

# 2014 Iowa Agricultural Overview

## Crops and Weather Summary

The 2014 crop season started off slowly due to colder than normal temperatures and considerable frost depth. Planting progress during April was ahead of 2013 but behind the normal pace. By the end of the month 15 percent of corn had been planted, and in some areas had begun to emerge. Statewide above normal precipitation throughout April helped replenish soil moisture levels and improved pasture and range conditions.

Planting progress advanced rapidly during May with 96 percent of the state's corn acreage and 80 percent of soybean acreage planted by the week ending May 25. At the end of the month, 89 percent of the corn crop had emerged, 19 percentage points ahead of 2013. Sixty-three percent of soybeans had emerged, 42 points ahead of the previous year. Twelve percent of the oat crop was headed. The first cutting of alfalfa hay was 7 percent complete by the week ending May 25.

By mid-June almost all of the soybean and corn crops had emerged. Recurring precipitation during the second half of June limited most fieldwork and harvest of alfalfa hay. With the exception of southeast Iowa, over one-quarter of the State's topsoil was in surplus condition. By the end of the month, 86 percent of the oat acreage was headed, 2 percentage points behind average. There were isolated reports of corn silking and 6 percent of the soybean acreage was blooming, 10 days ahead of the previous year but 2 days behind average. The first cutting of alfalfa hay was 90 percent complete.

The week ending July 6 saw the highest topsoil moisture at 37 percent surplus and the highest subsoil moisture at 25 percent surplus statewide; however, dry and cool weather persisted for the rest of July allowing farmers to catch up on fieldwork but slowing crop progress. Corn silking surpassed the normal pace in mid-July, with slightly more than half of the acreage in or past the silking stage. Soybeans setting pods was also slightly ahead of normal at mid-month. Statewide there were 6.5 days suitable for fieldwork for the week ending July 20, the most thus far in the season. The second cutting of alfalfa hay started in earnest in early July.

Frequent rains from late August into September increased soil moistures. By the end of August, 92 percent of the corn crop was in the dough stage, 23 percentage points above 2013 and 6 points above the five-year average. Ninety-six percent of the soybean crop was setting pods, 1 week ahead of the previous year but slightly behind normal. Oat harvest for grain was virtually complete. The third cutting of alfalfa hay was 53 percent complete, 22 percentage points below 2013 and 23 points below the five-year average.

Above average temperatures pushed crops towards maturity by the last week in September. Fifty-eight percent of corn had reached the mature stage, 8 days behind normal. Some scattered corn harvest for grain had begun. Leaves were turning color on 94 percent of the soybean crop, equal to the 5-year average for this stage for the first time this season. The third cutting of alfalfa hay was 91 percent complete, just over 2 weeks behind both 2013 and average.

High grain moisture levels and wet fields caused harvest activities to progress slowly at times during October. By the week ending October 26, 36 percent of corn harvest was complete, 6 days behind 2013 and 16 days behind the 5-year average. Soybean harvest reached 81 percent complete, 2 days behind the previous year and 4 days behind normal. The third cutting of alfalfa hay spanned almost 3 months from the end of July to the middle of October, never advancing ahead of the average.

November was relatively dry but unseasonably cold, with the first snow accumulation occurring in northern Iowa on the 10<sup>th</sup>. By the end of the season, only isolated corn fields remained to be harvested and soybean harvest was virtually complete. Condition of the corn crop did not change dramatically from early in the year and ended with 76 percent in good to excellent condition as of November 2. By November 23, 96 percent of the corn crop was harvested, 2 days ahead of average. Soybean harvest was 99 percent complete. Off-farm grain storage availability was rated at 86 percent adequate to surplus. On-farm grain storage availability was 79 percent adequate to surplus.

## Livestock Summary

Iowa's cattle and hog producers received \$13.88 billion in cash receipts during 2014, a 17 percent increase from receipts in 2013. Cattle and calves accounted for \$4.67 billion of the cash receipts and hog sales totaled \$9.21 billion.

Iowa producers had 3.9 million **cattle and calves** on farms January 1, 2015, up 100,000 from January 1, 2014. Cows that had calved totaled 1.13 million head, up 3 percent from a year earlier. Of this total, 920,000 head were beef cows and 210,000 head were milk cows.

Heifers weighing 500 pounds and over were at 940,000, up 2 percent from a year earlier. Of this total, 170,000 head were beef cow replacements, 130,000 head were milk cow replacements, each up 10,000 head from 2014; while all other heifers numbered 640,000 head, unchanged from the previous year.

Steers weighing 500 pounds or more were up 3 percent at 1.31 million head. Bulls 500 pounds and over were unchanged from the previous 2 years at 60,000 head. Calves weighing under 500 pounds totaled 460,000 head, up 2 percent.

Iowa continued to rank number one in **hog** inventory in the United States, with 31 percent of the nation's hogs in 2014. Hogs and pigs on hand December 1, 2014, totaled 21.3 million head, 5 percent higher than a year ago.

Iowa's pork producers farrowed 1.99 million sows from December 2013 through November 2014. The average pigs saved per litter was 10.48. This resulted in a pig crop of 20.86 million, an increase of 4 percent from 2013.

**Sheep and lambs** totaled 175,000 head on January 1, 2015, up 13 percent from a year ago. An estimated 150,000 lambs were born during 2014, up 11 percent.

Iowa **milk production** totaled 4.65 billion pounds of milk during 2014, up 1 percent from 2013. Milk cows on hand decreased 1,000 from 2013, averaging 207,000 head. The annual average milk produced per cow was 22,444 pounds, up 1 percent from the previous year.

**Slaughter** plants in Iowa produced 6.60 billion pounds of red meat (beef, veal, pork, and mutton) during 2014, increasing slightly from 2013.

## Prices Summary

All milk prices averaged \$24.60 per hundredweight in 2014, up 20 percent from \$20.50 in 2013. Prices averaged from a high of \$26.40 in September to a low of \$20.90 in December.

The 2013-2014 marketing year average price received for corn was \$3.70, down 18 percent from the previous year. The market year began with \$5.66 per bushel in September and ended with \$3.61 per bushel in August. The average monthly prices for the 2014 calendar year ranged from a high of \$4.76 in April to a low of \$3.51 in September.

The 2013-2014 marketing year average price for soybeans was \$9.96 per bushel, a 24 percent decrease from 2012-2013. The marketing year began with \$13.90 per bushel in September and ended with \$12.40 per bushel in August. The average monthly prices for the 2014 calendar year ranged from a high of \$14.70 per bushel in May to a low of \$10.00 per bushel in both October and December.

The 2013-2014 marketing year average price for oats was \$3.60 per bushel, down 8 percent from 2012-2013. The marketing year began with \$3.70 per bushel in July and ended with \$4.18 per bushel in June. The average monthly prices for the 2014 calendar year ranged from a high \$5.17 per bushel in February to a low of \$3.15 in September.

The 2013-2014 marketing year average price for all hay was \$133 per ton, decreasing 24 percent from the previous year. Average monthly prices for the 2014 calendar year ranged from a high of \$171 per ton in January to a low of \$132 in both October and December.