# 2015 Iowa Agricultural Overview

## Crops and Weather Summary

The 2015 crop season got off to a warm start but was soon followed by wet and cool conditions that settled in for much of April. By the end of the month 14 percent of corn and 85 percent of oats had been planted, almost two weeks ahead of last year; 41 percent of oats had emerged. Pastures recovered from the winter at a quicker pace than in 2014. On April 5, 33 percent of pastures were rated in good to excellent condition. Soil moisture levels were replenished with the abundant moisture.

Corn and soybean planting advanced rapidly during the beginning of May, but slowed down due to heavy rain events as May came to a close. A majority of the state's corn had been planted by May 3, with 54 percent of the corn crop planted within that one week. By the end of May corn planting was nearly complete with emergence (90 percent) not far behind, while soybeans emerged had reached 53 percent.

By the week ending June 28, 96 percent of the soybean crop had emerged. As a result of wet, and in some areas severe weather, this week also recorded the highest topsoil moisture at 31 percent surplus and the highest subsoil moisture at 26 percent surplus statewide. The second cutting of alfalfa hay was 9 percent complete, one week behind average. Eighty-one percent of pastures were in good to excellent condition, with nearly one-quarter in excellent condition.

Crop development was aided by a week of hot and humid weather in mid-July. Corn silking surpassed the five-year average, with slightly more than half of the acreage in or beyond the silking stage. By the end of the month, 57 percent of the oat crop had been harvested for grain or seed, 5 days ahead of last year. More than one-third of soybeans were setting pods.

By August 16, oat harvest was 97 percent complete. That week was the first time the State averaged more than 5.0 days suitable for fieldwork in consecutive weeks. By the end of the month the second cutting of alfalfa hay was nearing completion while the third cutting was 67 percent complete. Ninety-five percent of soybeans were setting pods or beyond, while 11 percent of soybeans were turning color, 2 days behind the five-year average.

September saw warmer temperatures than normal, which helped crops mature. By September 27, 71 percent of corn had reached the mature state, 3 days behind the five-year average; corn and soybean harvest was underway, slightly behind the average pace. The third cutting of alfalfa hay was 92 percent complete.

Farmers took advantage of good field conditions in the first half of October when precipitation was almost nonexistent and large amounts of corn and soybeans were harvested. Sixty-five percent of the soybean acreage and 29 percent of corn was harvested by October 11, while the third cutting of alfalfa hay was 98 percent complete. By the end of the month grain movement from farm to elevator was rated 67 percent moderate to heavy.

Ninety-eight percent of soybeans and 93 percent of corn for grain had been harvested by November 8. By the end of the season, only isolated corn fields remained to be harvested and soybean harvest was virtually complete. November saw above average precipitation, and the fewest days suitable for fieldwork in the season for the week ending November 29, when fieldwork activities were halted due to a mix of winter weather that left fields saturated.

## Livestock Summary

Iowa's cattle and hog producers received $11.92 billion in cash receipts during 2015, a 7% decrease from receipts in 2014. Cattle and calves accounted for $4.41 billion of the cash receipts and hog sales totaled $7.51 billion.

Iowa producers had 4.0 million cattle and calves on farms January 1, 2016, up 100,000 from January 1, 2015. Cows that had calved totaled 1.15 million head, up 4 percent from a year earlier. Of this total, 940,000 head were beef cows and 210,000 head were milk cows.

Heifers weighing 500 pounds and over were at 920,000, down 2 percent from the previous year. Of this total, 190,000 head were beef cow replacements, 120,000 head were milk cow replacements, and all other heifers numbered 610,000 head, down 20,000 head from a year ago.

Steers weighing 500 pounds or more were up 2 percent at 1.32 million head. Bulls 500 pounds and over were unchanged from the previous 3 years at 60,000 head. Calves weighing under 500 pounds totaled 500,000 head, up 11 percent.

Iowa continued to rank number one in hog inventory in the United States, with 30 percent of the nation's hogs in 2015. Hogs and pigs on hand December 1, 2015, totaled 20.8 million head, 2 percent lower than a year ago.

Iowa's pork producers farrowed 2.02 million sows from December 2014 through November 2015. The average pigs saved per litter was 10.78. This resulted in a pig crop of 21.71 million, an increase of 4 percent from 2014.

Sheep and lambs totaled 175,000 head on January 1, 2016, unchanged from a year ago. An estimated 145,000 lambs were born during 2015, down 3 percent.

Iowa milk production totaled 4.84 billion pounds of milk during 2015, up 4 percent from 2014. Milk cows on hand increased 4,000 from 2014, averaging 211,000 head. The annual average milk produced per cow was 22,943 pounds, up 2 percent from the previous year.

Slaughter plants in Iowa produced 6.97 billion pounds of red meat (beef, veal, pork, and mutton) during 2015, increasing 6 percent from 2014.

## Prices Summary

All milk prices averaged $17.30 per hundredweight in 2015, down 70 percent from $24.60 in 2014. Prices averaged from a high of $17.80 in September to a low of $16.90 in March, April and May.

The 2014-2015 marketing year average price received for corn was $3.50, down 6 percent from the previous year. The market year began with $3.51 per bushel in September and ended with $3.67 per bushel in August. The average monthly prices for the 2015 calendar year ranged from a high of $3.86 in January to a low of $3.53 in both November and December.

The 2014-2015 marketing year average price for soybeans was $8.65 per bushel, a 13 percent decrease from 2013-2014. The marketing year began with $11.00 per bushel in September and ended with $9.49 per bushel in August. The average monthly prices for the 2015 calendar year ranged from a high of $10.20 per bushel in January to a low of $8.45 per bushel in December.

The 2014-2015 marketing year average price for oats was $2.57 per bushel, down 29 percent from 2013-2014. The marketing year began with $3.95 per bushel in July and ended with $3.46 per bushel in June. The average monthly prices for the 2015 calendar year ranged from a high $4.26 per bushel in February to a low of $2.50 in August.

The 2014-2015 marketing year average price for all hay was $108 per ton, a decrease of 19 percent from the previous year. Average monthly prices for the 2015 calendar year ranged from a high of $132 per ton in January to a low of $104 in July.