alone, the video was viewed more than 947,000 times, generating over 88,000 "likes" and more than 5,000 comments.

Jason Brelsfoard said viewers connected with it because it served as a positive story in a world often filled with negative news.

"I think when people saw that video, they realized there are better things out there in life if you stay true to your roots and take care of your parents," he said.

The comments from neighbors and strangers alike were overwhelming.

"People were saying 'You don't see that

very often anymore,'" Jason said. "You don't see kids taking care of their father or a lot of family farm actions like that."

The Brelsfoards said the conversations in the cab during their annual rides are just as memorable, usually centered around yields. "When dad was farming, the yields weren't near as good as they are now with all the new genetics and hybrids they have out," Jason said.

And Gary enjoys watching the yield monitor from the buddy seat, two things they didn't have back when he was driving the combine.

"Dad can see the numbers pop up on there and how the yield changes throughout the field," Jason said. "I think that maybe amazes him a little bit."

The Brelsfoards grow corn and soybeans with a cover crop rotation near Maroa in Macon County. Jason Brelsfoard took over the farm in 2015 and his 20-year-old son, Mason, helps out. Their goal is to obtain more ground so Mason can join the farm full-time soon.

When asked about the future of the operation, Gary Brelsfoard shared his vision with Jason and Mason.

"Just keep it together and keep farming, but adding to it every year," he said.

But for now, they look forward to continuing the harvest ride-along tradition in 2025.

"I want to do that for him every year and keep him as much of a part of the farm as I can, for as long as I can," Jason concluded. "I owe that to him for all that he's taught me."

(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.)



The Brelsfoards, father Gary, and son Jason, said the conversations in the cab during their annual combine rides are just as memorable now, usually centered around yields.



FARM - HOME - CROP - HAIL - AUTO - LIFE
COMMERCIAL - BONDS - HEALTH



FIRST STATE INSURANCE

• Complete Insurance Service •

715 Washington Street, Mendota • 815-539-5651

07312024

FARMING THE FUTURE

Eureka Savings BANK
Member FDIC

Loans and Lines of Credit are subject to credit approval.

Agricultural Loans & Lines of Credit

Joe Brizgis
815-883-3354