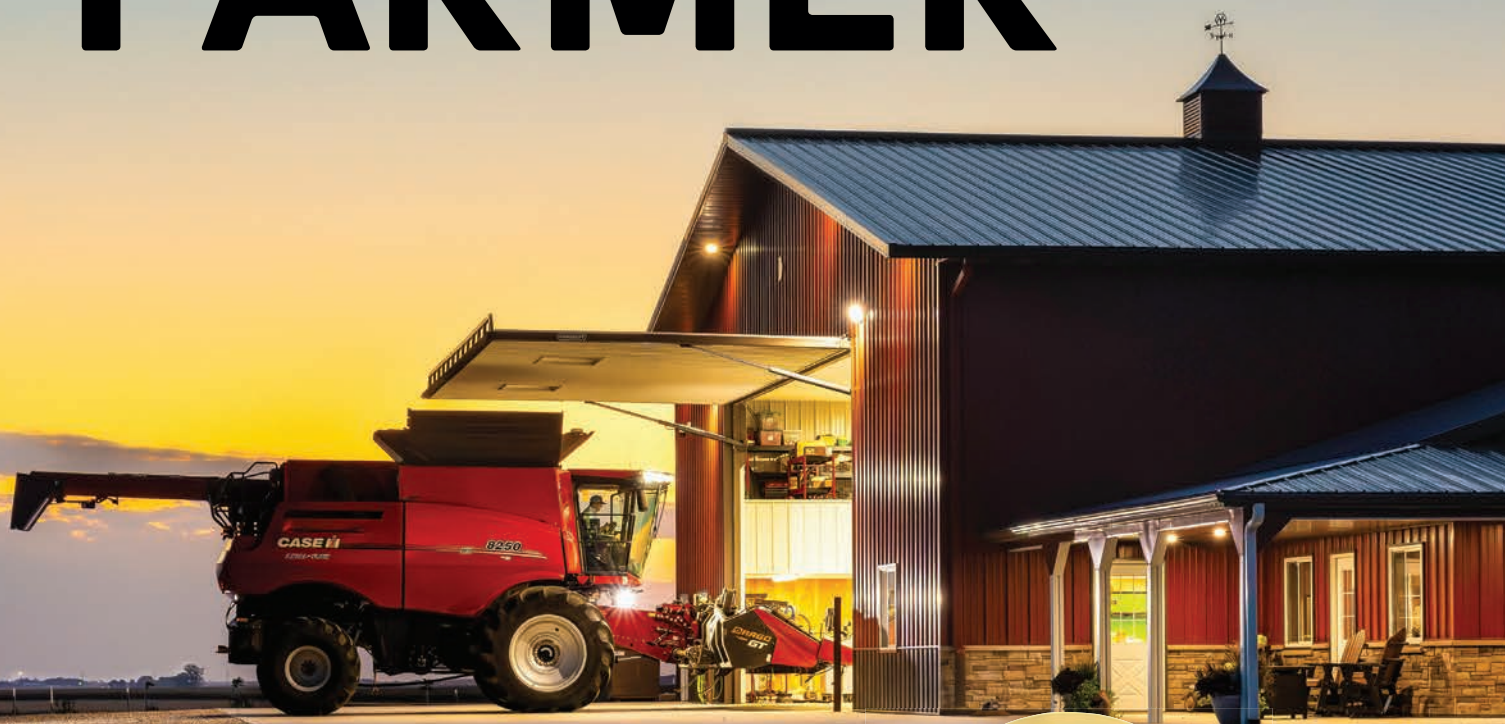


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NOVEMBER 2025

VOL. 140 / NO. 10

Serving Our Readers Since 1886

ROBB LONG



ON THE COVER

The Eichackers, of Salem, South Dakota, built a facility to support their farming operations and host events.

PHOTO BY ROBB LONG

This shop works as great as it looks and is built for efficient maintenance workflow, with a welcoming style for bull auctions.

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Time To Make a Trade Deal

Negative operating incomes for America's crop farmers are causing a bumper crop of angst as the 2025 harvest comes to an end. Grain prices are down, while it seems nearly every expense to produce a crop is up. Tariffs and trade disputes are only adding to the economic stress. Whether it's row crops or specialty crops, farmers are suffering.

No one knows this more than U.S. soybean farmers. Their economic headwinds are linked in part to the tariff war between the U.S. and China. Following President Donald Trump's action to place tariffs on Chinese goods, China imposed retaliatory tariffs of up to 34% on U.S. soybeans, making them less competitive compared to South American soybeans.

As of this writing, in the current crop marketing year, the U.S. has made zero soybean sales to China as the two economic powers maneuver to gain leverage over broader trade negotiations. China was once our largest soybean customer, purchasing up to one-third of American-grown soybeans—or some 60% of our soybean exports—worth about \$12.5 billion annually.

Déjà Vu

America's soybean farmers have been caught in this trade crossfire before. President Trump's first term also saw a trade war with China. As a result, U.S. export values declined by \$9 billion (73%) for soybeans, according to the American

Farm Bureau Federation. Other commodities also saw a drop in sales—67% for wheat, 61% for corn and 37% for sorghum. Congress took action and provided \$28 billion in direct payments to farmers for the lost income.

The Trump administration is again planning an aid package in response to the current trade dispute. President Trump recently posted on social media: "The soybean farmers of our country are being hurt because China is, for 'negotiating' reasons only, not buying. We've made so much money on tariffs, that we are going to take a small portion of that money, and help our farmers."

That may be welcome relief in the short term, but it does little to repair trade

relations. Soybean farmers are already concerned there has been irreparable damage to a vital export customer. Adding alarm to the lost soybean sales is Brazil. It has surpassed the U.S. as the world's largest soybean producer. China turned to Brazil when President Trump launched his first trade war. World Bank data shows Brazilian beans last year accounted for more than 70% of China's imports; U.S. share was down to 21%. Competition with Brazil will only increase as it continues to expand soybean acres.

Time Is Now

The Trump administration's call for increasing domestic soybean demand via biofuels and new uses, for example, and cultivating new export markets certainly makes sense to boost sales, but that will take time. And, neither can replace China in one shot.

President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping were scheduled to meet at the end of October. Agricultural trade needs to be at the top of their agenda. It's time to bring down the bluster and posturing, and get a deal done. Trade wars benefit no one.

"The longer trade disputes continue, unfortunately, the more storm clouds gather over farm country," stresses American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall. "Farmers can face long-term effects because of the uncertainty and disruptions that tariffs bring. Many countries may decide to simply buy agricultural products elsewhere, and it can be difficult to recover those markets once they're lost."

Caleb Ragland, a Kentucky farmer and president of the American Soybean Association (ASA), agrees. "U.S. farmers cannot wait and hope any longer," he stressed in a press release. "ASA is calling on President Trump and his negotiating team to prioritize securing an immediate deal on soybeans with China. The farm economy is suffering while our competitors supplant the United States in the biggest soybean import market in the world." ///


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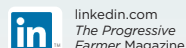
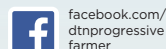
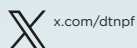
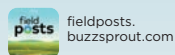
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OBBBA Offers Farmers Singles But No Tax Home Runs

In my September column, I dove into the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). For the most part, OBBBA either extended or made fixes to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017. Because I didn't get the chance to talk about all the provisions that might have an impact on farmers, I thought I'd go into a few more details this month.

OBBBA enacted Section 1062, which allows an election when selling farmland to a qualified farmer. The seller may elect to pay his or her taxes on the gain of the sale of the farmland in four equal installments. To be eligible for the election, the property must have been farmed by the seller or have been leased to a qualified farmer and farmed for 10 years prior to the sale. Next, the property being sold must be subject to a covenant or other legal restriction that prohibits/restricts the property of all other uses except for a farming activity for 10 years following the sale of the property. In addition, a copy of the covenant must be filed with the first tax return. As you probably figured, the 10-year restriction will be the most difficult part in getting the deferral of the gain.

If the seller doesn't follow the rules, recognition of gain can be accelerated. If the seller misses a tax payment associated with the deferral, the remainder becomes taxable in the year of default. Also, if the seller passes away (individual) or upon the sale of substantially all the assets or a liquidation (trust, estate or C corporation), the remainder of the deferral may become taxable.

The qualified business income (QBI) deduction under Section 199A was extended and simplified. The deduction remains at 20% of qualified business income for pass-through entities such as sole proprietorships, partnerships and S corporations. Like before, C corporations do not qualify. A benefit is OBBBA increased the phaseout thresholds and removed certain wage and property limitations.

The OBBBA restored and increased the personal exemption amount, which had been suspended under the TCJA. Starting in tax year 2025, all taxpayers are eligible for a

personal exemption of \$5,000 per individual. This exemption is indexed for inflation. The phaseout thresholds have also been raised, allowing more people to qualify.

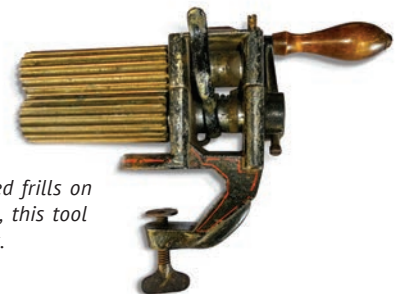
The child tax credit was expanded and made refundable under the OBBBA. The maximum credit increased to \$3,600 per child under 6 and \$3,000 per child ages 6 to 17. The credit begins to phase out for higher-income households at \$200,000 (single) and \$400,000 (married filing jointly).

A new additional personal exemption was created for taxpayers 60 and older. These individuals get an extra \$2,000 exemption, which is indexed for inflation. This is in addition to the standard personal exemption.

The premium tax credit was improved under the OBBBA, making the expanded eligibility and increased subsidy levels permanent. There is no longer a "cliff" at 400% of the federal poverty level. Instead, premiums are capped at a percentage of household income, ensuring broader and more affordable coverage.

As I tell my clients, the OBBBA doesn't have any tax "home runs" but provides you with a series of "singles." By taking advantage of several of the OBBBA provisions, farmers can see a decent reduction in their taxes. ///

TOOLS FROM THE PAST



*If you wanted frills on your clothes, this tool did the trick.
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Answer:

This is a hand fabric fluter. Place the material between the rollers, turn the handle, and it creates a decorative ruffle or crimps for dresses, etc., to use on a collar, for example.



Rod Mauszycki

DTN Tax Columnist Rod Mauszycki, J.D., MBT, is a tax principal with CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen) in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

➤ Read Rod's "Ask the Taxman" column at **ABOUT.DTNPF.COM/TAX**

➤ You may email Rod at **taxman@dtm.com**

WHAT'S TRENDING @ DTNPF.COM



► Host Sarah Mock recently sat down with Senior Ag Policy Editor Chris Clayton to discuss USDA's reorganization proposal, a potential aid package for farmers and other farm policy issues.



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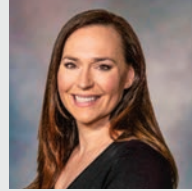


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Nov. 10: WASDE Report: Join DTN Lead Analyst Rhett Montgomery as he breaks down the latest world supply and demand outlook and analysis on commodity prices.

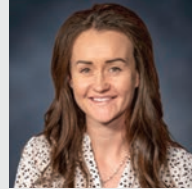
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The Worldwide Wheat Machine Keeps Humming in 2025

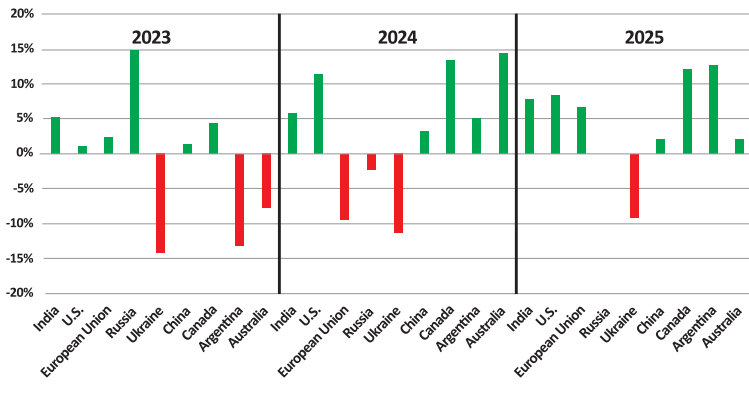
Whenever and wherever I am invited to speak about the world wheat market, one word always finds its way into my presentation and often multiple times, and that word is “efficient.” Between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, wheat in one variety or another is grown almost year-round with very limited gaps between one harvest and the next. Several of the world’s biggest wheat-using countries, such as within the European Union, China and India, are sufficiently able to grow their needs internally. Meanwhile,

the point of producing the second-highest winter wheat yield on record. The 2025 crop outproduced the 2024 crop despite a lower harvested area, which fell within the top 10 fewest acres of winter wheat in the U.S. since 1909. This resilience wasn’t just a domestic observation either, as the recently harvested Russian crop went into dormancy at the end of 2024 and was considered in generally poor condition only to rebound during spring green-up. It outproduced 2024 and also swelled among private estimates to the third-largest Russian crop on record if current estimates at the time of this writing prove correct. In fact, in tracking USDA’s six “major exporting” countries, plus China, India and the U.S., only Ukraine has featured a crop below its previous five-year average during the past year.

On the bottom line, world wheat stocks have declined slightly during the past six to seven years but not enough to incite a significant market reaction, as stocks outside of China have held right near 5 billion bushels in each of the past six seasons. Meanwhile, domestic U.S. wheat stocks sit at 16% above the five-year average. All these factors have worked to keep wheat prices near the bottom of historical ranges, more specifically within the 15th percentile of inflation-adjusted prices since 1990, as of the August monthly close for the December Kansas City futures contract.

There is no denying that the wheat supply chain is showing few concerns entering the homestretch of 2025, but there may be some reasons for price optimism through late 2025 and into 2026. After all, a market with so many key harvests in a calendar year also invites ample opportunity for issues to arise—issues that traders then react to with bullish price movements. As I’ve alluded to, though, the wheat market is often quick to extinguish supply concerns by the next major harvest. So, wheat producers will often need to be prepared to act fast to capitalize on opportunities within the market. ///

Rolling Wheat Harvests 2023–2025
% Above/Below 5 Yr Avg



SOURCE: USDA



Rhett Montgomery
Lead Analyst

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net-importing countries often have four or five options to turn to through the year for supply, whether that be African countries importing from Europe, Russia and Ukraine, or Southeast Asian countries importing from Australia. This efficiency is impressive in the ability of world supplies to quickly rebound from production shortfalls to meet world demand. But, it is also frustrating from a producer standpoint given the price pressures that come with a steady supply of the cornerstone grain.

Another word I would use to describe the wheat supply chain around the globe in 2025 is “resilient.” Recall that a year ago in late fall 2024, the 2025 U.S. winter wheat crop opened with the second-lowest USDA condition rating postplanting since the series began in the late 1980s. Despite dryness concerns through the winter and spring, late conditions improved to



Farmland Market Stalls Amid Cost-Price Squeeze

The ethanol boom ushered in a new era of commodity prices. Since 2006, corn prices have averaged \$4.45 per bushel and soybeans \$10.65, what University of Illinois economist Gary Schnitkey calls a long-term price plateau.

There's a typical pattern for commodity-based agriculture.

"We spend short amounts of time well above that price plateau, and then we can spend considerable time below," he says. USDA forecasts another year of average prices below the plateau: \$3.90 for corn and \$10 for soybeans, as of September estimates.

"Whether we spend one more year below it, two more years below it, five years below it, it's all unpredictable," Schnitkey adds.

In 2023, a hypothetical central-Illinois farm with a 50-50 corn and soybean rotation spent \$1,000 per acre to produce a crop, but it also brought home record income.

"Costs have not come down near as much as prices have come down," Schnitkey says. The Illinois' Farmdoc team anticipates it will cost \$975 per acre to plant crops on the same hypothetical farm in 2026. Of that, \$359 will go to cash rent, while \$648 will cover nonland expenses like seed, fertilizer, equipment and labor, etc. That's "lower than 2023 primarily because of nitrogen fertilizer prices and nothing else," he says.

If 2026 goes as anticipated, the Farmdoc team forecasts losses of \$33 per acre after accounting for a \$50-per-acre Agriculture Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage payment. That'd mark four consecutive years of significantly negative profit margins. The analysis didn't include any ad hoc assistance, which hadn't been announced at press time.

For comparison, cash rent farmers in central Illinois lost \$3 per acre in 2014 and \$10 per acre in 2015 before returning to slim but profitable margins the following two years.

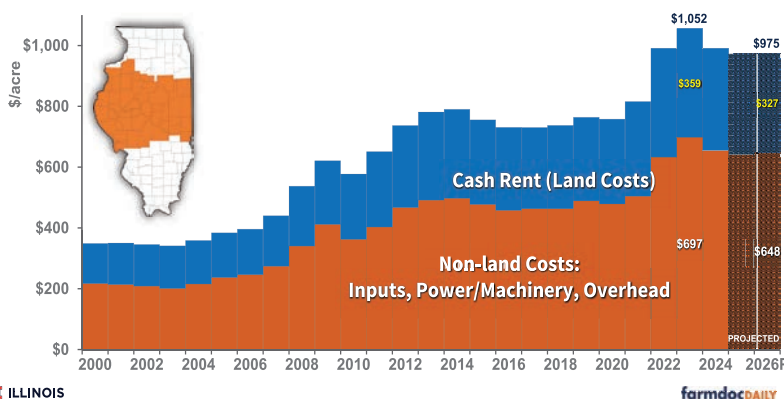
Farm income fractures. Farmers are facing steeper losses for longer in this downcycle compared to the last one, and it has significantly eroded farm incomes. Schnitkey says farms generally need to earn \$80,000 to \$90,000 to cover family living expenses and debt payments, but the average income for farms enrolled in the Illinois Farm Business Management database is only forecast at \$45,000 for both 2025 and 2026.

"That's going to result in deteriorating financial positions, lower working capital and, for many farms, higher debt-to-asset ratios," he says.

"Ad hoc payments may be necessary and may be helpful in the short term, but I don't know how many favors we're doing ourselves in the long term," says Nick Paulson, another University of Illinois ag economist. He joins a growing chorus of farmers and experts who warn that while higher government payments may prop up incomes, they may also deter companies and landowners from lowering the cost of inputs.

Land impacts. Cash rents tend to rise quickly when commodity prices go up but are slow to fall. Paulson says

Production Costs for Central Illinois in \$ per acre
50-50 Corn-Soy Rotation, 2000 to 2026P



SOURCE: ILLINOIS FARM BUSINESS FARM MANAGEMENT AND FARMDOC PROJECTIONS

a broad array of survey-based data—by USDA, the Federal Reserve and the Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers—all suggest that cash rents are declining, albeit incrementally.

"Evidence is more mixed on where farmland prices are going than cash rents," Schnitkey says, adding the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago sees farmland values climbing for Indiana, Iowa and Wisconsin on a year-over-year basis, while Illinois' stay flat. Other surveys show good-to-excellent Illinois farmland values declining by 2 to 4%.

He notes that buyers are still picking up land that comes to market, but price growth appears limited by interest rates and financial caution on farms.

Paulson says there will be a surprise positive movement that reshapes the farm economy puzzle. "The key word there is surprise," he says. "When that's going to happen, where that's going to happen is tough to predict. Anyone who tells you otherwise is not being honest." ///

A Harvest Tradition of Thanks

BY Katie Pratt



KATIE PRATT

Harvest isn't truly done until we've gathered in the farm shop for our annual harvest dinner. My in-laws have been saying thank you like this for years. Everyone is invited, from the part-time harvest help who drove grain carts or trucks to the seed dealers, landowners, neighboring farmers and friends who weathered the chaos of another harvest season.

We call the caterer, send the invitations and take a good guess on the number attending. The farmers spend a few days cleaning the farm shop, washing away harvest dust and setting every tool back in its spot. We set tables and chairs, and decorate the shop in holiday greenery.

On the night of the dinner, entire families arrive. We've taken to setting up a kids' corner with games, puzzles and craft supplies. However, these kids—most of them true country kids—prefer to run wild outdoors regardless of the late-fall weather.

We take up a lot of space, eat a lot of great food and talk a lot about—what else—farming and harvest. This year, I'm sure the conversation will focus on the fields attacked by hail and wind midsummer, then heat in late summer and finally drought in early fall. In the same breath, we'll celebrate the yields we didn't expect from fields that caused us to lose hope.

We'll marvel at the fact that harvest is truly done. Every year, we seem surprised when we can say harvest is over as if it is a never-ending season. But, every year, it does conclude—and with the telling of embarrassing mishaps that may have fallen upon one or more of our harvest crew.

Did I mention we laugh—a lot?

The harvest dinner is our final farewell to another year and a celebration of what makes this farm possible: the people. ///



Katie Pratt writes and shares her love of agriculture and family from a north-central Illinois farm. Find her writing blog at theillinoisfarmgirl.com

RIP Katie Elder

BY Tiffany Dowell Lashmet

“For a ranch kid, their first horse is their first love.”

I wrote these words on Facebook earlier this year announcing the passing of my children's beloved pony, Katie Elder.

She truly was one of a kind, and she lived a heck of a life. She did a stint as birthday party entertainment prior to coming to us. On our farm, she was the best babysitter we've ever had, an excellent therapist and the overseer of all other animals. At the rodeo, she showed her stuff as a champion flag racer and runner in the game of “golfette.” When we finally retired her from riding, she spent her last few years as a pasture princess, just eating, sleeping and doing whatever she pleased.

Katie Elder was ridden backward, double, standing up, upside down, under the swing set and through the trees. She never flinched. She raised her kids well and was, without question, very well-loved and made her owners feel very well-loved in return.

What I did not expect when I made my post was the reaction from so many people remembering their own first horse. Grown men commented that they still missed their first horse every day. Grandmothers wrote comments about the lessons they learned as a child because of the horses they owned. It got me thinking about my own first horse. Baldy was a big sorrel gelding that I can still picture today, 40 years later.

Apparently, at least according to my social media followers, first horses are as memorable as first loves. While horse ownership is not for the faint of heart (or those who like keeping their money in the bank instead of in the barn), it can be one of the most long-lasting things you can do for your children. Do you remember your own first four-legged love? ///



TIFFANY DOWELL LASHMET



Tiffany Dowell Lashmet juggles family, farming, writing, livestock and a career in ag law from the Texas Panhandle. Follow her blog at alwaysafarmkid.com, on Instagram at [@alwaysafarmkid](https://www.instagram.com/alwaysafarmkid) and [@TiffDowell](https://www.instagram.com/TiffDowell) on X.



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Brothers Jon Richer, fresh out of the Marine Corps, and Caleb, an engineer working for the U.S. Navy, became full-time farmers with a common goal of building on the legacy their father, Dale, put in motion years ago.

“The former tenant [of 18 years] had been no-tilling all those years but had been using anhydrous ammonia, and the ground was hard, and the soil was pale,” Jon recalls. “Despite the long-term use of no-till, there were still several washouts we needed to repair, and we couldn’t find earthworms in our fields.”

The brothers were already building up their 45-head Angus-based commercial cow herd when they went “full time” producing a 50/50 split of corn and soybeans on roughly 600 acres, along with about 100 acres in wheat and triticale forage. Slowly, they also established a drylot operation to fatten 100 purchased steers per year on farm-grown grain and forage.



“We were making it work well for nine months of the year,” Caleb explains. “But, from December to March, our cattle would be nearly up to their bellies in mud and manure because of the wet winters.”

That began to change in July 2016 with a chance conversation between Caleb and a friend who worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

NRCS 9-Step Conservation Planning

1. Identify problems and opportunities.
2. Determine objectives.
3. Inventory resources.
4. Analyze resource data.
5. Formulate alternatives.
6. Evaluate alternatives.
7. Make decisions.
8. Implement the plan.
9. Evaluate the plan.

Step-by-Step

Indiana growers follow nine-point NRCS program to boost regenerative farming practices and yields while improving their cattle operation.

“He asked me how we were doing on the farm, and I had to tell him for most of the year, we do well, but with winter’s rains, we’re going to have to do something to fix the mud situation, or we’ll have to quit the cattle,” Caleb says. “While we were skeptical at first, he convinced us to approach NRCS about its programs and how they could help us plan out remedies to our problems by looking at our whole operation and planning around what we wanted to do now and in the future.”

Brothers Jon and Caleb Richer returned to their family’s Indiana farm with a mission to make various improvements to their crop and cattle operation.

> 9-STEP CONSERVATION PLAN

In 2017, the Richers met with Mark Cambron, the local NRCS district conservationist, about their concerns for animal health, manure runoff into a pond and the possibility of technical and financial assistance.

“That was Step 1 of the proven Nine-Step Conservation Planning Process,” Cambron explains. “From there, we worked through the farm’s overall resources and how those could be used to meet the brothers’ objectives with our technical and financial assistance.”

The process also explored alternatives and potential for future improvements. By 2019, the Richers made decisions to begin what ultimately involved three



improvement projects through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). They included:

- the installation of a 40- x 120-foot manure barn and a concrete heavy-use-area feeding slab to allow quick removal and storage of manure into the barn until applied on fields
- constructing a roof over the cattle feeding area to direct excess rainfall safely down a grassed waterway to a nearby pond in the West Boggs Creek watershed
- building a nearby barn for the cow herd to protect it from winter weather and the inevitable mud (the structure is designed to allow cows and calves access to corn stalks and other field residue on an adjacent 80-acre field). ►



The brothers were ecstatic at the turnaround their improvements made, providing them better livestock feeding efficiency, the ability to store and spread manure at will to nourish crops, and improvements in soil health the homegrown fertilizer provided as cattle grazed cornstalks and cover crops.

> PLAN BOOSTS CATTLE BENEFITS

“When we got the concrete and manure barn, our rate of gain on cattle went from 2 pounds per day to over 3 pounds,” Caleb explains. “We realized we could now feed a lot more cattle, and using the manure to help produce the forage they eat would benefit our bottom line as well as the biological health of our fields.”

Currently, the brothers feed about 150 steers but say their facilities could handle up to 300 on full feed from 500 pounds to finish. They market a large portion of cattle as freezer beef and also sell individual cuts through the Richer Farms Market, operated by their wives, Neely and Megan.

“In addition, we graze all of our cornstalks with the cow herd, and while they are consuming that residue, they’re recycling those nutrients right back onto our fields,” Jon says. “The same with the cover crops we keep on all acres not growing grain. We’re improving soil health and growing cheap cattle feed at the same time.”

With the access to stored manure, the brothers have begun to spread it further across the farm rather than just on acres next to the feeding operation. To facilitate moving the manure, they bought an Artex SB 600 spreader, which is instrumental in keeping the storage clean and fields fertilized according to soil tests.

“We’ve been able to turn a potential liability in storing large amounts of manure into a money-saving asset,” Jon explains.

The Richers turned to NRCS specialists to craft solutions to improve their cattle facilities and soil health and to secure financial assistance.

“When we realized we could save \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year on commercial fertilizer with farm-raised manure, it made sense to buy the big spreader, because in two years, it would be paid for.”

> SOIL-HEALTH BENEFITS

Soil tests show the brothers are slowly improving soil organic matter from the 1.2% when they took over the operation to readings in the 2.2 to 2.3% range in some fields. Also, they say the top foot of their fields is now turning black, and a shovel in nearly any spot of cropland yields 20 to 30 earthworms.

“This regenerative approach to farming also has boosted corn yields from the 165 range when we started farming together to 230 to 240 bushels per acre,” Jon says. “We market some of our grain, but at least 100 acres goes back into a total mix ration for our cattle. The yield bump has been astounding.”

The positive changes in soil health on Richer Farms are also rooted in the brothers’ early switch to no-till. Cover crops go in immediately behind the combine and provide extra grazing as well as reduced compaction and improved nutrient cycling.

“We’ve been very happy planning the projects through NRCS,” Jon explains. “They helped us turn problems into solutions. The efficiencies we’ve achieved are helping pay for our part of the EQIP projects and definitely are improving our bottom line.” ///





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PARKER CHRISTIAN CHIEF AGRONOMIST OF UPTERRA



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Frequency Arrays imprint proprietary frequencies into the water to enhance nutrient cycling, density and uptake, and improve overall crop health and pest mitigation.



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Forage Crops: 3.9 tons/ac yield increase



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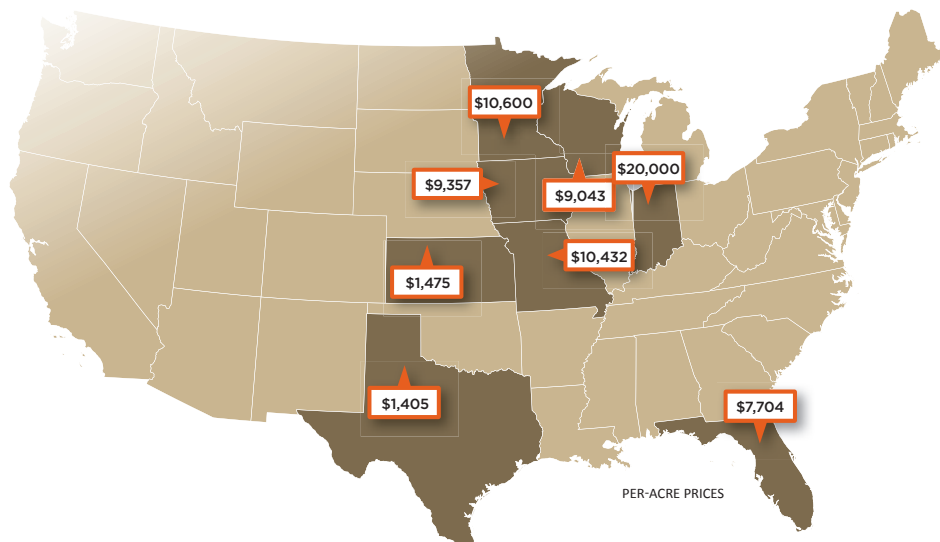


Soybeans: 15 bu/ac yield increase

"I ended up having my highest yield on my corn, which was 201 bushels per acre. My insurance agent told me that, out of all of her customers who were dryland, I was the only one who did not have a claim in this area. TerraFlow made a big difference."

JASON DOEBLIN MISSOURI

Recent Farmland Sales



FLORIDA, Suwannee County. A 1,681-acre irrigated farm sold for \$12.95 million, or an average of \$7,704 per acre. The farm's 1,347 irrigated acres included 16 wells and 15 center pivots. Of the remaining acres, 121 are suitable for dryland crop production, and the remaining are in woods, and cutover timber. **Contact:** Drew Bridges, Bridges Land Co. LLC; drew@bridgeslandcompany.com, 229-254-1117 www.bridgeslandcompany.com

INDIANA, St. Joseph County. A 120-acre farm sold for \$2.4 million, or \$20,000 per acre. The 20-acre homesite includes a 1,566-square-foot home built in 1904 and three barns. The remainder of the property is mostly level, tillable cropland featuring Crosier loam soils. **Contact:** Larry Jordan, Halderman Real Estate and Farm Management; lj@halderman.com, 765-473-5849 www.halderman.com

IOWA, Plymouth County. Twelve tracts totaling nearly 1,400 acres sold over two days at auction for \$13.1 million, or an average of \$9,357 per acre. The smallest tract, just shy of 12 acres, sold for the highest per-acre price, at

\$18,000 an acre, while the largest farm, at 207 acres, brought the second-highest per-acre price, at \$16,000 per acre. The least-expensive parcel was a 78-acre tract that had severely eroded Ida silt loam soils. **Contact:** Randy Stabe, Stabe Auction and Realty; auction@frontiernet.net, 712-540-9640 www.stabeauctionandrealty.com

KANSAS, Norton County. Four tracts of farmland totaling 640 acres sold at auction for \$944,250, or an average of \$1,475 per acre. The farm was a mix of cropland, pasture and CRP. The smallest tract, a 70-acre parcel of cropland, sold for an average of \$2,100 per acre, while the largest tract, a 325-acre field split between crops and grass, sold for an average of \$1,250 per acre. **Contact:** Donald Hazlett, Farm and Ranch Realty Inc.; frr@frrmail.com, 800-247-7863 www.farmandranchrealty.com

MINNESOTA, Brown County. A farm that's just shy of 150 acres sold at auction for \$1.59 million, or an average of \$10,600 per acre. Offered in two parcels across the street from each other, the properties have a Price Loss Coverage yield of 171 bushels per acre

(bpa) for corn and 49 bpa for soybeans. Each parcel contains some drainage tile.

Contact: Nick Meixell, Hertz Real Estate Services; NickM@hertz.ag, 507-246-0909 www.hertz.ag

MISSOURI, Audrain and Monroe Counties. A 495-acre farm sold in 10 tracts in a private sale for \$5.164 million, or an average of \$10,432 per acre. The mostly tillable properties sold in tracts ranging from 10 to 98 acres, containing mostly Putnam, Mexico and Leonard silt loam soils. **Contact:** Jess Nighswonger, Schrader Real Estate and Auction Co. Inc.; auctions@schraderauction.com, 800-451-2709 www.schraderauction.com

TEXAS, Floyd County. A contiguous 2,768-acre property sold for \$3.89 million, or \$1,405 per acre. The property was originally listed at \$4.1 million. The property contains 390 irrigated acres, 235 dryland crop acres and 1,842 acres of pasture. Two of the tracts have drip irrigation on 80-inch spacing. **Contact:** Brent McDonald, Farmers National Co.; BMcDonald@farmersnational.com, 806-503-2287 www.farmersnational.com

WISCONSIN, Grant County. A 115-acre farm sold in an online auction for \$1.04 million, or \$9,043 per acre. The farm's Fayette and Palsgrove silt loam soils carry an NCCPI rating of 79.7. The tract is hilly, with the NRCS soil data indicating some erosion. The farm also has a restrictive covenant preventing any future livestock facilities. **Contact:** Darrell Crapp, Sullivan Auctioneers; sold@sullivanauctioneers.com, 844-847-2161 www.sullivanauctioneers.com

These sales figures are provided by the sources and may not be exact because of rounding.

Submit recent land sales to
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Flow and Function

This well-designed structure is built for efficient maintenance workflow and as a versatile hub for livestock auctions.

Adam Eichacker is a fourth-generation farmer working his family's homestead near Salem, South Dakota, 30 miles west of Sioux Falls. Adam's family operation, Eichacker Simmentals, is a diversified grain and a registered Simmental cattle operation managed in partnership with his father, Steve, his uncle, Greg, and his mother, Cathy.

Since 1942, the Eichackers have worked the East River area of South Dakota, east of the Missouri River, which is known for its rich plains. "We have a very good conservation balance. The cornstalks get grazed by the cattle, and what can't be farmed goes to the cattle. We

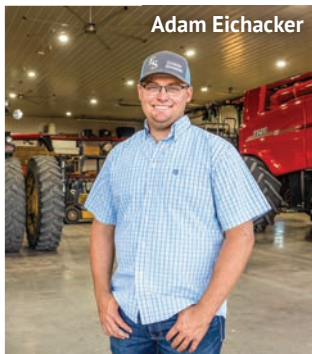
feed silage and cracked corn to the feedlot cattle," Eichacker explains.

The farmstead is marked by a row of grain bins, a long, gray Quonset hut, feedlots and buildings central to the dairy that once operated here.

Prominent is the farm's deep-red

Morton Buildings structure built in 2022. It is a highly functional building, 13,000 square feet with 20-foot sidewalls and a 1,000-square-foot office complex featuring a wraparound porch finished with stone wainscot. It's a fine buffer against wind and rain.

The 81- x 150-foot building is designed for traffic flow and an efficient maintenance pipeline. Wide concrete and gravel aprons outside allow uncluttered



Adam Eichacker

ROBB LONG PHOTOGRAPHY



ROBB LONG PHOTOGRAPHY

space for equipment, deliveries and visitors. The building is heated comfortably in the winter and cooled in the summer. LED lights reflect off the white walls and down to the floor: a 5-inch, densified concrete pad infused with a hardening agent for high strength and a smooth finish. A 36-foot-wide washrack, segregated by a service door and an overhead door large enough for a forklift, is as much a place to contain the grease and dirt, even the odor, of a teardown as it is a place to clean equipment.

It serves, too, as the center of the family's annual bull sale. "One of the main reasons for this design was for a bull sale," Eichacker says. Morton structures have a look appropriate for sales that bring in as many as 400 bidders.

"My father and I just weren't happy with other steel structures. They look commercial or industrial. Aesthetics was very important to us. We wanted this to feel kind of like home for our bull buyers," he continues. A bank of four clerestory windows high on the back wall carry natural light down to the auction floor. Three cupolas on the rooftop are nonfunctional "but add to the eye appeal as visitors arrive at the farm."

Many of the early pencil-drawn plans for the building ended up in the wastebasket or in what became a folder thick with ideas. "Planning was not only the most important part of the process, but it was also one of the most rewarding once you see the finished project," Eichacker says.

The Eichackers' design is not short on doors—something obvious in other shops with too few. A 40- x 18-foot Powerlift hydraulic door, three 24- x 18-foot overhead doors—two of those on either end of the drive-through washrack—a 12- x 12-foot overhead door for pickup trucks or forklifts delivering parts and supplies, and a half-dozen work doors scattered around the shop create easy access for humans and equipment.

"We put in doors all over the building; you're able to come and go through any corner of the building," he says.



COURTESY OF THE EICHACKER FAMILY



Watch The Video



tinyurl.com/yc7w9cn6 DTH

Large doors are positioned for traffic flow—the Powerlift on one end and an overhead 24-foot-wide door on a far wall. "Powerlift doors can be a little slow, but the large opening for accessibility is huge, and having the accessibility of coming in opposite ends of the shop is really nice," Eichacker says. "If you have everything torn apart in one place, you can still get something in on the opposite end."

The shop is heated and cooled by a geothermal system—glycol in lines under the floor warming the shop in winter—the same system cooling it by way of air handlers in the summer. The morning we visited, the glycol was 48°F. Geothermal lines, 400 feet long, are buried 10 or 11 feet behind the building, out and back, in each of 14 trenches.

"I was skeptical at first," Eichacker says. "How was concrete going to heat the building? I was used to our old shop with forced air and propane. But, I'm impressed. You can open doors for 10 minutes in the winter, do the equipment shuffle, and within 15 minutes, you're right back to you didn't even know your doors were open."

Important to the quality of the auctions, but also for day-to-day work, is echo control. "We have our annual bull sale the beginning of March, and they draw 300 to 400 people. You have an auctioneer, big PA [public-address] system, microphones, speakers. We did not want this to get to be an echoey building," he explains.

Morton offers an acoustical feature to dampen echoes. Perforated acoustical steel is applied to the sidewalls and ceiling. Sound passes through the perforations and is muffled by the vapor barrier and insulation behind. The Eichackers made ample use of it.

"You're not afraid to grab an impact on some wheel nuts or drop tools on the floor. It doesn't hurt your ears," Eichacker says. "When we get to our bull sale, for weddings, family or local events, we are very happy with how the building absorbs the sound." ➤



DAN MILLER



ROBB LONG PHOTOGRAPHY



COURTESY OF MORTON BUILDINGS

Other favorite design elements:

OFFICE/PORCH: “Initially, our plans had the office and kitchen inside the 81- x 150-foot box. But, it made things tight inside.” Instead, the Eichackers added a 42- x 24-foot office structure outside—space that includes an office, kitchen, lounging area, bathrooms and laundry. “We made a good decision. It moved all that stuff to an external portion of the shop and gave us a square space inside.”

ELECTRICAL RUNS: “We didn’t do any plumbing in the walls,” he explains. “We wanted to leave the vapor barrier intact. And, I like the ability to modify things going forward. We’ve already added additional hookups for welders and outlets by the workbenches.”

INSULATION: “You only get one chance to insulate a building,” Eichacker explains. The family installed board insulation below the concrete floor and around the outside of the building to keep the heat from dissipating wastefully out the concrete. Sidewalls are an R-30 batt insulation with vapor barrier. The ceiling is both batt insulation and a blown-in top layer for a total of R-50.

SPARE CONDUIT: The Eichackers added empty runs of PVC under the concrete floor that enables them to fish electrical wires, camera lines, air and water lines, and the like under the floor.

LED LIGHTS: This brightly lit shop has five rows of overhead LED halos. Light spreads to all the corners. “You even get light down underneath the equipment, as it reflects off the floor. If I had to do it again, I could make a case for putting up six rows of lights in an 80-foot building.”

BIG ASS FANS: The popular industrial brand offers fans that span up to 24 feet in diameter. Eichacker opted for a pair of 10-foot fans. He says they generate plenty of good airflow to all parts of the building.

COMPRESSED AIR: “Nobody likes to listen to the compressor,” Eichacker says. It’s mounted inside the same insulated room as the geothermal system. Compressed air is plumbed to 50-foot reels inside and out, plus a half-dozen drops inside the main building

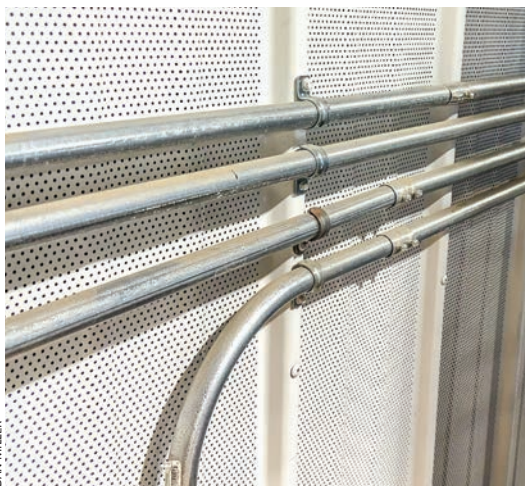
and another three inside the wash bay to deliver compressed air everywhere. “Wherever you’re at, you can grab an air hose and go.”

WATER: Well water serves the shop. “It’s hard water, but it’s cheap,” he says. A water softener treats water supplies running to the kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, sinks and a dishwasher.

FLOORS: One section of the floor is poured to a zero grade for steel fabrications. Zurn floor drains are installed inside the wash area. A second run serves cleanups in the main shop area. Sediment flowing with wash water down into the drains is collected in a 500-gallon sediment basin. “We pumped that out this summer for the first time. It was only about half full,” Eichacker says. ///



COURTESY OF THE EICHACKER FAMILY



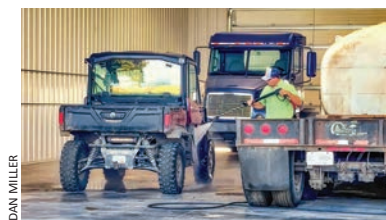
DAN MILLER



COURTESY OF THE EICHACKER FAMILY



ROBB LONG PHOTOGRAPHY



DAN MILLER

Even though they’re happy with the building, there are a few things the shop owners might do differently now:

1 The Eichackers chose 20-foot ceilings. Upon further consideration, 22 feet might have been better. The fans hang down 2 feet from the ceiling. They can maneuver around them, but, “If I had to do it again, 20-foot, to me, with our equipment, is a minimum,” he says. “Twenty-two feet would be better. I know it’s a price jump, but it just gives you that much more room to put up lights, overhead doors and fans, and move in bigger equipment.”

2 The Eichackers built a mezzanine for parts, tools and the geothermal air-handling equipment. The bench and tool area is underneath. The loft is supported by wooden posts. “Knowing what I know

now, I should have probably installed a large, steel I beam to support the loft. It would have given us more open space and flexibility.”



COURTESY OF MORTON BUILDINGS



Equipment Decisions With Partial Budgeting

Tool provides useful guidance about the return on investment of your machinery lineup and when it makes sense to keep or trade.

The price of a 310-PTO horsepower tractor climbed by 3% between 2023 and 2025, according to estimates compiled by University of Illinois' Farmdoc team every two years. That's modest compared to the 2021 to 2023 time frame, when the price of the same tractor jumped 32%.

But, with corn, soybean and wheat prices muddling below many farmers' break-even levels, price tags on equipment are forcing farmers to think more carefully about decisions that would have been no-brainers in 2021 and 2022, when incomes hit records.

"Working capital has contracted over the last year," says Russell Morgan, a farm business adviser and consultant. "There are many farmers that have—I wouldn't call it a shortfall—but certainly tighter working capital."

Between recent upgrades and tight finances, many farmers are forgoing large capital expenditures such as machinery purchases. The Association of Equipment Manufacturers reports that year-to-date combine sales as of August were 42% behind 2024's sales. Sales of tractors with more than 100 horsepower were down more than 26% year-to-date, while 4-wheel-drive tractor sales were almost 40% lower.

But, equipment doesn't last forever, and repairs have trade-offs, too. While some farmers have arrangements with their dealerships to upgrade their fleets every year, others face the repair-or-replace choice on a piece-by-piece basis. Farmers may be reluctant to buy when finances are tight, but sometimes it's worth the investment, Morgan explains.



JIM PATRICO

$$ROI = \left(\frac{\text{Net Profit}}{\text{Total Investment}} \right) \times 100$$

> USE THE RIGHT METRIC

One of the most commonly discussed metrics in finance is return on investment (ROI), but Morgan cautions it's often misused. "It's abused. It's used wrong," he says. Unlike other common but ambiguous buzzwords, such as sustainability, return on investment has a very specific definition.

The return on investment is a ratio expressed as a percentage, measuring the profit generated by an investment relative to its initial cost.

Seed and fertilizer salesmen often misuse ROI because they're trying to illustrate that their products generate a large return, but Morgan stresses that those items are operating expenses, not investments.

"Investment typically refers to a capital investment, something that's going to be around for more than one operating cycle, like a tractor or building," he says.

Calculating the ROI for a tractor, for example, starts with comparing the net financial benefit it provides

against the total cost of ownership over a specific time period, which is typically one year.

Morgan says the net annual benefit requires estimating the positive impact (gains) and subtracting the negative impact (costs) the new tractor has on the farm's profit each year. The positive impacts gained from factors such as enhanced technology, improved fuel efficiency and time savings may be difficult to quantify. Not fully capturing these positive attributes may result in a negative ROI calculation given that farm machinery typically declines in value over time.

For example, if a farmer's total initial investment is \$300,000 with a net annual financial benefit of \$30,000, the ROI would be 10%.

Morgan says ROI as an analytical tool has limitations. It's great at comparing two investment ideas to determine which provides more profit potential—such as a CD with a 4% interest rate and one with a 5% rate. But, it's not that useful in making decisions about a single investment, such as the choice to either buy a new tractor or fix the current one. It also doesn't address the amount of risk the operation can tolerate.

➤ PARTIAL BUDGETING BRINGS PERSPECTIVE

Partial budgeting is an old methodology, but it's tried and true, Morgan explains. It focuses on the incremental costs and benefits associated with a single action, such as upgrading or making repairs to equipment, rather than the farm's entire financial picture.

To start, he suggests outlining easily quantifiable parameters and dividing them into four quadrants. In the top left, list the parameters that add to revenue, such as higher yields because of better technology. On the bottom left, list the parameters that would decrease expenses, such as lower maintenance costs. Then, add them together. This is the positive impact of the decision.

On the top right, list anything that would reduce revenue. Morgan says that category doesn't always apply to equipment but can if the new machine is less versatile or results in the loss of custom-farming business, for example. In the bottom right quadrant, include parameters that add to costs, like interest, depreciation or insurance. Add them together to get the negative impacts.

Finally, subtract items on the negative impacts from the positive. For example, if the positive impacts of the choice total \$100,000 but the drawbacks amount to \$50,000, the net impact is a positive \$50,000.

"That looks like a positive decision, but that's where an economist says, 'It depends,'" Morgan says, explaining that there are factors that aren't easy to quantify that need to be considered, as well. If the decision reduces your management time overseeing labor, for example, that's a net positive, which may be hard to translate into dollars and cents. If the

new equipment includes technology beyond your management capacity or requires labor that you don't have, that's a negative factor.

"These are things that are near impossible to put dollars on, but it does impact the dollars," he says.

Morgan suggests writing all of the nonquantifiable aspects in the quadrants, too, so that you can look at the full picture.

Example:

Partial Budget Machinery Purchase	
Positive	Negative
Added Revenue: Improved yields... \$50,000 (fewer breakdowns, timely fieldwork adding 1-2% to APT)	Reduced Revenue: No impact on custom work... \$0
Decreased Costs: Avoided repair: ... \$45,000 Fuel efficiency gains... \$21,000 Reduced labor... \$10,000	Added Costs: Depreciation & interest... \$38,000 Insurance & tax... \$1,200 Lost value/trade-in... \$10,000
Difficult to Quantify * Less management time * Better record-keeping	Difficult to Quantify * Learning curve on software
Net Positive: \$100,000	Net Negative: \$50,000
Net impact: \$50,000	

➤ KNOW YOUR RISK

If the decision to buy a new tractor looks like a net positive, also consider the impact on the balance sheet, your working capital and your debt-to-asset ratio. Every farm operation is different. "How one management team would interpret the same scenario might be different than how another management team would do it, because they have different aversions to risk," Morgan explains.

Even though a new piece of equipment can increase the value of your assets, the prospect of increased debt can weaken your ratio. Bankers generally consider a debt-to-asset ratio of 60% as vulnerable or high risk.

"Your lender might look a little more askance at your situation" if your ratio goes too high, Morgan says, advising farmers to leave themselves wiggle room in case something negative happens.

"It may be better to hold on to that machine for another year even though it looks like it can make money. Employ proactive management as opposed to reactive management," he says. ///

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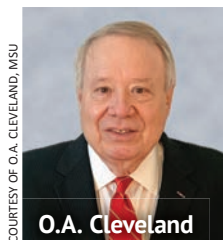


Cotton Conundrum

Weak demand is pressuring prices and causing cotton growers to reevaluate acres for 2026.



O.A. Cleveland is trying to be bullish on cotton, almost willing futures prices to move out of their four-month trading range of 65.50 to 67.50 cents per pound, which is far below most growers' cost of production. But, the professor emeritus at Mississippi State University, long known as one of the most perennially bullish cotton analysts, says he "just can't get there" no matter how hard he tries.

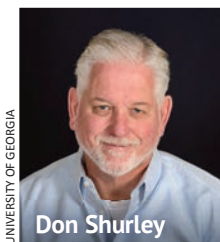


COURTESY OF O.A. CLEVELAND, MSU

Over the last two months, USDA reduced its estimate of the U.S. cotton crop by 1.3 million bales, or nearly 10%. It also forecast world ending stocks would be the lowest since 2010–11, and world cotton carryover would be the lowest since 2014–15 because of lower production in several countries.

"In the past, if we had production declines like we're seeing, the market would have been limit up," Cleveland points out. "And, we see production declines that historically would have resulted in a strong movement higher, and [instead] the market comes down."

The August report also revised acreage lower, mostly in Georgia and Texas, explains Don Shurley, professor of economics emeritus at the University of Georgia. "In the September report, expected U.S. production was raised just slightly. Through all this, the market seemed not to care." (Texas was reduced 440,000 acres, and Georgia, 160,000.)



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

"Prices have not improved and, if anything, have gotten weaker," he adds. "Although acreage has been reduced, crop condition has generally been favorable, and it could be the market is viewing this as offsetting some of the reduction in acres."

> DEMAND DOLDRUMS

Cleveland and Shurley point to another factor—reduced demand for cotton fabrics—while the world cotton market has become more competitive, as countries such as Brazil have tripled their cotton production in the last 10 years (see table on page 27).

"U.S. exports for the 2025 crop year were also reduced by 500,000 bales," Shurley adds. "It's hard to see prices making much improvement over the next few months unless: 1) the crop is reduced again, or 2) the outlook for demand improves."

"We're seeing December 2026 futures at 70 cents," says Cleveland, who continues to write market commentaries and participates in the monthly "AgMarket Network Cotton Roundtable." "Unfortunately, for the past 18 months, we have seen the distant futures contract price fall to the expiring futures price. And, that's symbolic of the lack of demand we have."

The low prices could lead to a decline in acreage in China or India, he notes. "However, Brazil tells us that their 2026 acreage could be 3% higher than 2025. They have increased their acreage by more than 100% in 10 years."

Meanwhile, China is buying less cotton. "Granted, China has farmed out some of their domestic production to Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh and other lower-wage countries," Cleveland states. "We're getting a portion of that market, but we are losing share in all of our export markets, primarily to Brazil."

"We have lost our comparative advantage of being the low-cost producer," he stresses. "Brazil grows cotton for at least a nickel a pound less than we do."

> FEWER ACRES?

What will producers faced with such a bleak outlook plant in 2026? Shurley says he's predicting Georgia growers will reduce acres as they did in 2025 or remain at about the same acreage as this year. (Shurley also writes weekly market commentaries.)

"Our main alternatives are corn or peanuts," he notes. "Soybeans can be an alternative in some situations, but I think it's beyond acreage decisions for some growers. Two years in a row like this is more than some farm businesses can withstand."

John Robinson, professor and Extension specialist for cotton marketing at Texas A&M University, says many Texas growers will continue to plant



COURTESY OF SOUTHERN AG TODAY



cotton because of the current lack of viable alternatives.

“The U.S. might have planted less than 9 million acres this year if the corn market had been strong. We would have had a big swing out of cotton, but we didn’t because the corn market was

terrible. Will grain markets be higher next year? My corn vs. cotton ratio suggests we’ll have 10 million cotton acres planted instead of 9.0 or 8.5.”

➤ PRICE PROSPECTS

The economists agree pricing the 2026 crop at the current levels offered by ICE (Intercontinental Exchange) futures would be premature, guaranteeing growers would be locking in a loss.

“Even if the outlook is projected to be weak, there’s always a range within that year,” Robinson explains. “Typically, the seasonal pattern is the highest prices happen between March and early June.

“I tell growers if you’ve decided to plant cotton, you really need to consider forward-pricing or hedging at that time of year. If the price is 69 or 72 cents, they’ll say that’s not enough. I’m not saying sell your whole crop, but if you make the decision

to plant it, you need to consider pricing it in chunks when prices are historically the highest.”

One caveat is the weather. DTN is forecasting La Niña conditions to continue into winter 2025–26, an event that usually favors drier than normal weather over the primary cotton areas from California through the Carolinas and everywhere in between.

“If it persists into the first quarter, it could impact the cotton in west-central and northwestern Texas with much higher abandonment than currently assumed,” Robinson adds. “And, although China has been reducing consumption, other countries could buy more if the economy doesn’t weaken.

“I heard a talk [recently] that said U.S. consumers have been buying apparel at a good clip,” he notes. “Retailers have been understocked. So, there’s a gap in inventory that may have to be made up because they don’t have as much as they did pre-COVID.”

Shurley says options can help. “They’re not a perfect solution, and nothing is. Suppose you bought a Dec. 26 put with a strike price at 70 cents. This might cost 4.5 cents, so you would be locking in a ‘floor’ at 65.5 cents basis December. But, you could sell at a higher price if the market goes up.”

The economists also agree efforts such as the National Cotton Council’s new campaign against microplastics could help. “Until we do something about demand, I don’t see prices getting much better,” Cleveland says. ///

BRAZIL COTTON PRODUCTION

Market Year	Area (1,000 ha)	Production (1,000 480-lb. Bales)	Yield (kg/ha)
2015/2016	975	7,180	1,603
2016/2017	955	5,920	1,350
2017/2018	940	7,020	1,626
2018/2019	1,175	9,220	1,708
2019/2020	1,640	13,000	1,726
2020/2021	1,665	13,780	1,802
2021/2022	1,370	10,820	1,720
2022/2023	1,600	11,720	1,595
2023/2024	1,660	14,570	1,911
2024/2025	1,945	17,000	1,903
2025/2026	2,100	18,250	1,892
5-year Average 2020/21 – 2024/25	1,648	13,578	1,786
Change From 5-Year Average (%)	27	34	6
Record	1,945	17,000	1,911
Record Year	2024/2025	2024/2025	2023/2024

SOURCE: PS&D ONLINE UPDATED ON SEPT. 12, 2025, USDA, FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE, IPAD



Strategies To Deal With a Downturn

Years ago, I was helping a family business in the oil and gas industry. Times were good, and they were enjoying both growth and profitability. But, they knew their business was cyclical, and at some point, the financial conditions would change. They wanted to lessen the impact of the impending downturn.

During that meeting, we put together a list of ideas. We identified the leading indicators of a slowdown in the business so we knew when the downturn would show up locally. We listed the equipment we might sell early before others flooded the market. We analyzed what jobs were less profitable and why. We talked through the list of employees, picking out who might be ready for retirement or who might work well in another business.

Sure enough, the downturn arrived. It was still hard. But, as soon as it started, the family pulled out the list and began diligently assessing options and making decisions.

Agriculture is also a cyclical business, and row-crop economics are facing headwinds. Here are a few contingency-planning categories to consider if you are working through a downturn on your farm.

Understand your financial performance. A good place to start is analyzing your income and expenses, and clarifying what business activities are producing a profit. Use your accountant, lender or a financial analyst to help you understand what makes or loses money so you understand your “burn rate” (the rate at which you are losing equity or working capital). You will then have a good basis for potential decisions and understand the level of urgency.

Reduce expenses. An obvious place to focus is on reducing expenses. From crop inputs to employee costs to your family living expenses, scrutinize everything. Be cognizant that cuts in some expenses, like crop inputs or fertilizer, may produce future challenges related to yield or soil health. Where can you cut expenses without significantly affecting future crop quality?

Provide services. If you have excess labor and equipment, consider providing services like spraying,

planting or harvesting to other farms. You may also have people with other abilities who might generate revenue in areas like technology, construction, demolition, earth-moving or manure-hauling. These strategies need a profitability analysis to make sure you do not lose more money.

Collaborate with neighbors. Agriculture is capital intensive, and many neighbors have similar equipment. Are there opportunities to share? Perhaps you can work with a neighbor who is better at grain marketing and pool your bushels to gain

more revenue or financial flexibility. Is there a chance to share a mechanic or pool labor? While agriculture is known for independent operators, some farms I know are starting to work together as neighbors.

Sell assets. Selling land or equipment can be more difficult. The equipment market may be saturated, and selling land is often

a hard decision. Also, beware of the tax impact of selling assets, particularly those with a low tax basis, as you may face capital gain or income tax obligations. Once you know the tax effect of selling assets, it may make sense to strategically sell certain assets to generate cash or reduce debt.

Speaking of debt, stay in close communication with your lenders. They likely have good ideas based on their observations of other operators. Another area to consider is off-farm employment as a steady income stream with benefits such as health insurance that can help the farm.

Dealing with a downturn is never easy. Your best chances to make it through are enhanced by open communication and getting all ideas on the table. ///



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Twine Talk

If I switch twine strengths in my New Holland or John Deere small square baler, will I need to make any adjustment of the tongue pressure on the billhook? My neighbor's New Holland baler's knot began hanging on the billhook when he changed from 130 to 170. Was his problem associated with the change in twine strength?

Steve: A change from 130 knot strength to 170 knot strength usually requires little change, if any, to accommodate the thicker 170 twine knot. However, it could need an adjustment.

When adjusting the tongue-holding strength, always turn the adjusting screw (see photo below) only $\frac{1}{4}$ turn at a time. If the tongue pressure is too low, the knot will not be tight. If the tongue pressure is too great, the knot will hang in the billhook. If you change from a higher knot strength twine to a lesser twine strength, you may need to increase tongue pressure. If you switch from a lower knot strength twine to a higher knot strength twine, you may need to decrease the tongue pressure.



Have a mechanical problem you can't resolve? Email Steve Thompson at askthemechaniccolumn@gmail.com

Please include your contact information and phone number.



STEVE THOMPSON

Of Mules and Drones

Farming is taking on a new piece of equipment: drones. The same farms once worked long ago by mules are now worked by drones. Although drones have been used for some time in police work, professional photography, security and gathering scientific data, farming with drones is a rather new approach to dodging Mother Nature and her tricks that keep machinery out of the field.

Local farmer Brad Lumpkins, of Lumpkins Farms, Leonard, Texas, recently hired Tri-County Ag Services LLC to spray his fields with a drone when the field was too muddy to run his big ground rig. When I asked him why he went with the expense of drone spraying, Brad was pretty straightforward. "You have to protect the crop," he said. Drones fly over the mud. Ronnie Lumpkins, Brad's father, remains amazed. "I never thought farming would come down to anything like flying a drone. Bet that drone would spook the mules that once farmed this land," he added.

There are safety issues when spraying with a drone because the spray is applied in a highly concentrated mix. It can drift and be inhaled. So, stay upwind when spraying fields to avoid exposure. Always wear protective clothing, and rinse your skin if you are exposed to drone spray.

Another issue is gunfire. If you see a drone flying around, day or night, know that it is illegal to shoot it down. That should be left unsaid, but just so you know: It is illegal to shoot down a drone under Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations. Drones are considered aircraft and are protected by federal law, including by the Aircraft Sabotage Act, which prohibits damaging or destroying aircraft.

Shooting down a drone can lead to significant penalties, including fines and up to 20 years in prison. That's in addition to state and local charges for offenses such as reckless endangerment or property damage. If you have an issue with a drone, document the incident—with photos if you can—and report it to local authorities or the FAA. ///

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JENNIFER CARRICO

Tips To Boost Calves at Birth

Q If a calf is slow at birth, what suggestions do you have to get it going? I've heard caffeine or other things can give it a boost.

A **DR. McMILLAN:** Getting calves off to a good start is extremely important not just for calf survival but to avoid neonatal diseases.

The first steps should happen long before the calf is born. Good heifer development and bull selection are critical to avoid difficult births. I prefer both heifers and cows to have a body condition score of about 6. Overconditioning can be almost as bad as underconditioning. Match bull calving ease expected progeny differences (EPDs) to your heifers and cows.

The next step is the art of knowing when to intervene to assist a cow in labor. Overly aggressive observation can create problems, but calves that remain in the birth canal too long will usually be weak at birth. My rule is to intervene after a cow has been in hard labor for more than an hour and heifers for two to three hours, but others have different standards. We had one reader who said he never intervened and, over the years, had essentially eliminated calving problems.

After a normal birth, calves should breathe within 30 seconds, lift their head within three minutes, sit up within five minutes, try to stand within 20 minutes, stand within an hour and nurse within two hours.

If the calf seems weak or slow to stand, dry it off, dip the navel in a disinfectant like Betadine or chlorhexidine, and warm the calf, if needed. Continued rubbing of the calf with a towel mimics the cow licking the calf and stimulates the calf. If there is any doubt that the calf got adequate colostrum, give a colostrum replacer (not supplement) using an esophageal feeder.

Caffeine has been used for years in human infants and calves to stimulate breathing. For the first years of my practice, we had a caffeine injection I found to be quite effective; but to my knowledge, it's off the market. Many experts recommend giving weak calves an energy drink such as 5-Hour Energy. This can provide up to 200 milligrams of caffeine. Cold water applied to the ear may also stimulate the calf.

Weak calves, especially those after hard or prolonged birth, may be in considerable pain. Injectable nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs including flunixin, ketoprofen or meloxicam have been proven to improve calf vigor and improve weight gain in the first weeks of life. These are all prescription medications, so talk with your veterinarian for guidance on how these drugs should be used.

Q I know animals have different normal temperatures from humans. What do you consider normal?

A **DR. McMILLAN:** Most animals—except equines—don't sweat much. That can make their temperatures much more variable, especially if they have exerted themselves or if it's hot.

In the absence of these factors, the following are pretty good rules of thumb for when you might consider animals have a fever and may need attention or possible treatment:

- > bovine: 103°F (39.5°C)
- > small ruminants: 103.3°F (39.6°C)
- > swine: 103°F (39.5°C)
- > equine: 101.5°F (38.6°C)
- > dogs and cats: 102°F (38.89°C)

Please contact your veterinarian with questions pertaining to the health of your herd. Every operation is unique, and the information in this column does not pertain to all situations. This is not intended as medical advice but is purely for informational purposes.

These are only my thoughts and general guidelines. Please get with your veterinarian and together develop the best program for your herd.



➤ Story By Jennifer Carrico, @JennCattleGal

Mexican Border Closure Burdens Texas Feedyards

Cattlemen on both sides of the border want live cattle trade to reopen.

The movement of New World screwworm (NWS) northward in Mexico shut down the U.S.-Mexico border to live cattle trade in July 2025. The closure has greatly affected some feedyards in Texas that rely on Mexican cattle to fill their lots.

Mark Rogers, owner of Rogers and Sons Ltd. Custom Cattle Feeders, in Dimmitt, Texas, has fed Mexican cattle for more than 25 years. For the past 15 years,

the imported cattle have taken up 90 to 95% of his feedyard. “The border closure affects us tremendously. It has always made sense for us to feed Mexican cattle, because we are one of the first feedlots they pass after going through Santa Teresa [Port of Entry] at the border,” Rogers says.

The border closure has lowered his cattle numbers to 70% of the feedyard’s capacity compared to a year ago. Rogers says he’s not the only feedyard suffering, as many neighboring cattle feeders are dealing with the same issue.

Omar Gonzalez, Rogers’ cattle broker across the border in Mexico, says they are suffering from the closure, as well. “Screwworm isn’t a problem up here in the Northern Plains of Mexico, and now we are having to find a place to put these cattle that normally go to the U.S.,” he says.

According to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Mexican cattle imports to the U.S. in 2025 ➤



Dimmitt, Texas, feedyard owner Mark Rogers has fed mostly Mexican cattle for over 25 years.

COURTESY OF MARK ROGERS

MARC HARDY



numbered 230,638 head compared to 998,763 head year to date in 2024. Gonzalez says the excess cattle in Mexico have created challenges of where to send them because of the limited available facilities. “It’s a real problem. Farmers here are having to sell their cattle at half the price they typically would, because there’s just nowhere to go with them,” he says. “They are keeping cattle as long as they can in hopes that some spots will open at feedyards.”

He says the only ones benefiting from the overflow of cattle in Mexico is the packers; they have more higher-quality meat to market to countries like Japan and China, and are even sending meat to the U.S.

> NWS MOVES CLOSER

The detection of NWS on Sept. 21 in Nuevo León was confirmed by Mexico’s National Service of Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality to be less than 70 miles from the U.S. border. Gonzalez says most of the cattle that move from Mexico to the U.S. are farther to the north and west in the states of Chihuahua and Sonora. Where NWS has been a problem in Mexico, he says, is hotter and more tropical. Gonzalez adds not all Mexican states can send cattle to the U.S., and the areas dealing with NWS don’t move cattle that far north.

“We’ve been using Ivomec on the cattle in northern Mexico for a long time to treat the flies, plus we will

usually freeze [temperature] by the middle to end of October, and then the flies are gone, and we don’t have to worry about them again until May,” he adds.

There is a fear among Texas and Mexican cattle producers that the border may never open. If that occurs, Gonzalez expects his country’s government to help build facilities to increase packing capacity. “It’s expensive for us to feed cattle in Chihuahua. We do see some corn grown there, but not enough for this many more cattle,” he explains.

Frank Welch has cared for the cattle that have come across the border headed to Rogers’ feedyard for many years. Typically, he will look after nearly 3,000 head of grass-fed cattle at a time that are sent to the West Texas range to grow before going back to the feedyard. “This year, I’ve only had a few hundred. Mark [Rogers] has had to find other cattle to run out here,” Welch says.

Rogers and Welch agree that the Mexican cattle are hearty and acclimate well to the Texas environment. They have few health problems, even in the small calves that were sent across when the border was open for a short time earlier in the year.



MARC HARDY

> BORDER CLOSURE CREATES UNCERTAINTY

The decrease in cattle coming to the U.S. not only affects the feedyards but many others in the industry. Those who find themselves out of a job include truckers, employees at the ports of entry and those who help expedite getting the cattle to the border on the Mexican side and to the feedyards on the U.S. side.

"I really don't know if we will ever get back to normal business down here in the Southern Plains feedlots. And, I'm not sure what I will do or my neighbors [will do] if the border doesn't reopen," Rogers adds.

"We have sent cattle across the border for over 200 years. There are generations and generations that have been doing this. We dealt with screwworm years ago and fought it, and we can again," Gonzalez says. "It seems to have gotten political this time. They [both governments] are just playing games."

He says fly traps were set at his feedyards in northwest Mexico, and all the flies that were captured tested negative for NWS. "The border closes, opens, closes, opens and then closes again. Every time, it has moved the market," he adds.

Rogers hopes the border closure doesn't last too long, because the Texas Panhandle is already suffering. "In the Hereford [Texas] area, beef is king. We need more cattle in the feedyards to help the grain companies and the packers, too. This will affect everyone and will end up costing the consumer," he concludes. ///

Mexican cattleman Omar Gonzalez says having the border closed is hurting producers on both sides.



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New World Screwworm Control Efforts Intensify

Preparation and prevention are critical as pest endangers U.S. cattle industry.



GETTY IMAGES

Eradicated from the U.S. in 1966, New World screwworm (NWS) is once again threatening the American cattle industry. The pest has moved more than 2,000 miles from Panama north through Mexico in the past year. This flesh-eating parasite

could cost cattle producers billions of dollars if it makes it across the border.

A USDA study on the estimated cost of NWS to Texas producers alone shows an adjusted loss of \$732.6 million and a total economic loss of \$1.8 billion. Texas remains the No. 1 cattle state in the country, being home to cow/calf producers and feedlots. The U.S.-Mexican border has been closed since July 10. The latest case has NWS within 70 miles of the southern U.S. border.

The last time NWS was a problem in the U.S., the sterile insect technique (SIT) was developed and used to eradicate the pest. SIT is still the primary tool to control this threat and has been used in Central America and Mexico for many years.

➤ STERILE FLY FACILITY PLANNED

Iowa State Entomologist Robin Pruisner says decades ago, the logistics and efficacy of releasing sterile male NWS worked well, and the process was used less than 10 years ago to eradicate the pest in a small outbreak in Key deer in the Florida Keys.

“The sterile insect technique involves sterilizing millions of male insects using ionizing radiation before releasing them into the wild to mate with wild females,” she says. “As no offspring can be produced, the SIT leads to drastic reduction in the wild populations of the disease carrier while minimizing the use

of pesticides.” Since the female only mates once, this helps eliminate the population.

This past June, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced an \$8.5-million investment in a sterile fly distribution facility to be built at Moore Air Force Base, in Edinburg, Texas. It’s expected to be completed by the end of 2025. Then, in August, Rollins announced the Moore Air Force Base would be the site for a \$750-million federally funded domestic sterile fly production facility. It will have the capability of producing 300 million flies per week and is expected to be online by late 2026. Currently, the only sterile fly facility in the world is in Pacora, Panama, and produces 115 million flies per week.

Funding the facility came with the support of multiple leaders and organizations. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said in a news release the support of the federal government to keep NWS out of the country is important in ensuring the protection from this threat to the agriculture economy. Support also came from the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA).



USDA APHIS

“Building the sterile fly production and distribution facilities at Moore Air Base marks a critical step in stopping the spread of screwworm and protecting the American cattle herd,” NCBA CEO Colin Woodall stresses. “Producing flies domestically under American oversight will overcome supply challenges in Mexico and



USDA APHIS

Central America, strengthening our fight against New World screwworm and protecting herds on both sides of the border.”

➤ EDUCATION HELPS WITH PREVENTION

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) officials explain screwworm refers to the maggots’ feeding behavior as they burrow into the wound, feeding as they go like a screw being driven into wood.

Teaching livestock producers about NWS symptoms and what to do to prevent problems if the NWS does make its way across the border into the U.S. is a critically important task. Cassandra Olds, assistant professor of veterinary entomology at Kansas State University, says livestock producers need to realize the NWS is invasive and will lay eggs on any animal with a wound.

“Cattle producers will need to be especially aware of possible problems during branding, dehorning or during calving,” she says. “A calf that doesn’t get properly cleaned by its mother at birth or a cow with placenta hanging out after birth is a target for those flies.” Olds advises ➤

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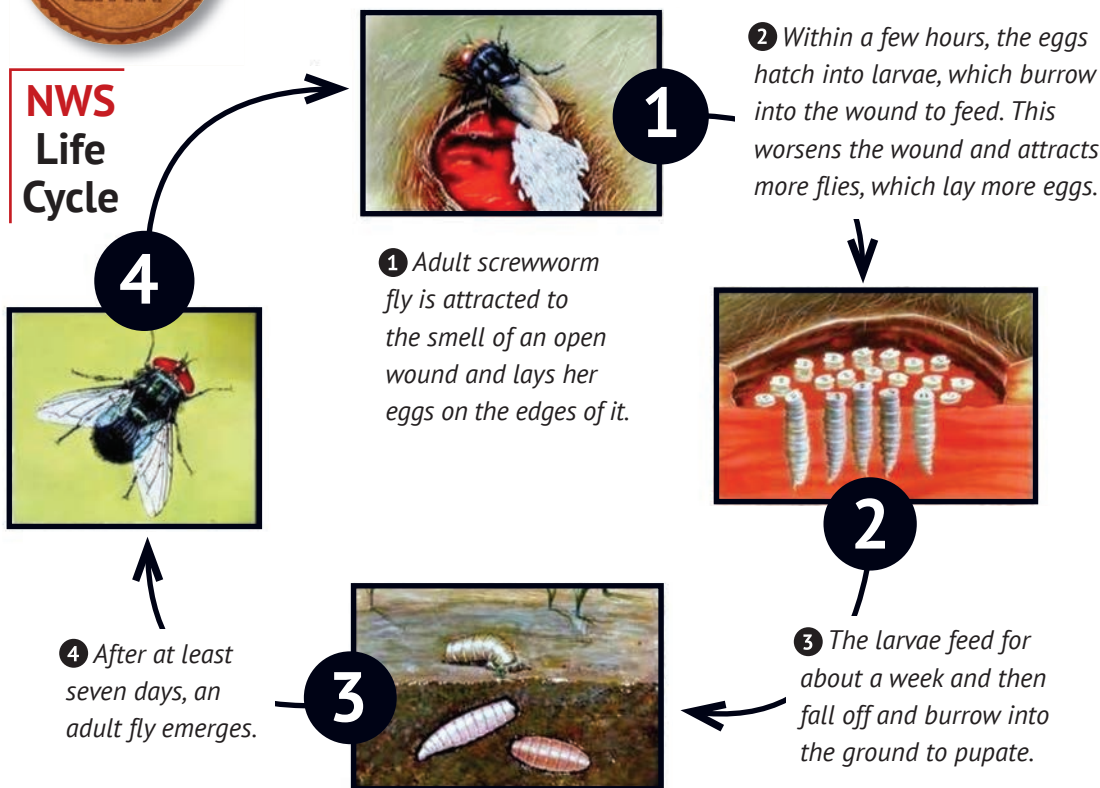
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(signed) Jackie Cairnes, Business Manager on 9/24/2025



NWS Life Cycle



ILLUSTRATIONS BY USDA ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE; TEXT ADAPTED FROM PAGES 218–219 IN “ATLAS OF TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL DISEASES,” BY PETER J. FERNÁNDEZ AND WILLIAM R. WHITE (PARIS: WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH, 2010)

keeping animals clean and dry will especially help a wound heal and minimize the disease threat.

Animals with an NWS infestation will be in a lot of pain, Olds continues. “They often will segregate themselves from the herd. You may notice they are uncomfortable or rubbing and licking an affected area,” she explains. “And, probably the worst but most identifiable symptom is the putrid smell the wound will give off from what we’ve been told.”

Symptoms in mammals and birds include irritated behavior, head shaking, smell of decay, evidence of fly strike and presence of fly larvae in the wounds.

> ESTABLISH PREPARATION PLAN

If livestock or animal owners suspect an NWS problem, Olds says they should immediately call their herd veterinarian to help diagnose and collect samples.

“If you see an animal with maggots on a wound, it should be isolated and a sample of the maggots collected,” she stresses. Olds says to wear protective gloves and use tweezers to remove some of the intact maggots from different areas of the wound. Place them in 70% ethanol in a plastic container with a screw-on lid.

Once the samples are properly taken, carefully clean the wound. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

conditionally approved Dectomax-CA1 on Sept. 30, an injectable doramectin for the prevention and treatment of screwworm larval infestations in cattle, as well as the prevention of reinfestation for 21 days.

“Mostly, just don’t leave any maggots behind when cleaning the wound,” Olds says. “An antibiotic can be used to treat the animal if a secondary infection is present or suspected.”

Proper paperwork needs to accompany the sample and sent to a veterinary diagnostic lab.

A good vet-client relationship is important with a suspected pest or disease outbreak to be certain needed steps are taken. Contact your state animal health commissioner or state veterinarian to help you manage the situation.

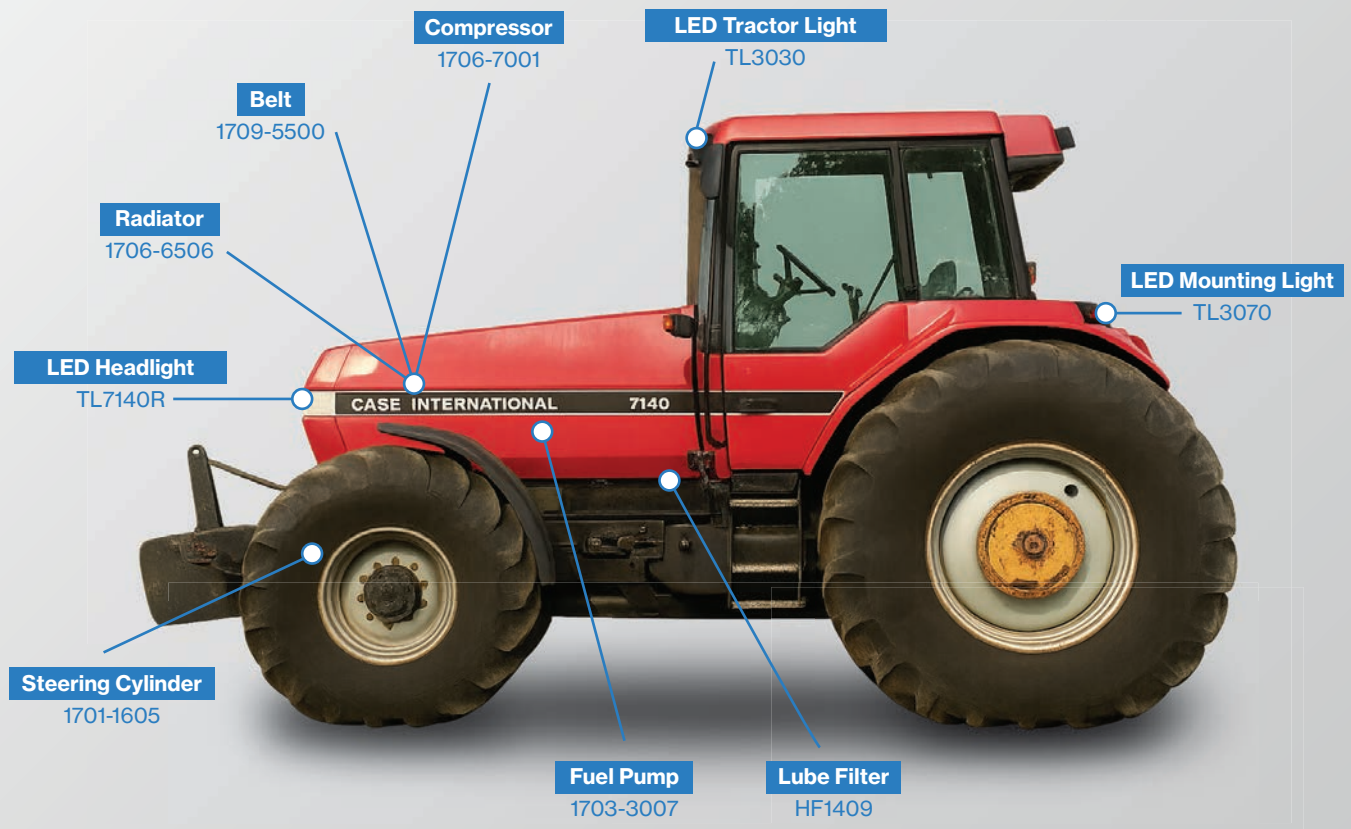
Olds says the NWS would only be a summer issue across most of the U.S. since the flies won’t survive the winter. Unlike other maggots, survival of the NWS maggots only happens on a living animal. “There is a lot of panic across the U.S. when it comes to NWS. Producers should use practical knowledge to prevent problems,” she concludes.

Cattlemen should have a clear plan if NWS is suspected. Good husbandry practices can reduce the potential for NWS problems. Fly-control options are important as well as a clear biosecurity plan, especially when moving cattle to or from the farm or ranch. A freeze will kill the flies in areas of cold winter weather.

The Panama-United States Commission for the Eradication and Prevention of Screwworm Infestation in Livestock says that, currently, NWS is present in all Central American countries and Mexico. Most have been free from the pest for more than 20 years. Through late September 2025, Mexico had 7,096 total cases of NWS, with 720 active cases. ///

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PATIENCE

Engineers Successful Business



This multigenerational farming family turned their in-cab ideas into a chemical-mixing and recordkeeping system.

As it has turned out, the easy part is the idea. The hard part has been everything else since the Applegate family first started to show off their product, Mixmate, a portable, automated, chemical-mixing and recordkeeping system.

For many farmers, the inclination to tinker with equipment or engineer crafty solutions to persistent problems is as natural a part of the job and lifestyle as blue jeans and weather-watching. Doug Applegate, who farms in Oakland, Iowa, is that to the extreme.

He, alongside his wife, Kathy, and two ag engineer sons, Brent and Luke, built a company—Praxidyn—to manufacture and market the chemical-mixing system Mixmate. They are still working their way through all that entails.

What does it take to turn a tractor-cab idea into a real-world business? The most important ingredient, the Applegates agree, is patience.

They first pieced together the Mixmate prototype more than 15 years ago in their farm shop during the slow days of one cold southwest Iowa winter and presented the prototype at a farm show in 2011.

That they didn't sell a machine for five more years is a testament to how difficult the journey from tractor-cab-idea to marketable product can be.

"The difference between a prototype and a production machine, there is hundreds of times more engineering that goes into the production machine," Doug explains. "We didn't realize how big of a job that would be."

When it came time to dig into the circuitry and coding, things got more complicated.

"One of the biggest things was the development of the circuit boards and code," Brent continues. "Google can be really good at finding stuff, but there were a lot of times I tried to Google a question, and it came back with zero results."

In addition, developing the software, so central to the automation and recordkeeping that Praxidyn touts as what helps set its machine apart, is never-ending.

The company completely overhauled its software, mobile



The Applegate family, Doug (from left), Kathy, Brent and Luke, created the Mixmate system on their eastern Iowa farm.

app and cloud service in the last several years and still must update it constantly.

The company is focused on adding compatibility with John Deere Operations Center and recently added Portuguese as a language option. Spanish may be next.

The company, which charges between \$30,000 and about \$42,000 for its two customizable Mixmate options, depending on exactly what's included, will likely start charging an annual subscription fee for its software because of the costs for software development and updates.

For an in-cab engineer such as Doug, inventing has always been an interest. His first foray into entrepreneurship came in the 1970s, when he developed a gadget to safely empty chemicals from 5-gallon cans. He and Kathy were just dating at the time, and she got a big taste of what was to come as they visited patent attorneys and set up booths at farm shows.

Chemical companies switching from metal to plastic containers spelled the end of that effort. When the family's two sons came along, the Applegates' inventiveness only escalated.

Brent and Luke were constantly tooling around on farm equipment and entered many successful engineering projects into 4-H and FFA competitions. They ultimately both earned ag engineering degrees from Iowa State University before coming back home to help on the farm and in launching Mixmate.

Now, Luke tackles more of the farming, while Brent helps lead the engineering and software development from the Praxidyn facility in Avoca, Iowa. Doug and Kathy, meanwhile, serve, among many roles, as the face of the company, hauling Mixmate to farm-equipment shows across the country.

At this point, there are hundreds of Mixmate machines in use, but Doug still thinks of himself as a farmer first. "If I wasn't a farmer, I think I'd have been an engineer," he says.

"He is an engineer," Kathy says, "even if he doesn't have that diploma on the wall." ///



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Pigweeds (10 Locations): CPFD; (HBI008A4-2022US); (N=11) TX, KS, NC, TN, MI, IA, OK, IN-1, IL-c, IL-s; 2022

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Ag Day at the Museum



A unique event showcases hands-on ways for kids to learn and hear about agriculture.

Tucked away on 3½ acres in a corner of downtown Mankato is the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota, and it's unlike any museum you might have seen or heard of before. Why? The museum's sole mission is to ignite the natural curiosity of kids through the power of play to understand agriculture.

Every year since opening its doors in 2015, the museum annually has welcomed more than 100,000 visitors—both young and old—to experience a variety of interactive ag exhibits.

> FARM TO TABLE

But, on one special spring day, called Ag Education Day, “Kids and caregivers can discover the fascinating world of agriculture and the trucks that transport food from farms to our tables,” says Rob Grover, Amboy, Minnesota, farmer and owner of Grover Farm Trucking.

“When I joined the fire department, we’d come here to the museum for fire safety day, where kids got to interact and touch the equipment,” he says.

That’s when the light came on, and Grover got the idea to do the same thing with trucks and agriculture.

“We worked in cooperation with the museum to bring in big trucks that would draw kids in and then set up stations in front of each one to help educate the kids.”

For example, Grover says one station is about driving a truck that’s used to deliver grain, and the kids get to honk the horn. Another station shows a transport that hauls food-grade oils used to make dressings, and the kids use soapy water and sponges to clean it because, well, kids love to play in water.

For first-timers Alex Bahl and his 4-year-old son, Owen, it was all about sitting in the trucks and pulling the chain to blow the horns. “It was awesome, and we’ll be back,” Bahl says.





> MULTIPLE DISPLAYS

In all, more than 10 semitrucks and tractors arranged in an arc formation provide the perimeter to the event on the museum grounds. In the center are several other stations that help keep kids engaged, such as:

- > drones in operation
- > a state-of-the-art combine simulator
- > drainage tiles that kids can climb and crawl through
- > a corn pit in which kids can play.

“Every child finds something magical about different experiences, and that’s why this unique event offers something for everybody,” says Jaci Sprague, vice president of development for the museum.

In the event’s second year, she says the corn pit (shelled corn in a wagon) seemed to be a highlight of the day. Also, every child who attends gets a free “Semi Sam” book from the series by Jared Flinn, which highlights the trucking industry via a semi named Sam.

This year, despite windy, chilly and drizzly conditions, more than 1,000 enthusiastic kids joined in the day of free fun. And, fun they had.

“Our sons’ favorite part of the day was seeing the tractors and the big, black semi,” Raina Klisch says. “As members of the museum, every couple months, my husband and I load up the kids and go there as a family outing.”

> HELPING HANDS

More than 50 volunteers were on deck that day, willing to get their hands dirty and stand in the cold without so much as a hint of complaining, Sprague explains.

“We try to involve the children of up to 9 years of age but then also educate the parents or caregivers about agriculture,” she says. About 30% of the population

Nick and Raina Klisch, and their boys, Hewitt, 4, Gannon, 2, and Rooney, 2 months, are regulars at the Children’s Museum.

served at the museum are given access at no cost because of their income level.

The museum is a nonprofit organization that provides hands-on play, exploration and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) programs, plus theater and cultural experiences.

“If you come to the museum, all children must be accompanied by an adult,” Sprague says. “And, all adults must be accompanied by a child.” ///

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota is located at 224 Lamm St., Mankato, MN 56001. Visit www.cmsouthernmn.org or call 507-386-0279.





Friendsgiving Faves

HASSELBACK SQUASH

Wow guests with this savory side at this year's holiday gatherings.

TOTAL TIME: 45 MINUTES
MAKES: 4-6 SERVINGS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 large butternut squash (about 2½ pounds) | Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper |
| 4 cloves garlic, peeled | ¼ cup unsalted butter |
| 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil | 1 cup honey |
| | ¼ cup apple cider vinegar |
| | Fresh sage leaves (about 6) |

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with foil.
2. Peel squash, cut in half lengthwise and scoop out seeds. Place each half cut side down on a cutting board. Using wooden spoons as guides, slice crosswise into thin slits all across the squash without cutting all the way through.
3. Transfer squash halves and garlic cloves to baking sheet. Rub with olive oil; season with salt and pepper. Roast until starting to soften (about 20 minutes).
4. To make glaze: In a small saucepan, melt butter; combine with honey and vinegar. Mash in roasted garlic; simmer until slightly thickened. Keep warm.
5. Tuck sage leaves between some of the slits in the squash. Brush generously with the glaze, letting it drip in between the slices. Roast until tender and caramelized (about 20 to 25 minutes).



Recipes and Photos By
Rachel Johnson
On Instagram
[@racheltherecipe](https://www.instagram.com/racheltherecipe)

GARLICKY SESAME GREEN BEANS

Soy sauce packs big flavor in this quick veggie side.

TOTAL TIME: 15 MINUTES
MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil**
- 1 (16-ounce) bag fresh green beans, trimmed**
- 8-10 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce**
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil**
- 1 teaspoon honey**

1. Heat vegetable oil in a large nonstick or stainless steel skillet over high heat. Add green beans; sauté 7 to 8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until beans start to blister.
2. Reduce heat to medium. Add garlic; stir well. Add soy sauce, sesame oil and honey. Cook 2 minutes, tossing to coat beans in glaze.
3. Remove from heat; serve warm. Garnish with sesame seeds or a drizzle of chili oil, if desired.



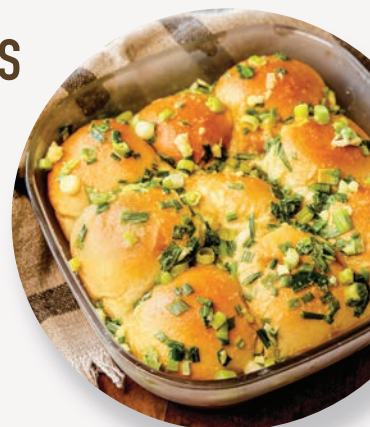
GREEN-ONION ROLLS

Buttery green onions transform frozen dinner rolls into a showstopper.

COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES (PLUS 2-3 HOURS RISING TIME)
MAKES: 9 ROLLS

- 9 frozen dinner rolls**
- 1 bunch green onions (or scallions)**
- ½ cup plus 1 teaspoon unsalted butter, softened**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**
- ¼ teaspoon cracked black pepper**

1. Arrange frozen dinner rolls in a greased 9- x 9-inch baking dish (about 9 rolls fit snugly). Cover; let rise overnight in the fridge or for 2 to 3 hours on counter until doubled in size.
2. Chop green onions, separating white parts from green tops.
3. Place white parts in a microwave-safe dish with 1 teaspoon butter; microwave on high 2 to 3 minutes or until softened. Let cool slightly.
4. In a medium bowl, combine remaining ½ cup butter, onions (white and green parts), salt, garlic powder and pepper; mix until well-combined.
5. Brush tops of risen rolls with some of the green onion butter. Bake according to roll package directions (usually about 20 minutes).
6. When hot from the oven, remove rolls; spread remaining green onion butter over tops of rolls. Serve warm. ///



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4 Summer Departures

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August

BRAZIL



See Soybean Harvesting & Planting. Talk with Farmers about logistics and operational costs. View Corn & Cotton in various stages and see cattle. Tour Mato Grosso, Brazil's largest agricultural state. Visit a sugarcane ethanol plant and one of the world's largest soybean farms with 150,000+ planted acres. See the Rainforest on an Amazon River Cruise & experience the world's largest waterfall - Iguassu Falls

January • February

AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND



Experience the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef & Rainforest in the North. Take a photo with a koala, see Kangaroos in the wild, & witness the Blue Mountains. Sydney Opera House Tour & Harbor Cruise. See fertile farming areas in Australia & New Zealand with visits to Grain & Cotton Farms, a Dairy, and a sheepdog and sheep shearing demonstration. New Zealand's rugged and picturesque scenery is always a crowd favorite!

February • March

SOUTH AFRICA



Travel from Johannesburg to Cape Town. Visit Pretoria, Plettenberg Bay, Cape of Good Hope & more! Tour corn & wheat farms as well as a cow/calf operation. Experience Africa's incredible scenery and diverse wildlife in safety & comfort on Six Big Game Drives and with top notch accommodations!

February

IRELAND ENGLAND & SCOTLAND



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Holidays



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“What we’re really talking about is a wonderful day ... when no one diets. I mean, why else would they call it Thanksgiving?”

—Erma Bombeck

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:16-17 (KJV)

The holiest of holidays are those kept by ourselves in silence and apart; The secret anniversaries of the heart.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

May your eyeliner be even and your holidays be bright.

MARY KAY

I find that it’s the simple things that remind you of family around the holidays.

AMY ADAMS

A holiday isn’t a holiday, without plenty of freedom and fun.

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

The joy of brightening other lives, bearing each other’s burdens, easing each other’s loads and supplanting empty hearts and lives with generous gifts becomes for us the magic of the holidays.

W. C. JONES

Holidays—any holiday—are such a great opportunity to focus on bringing the family together.

LIDIA BASTIANICH

I like to compare the holiday season with the way a child listens to a favorite story. The pleasure is in the familiar way the story begins, the anticipation of familiar turns it takes, the familiar moments of suspense, and the familiar climax and ending.

FRED ROGERS

Once again, we come to the holiday season, a deeply religious time that each of us observes, in his own way, by going to the mall of his choice.

DAVE BARRY

The holiday season is a perfect time to reflect on our blessings and seek out ways to make life better for those around us.

ANONYMOUS

A good holiday is one spent among people whose notions of time are vaguer than yours.

JOHN B. PRIESTLEY

One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don’t clean it up too quickly.

ANDY ROONEY

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