



NCGA

Economic Outlook

2025: 4Q

Quarterly overview of U.S. corn industry trends, challenges, opportunities, and market conditions.

Corn Industry Overview

The United States is a global leader in corn production, on target to produce a record 16.8 billion bushels of corn on 98.7 million planted acres in 2025.

Founded in 1957, the National Corn Growers Association represents nearly 36,000 dues-paying corn growers and the interests of more than 500,000 farmers who contribute through corn checkoff programs in their states. NCGA and its affiliated associations in 27 states work together to help protect and advance corn growers' interests.

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Year-Round E15 Remains a Win for Consumers, Corn Growers, and the Economy

A new study by NCGA and RFA examines the economic impacts of the unrestricted implementation of year-round, nationwide E15. While the impacts of increased blending to corn use are clear (at current motor gas use, every 1% increase in the average blend rate increases corn use in ethanol by 486 million bushels), the study confirms value beyond the farmgate that corn growers have worked to communicate consistently over the years.

The passage of the Nationwide Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act (S.593 and H.R.1346) and its implementation would boost the U.S. GDP by an estimated \$25.8 billion in economic activity, in addition to creating more than 128,000 fulltime jobs. Drivers generally save around 25 cents a gallon when choosing E15, making the economic benefits an all-around win.

Tough times in the U.S. agricultural economy underscore the importance and urgency of passing permanent E15 legislation. Without a policy change to allow corn use in ethanol to increase after plateauing over the last decade or a dramatic breakthrough in trade opportunities, market prices will likely continue to be problematic as productivity and yields continue to follow an upwards trend.

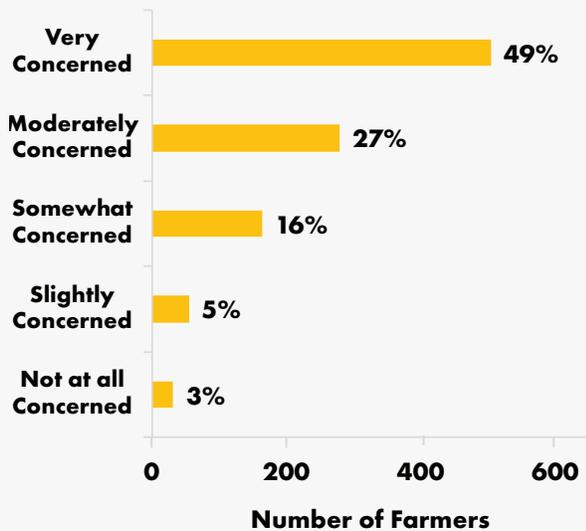
Why It Matters: Passing this legislation offers expanded markets for U.S. corn farmers, price relief for consumers, and job creation and income generation for communities.

Numbers Indicate Tough Times in the Corn Economy

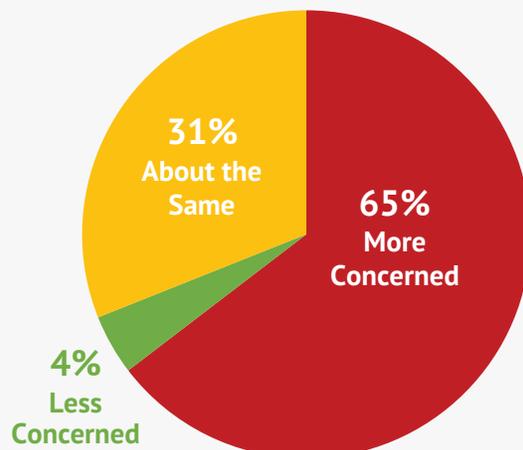
An early September survey of more than 1,000 corn growers from across the country confirms farmer sentiments are grim, with nearly half (46%) indicating they thought the U.S. was on the brink of a farm crisis and a similar portion stating they were 'very concerned' about the farm economy.

The results reflect the grave state of the U.S. corn industry: the third-straight year of negative profits, increasingly expensive input costs, and lower export values even amongst record-high export volumes as commodity prices remain low.

Farmer Level of Concern for the Farm Economy



Farmer Level of Concern About Their Farm Financials Compared to a Year Ago



USDA's September farm income forecast reflects a similar narrative for the economic conditions of corn farmers, whose cash receipts are forecast to fall by \$2.4 billion (4%) from 2024 despite a forecast 13% increase in production volume and production costs that have continued to rise since 2022. In 2021, a U.S. corn crop 11% smaller than forecast for 2025 generated cash receipts \$10.7 billion (15%) higher, for a crop that cost 22% less to produce.

Average net cash income for a corn business was expected to fall by 13%, a larger decrease than any of the other commodities. These are clear quantitative harbingers of the tough time farmers and rural communities are experiencing on the ground.

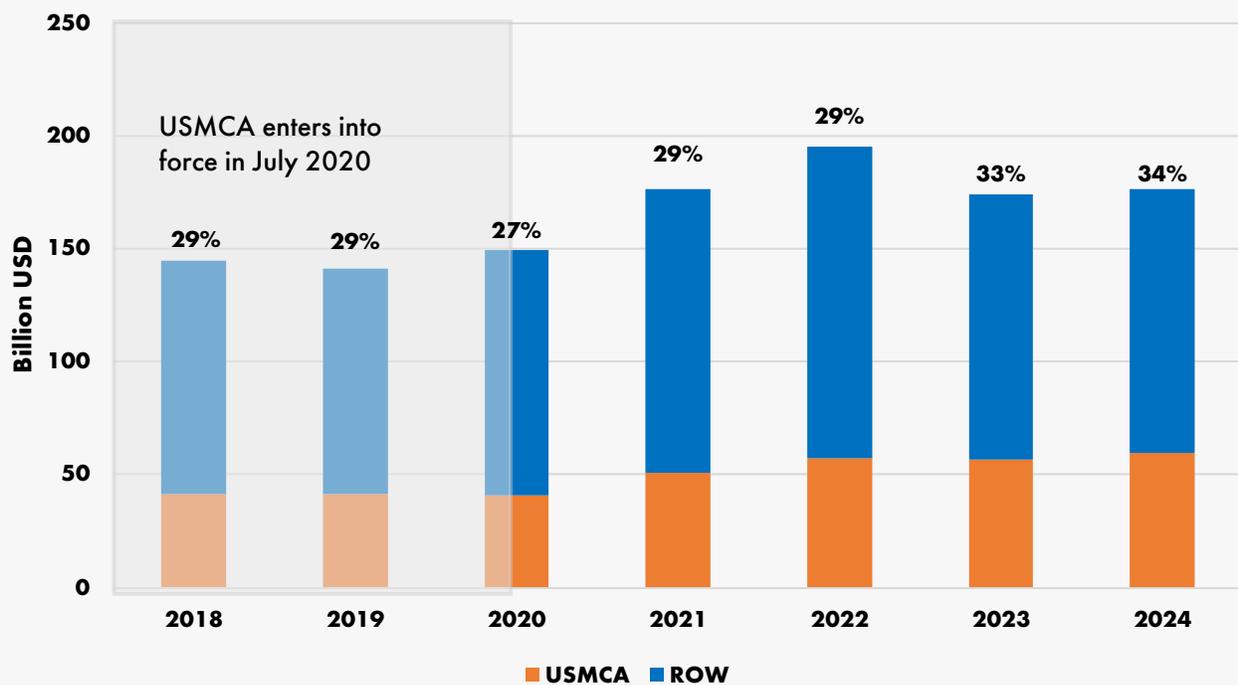
Why It Matters: Corn farming is an essential contributor to the nation's agricultural and economic value-chains. Corn growers are looking for market-based demand solutions to dig out of the economic bind they are currently experiencing and prevent a farm crisis.

Six Years of Success: Ready for a Review of USMCA

July 2026 will mark the first joint review of the Agreement between the United States of America, Mexico, and Canada (USMCA) that is a critical tool in facilitating nearly half of U.S. corn exports since the agreement entered into force in July of 2020.

In recent years, the USMCA agreement has represented nearly \$60 billion in value annually for U.S. agriculture, up from about \$40 billion annually in the years before the deal was implemented.

Share of USMCA of Total U.S. Agricultural Exports Since 2020



The USMCA agreement represents about \$8.5 billion in value annually to U.S. corn growers when considering exports of bulk corn, ethanol, and DDGS. Mexico and Canada have grown to represent more than 40% of the U.S. corn and ethanol export markets, underscoring the clear benefits and importance of the agreement to U.S. corn growers.

The three countries can choose to either renew the agreement for 16 years, allow the agreement to terminate in 2036, or trigger a series of annual reviews. Any country can also choose to withdraw from the agreement with a six months notice. Markets will be watching the process closely for indicators on whether the relationship will continue.

Why It Matters: Unimpeded (duty-free) and stable trade with a reliable partners is a cornerstone of the U.S. corn balance sheet. The USMCA agreement benefits U.S. corn growers and its seamless continuation allows for predictability and growth in markets.

Recent Corn Trade News: Spotlight on Southeast Asia

Exports of bulk corn are forecast to account for 18% of corn crop this year, though when accounting for ethanol and ethanol co-product exports, the share is closer to 30%. Recent trade developments represent promising opportunities to build demand outside of the United States for American-grown corn.

Corn Export Inspections: 2025-26 Marketing-Year-To-Date Highlights

- Corn Export Inspections to Malaysia up 60% from same period last year
- Corn Export Inspections to Thailand up 25% from same period last year
- Corn Export Inspections to Vietnam up 14% from same period last year
- Total Corn Export Inspections up 5% from same period last year, up 26% from same period two years ago

Data as of 10/23/25

Cambodia: Cambodia is a new market for U.S. corn and corn products. Though Cambodia is a minor importer of corn and ethanol, the elimination of tariffs on these products for United States suppliers is positive news.

Malaysia: Malaysia has committed to providing preferential market access for fuel ethanol, eliminating most duties on U.S. corn ethanol and providing a timeline for the reduction of others. Though Malaysia's imports of U.S. corn, ethanol, and DDGS are currently small, but codifying access for this growing markets is an encouraging sign, particularly for DDGS and ethanol.

Thailand: The recently announced deal with Thailand addresses both tariff and nontariff barriers for U.S. corn and products. The deal included a purchase commitment of \$2.6 billion per year, including corn, soybean meal, and DDGS. The deal addresses some onerous regulations on U.S. DDGS imports and opens the door to using imported ethanol as fuel.

Vietnam: U.S. corn markets to Vietnam have grown substantially since 2025 and Vietnam is already the fourth largest market for U.S. DDGS exports. Though Vietnam has bought corn from South American suppliers in recent years, the reduction of tariffs will further strengthen this trading relationship, hopefully securing stability for years to come. Vietnam also signed an MOU committing to \$2.9 billion in agricultural purchases. NCGA eagerly awaits more details.

Why It Matters: Trade has received out an outsized amount of attention from markets this season given rapidly evolving policy dynamics and increased need for demand to match a record crop. NCGA has long-pressed for new, durable trade agreements that move the needle for the nation's corn farmers.

Resources Referenced:

- [The Case for E15: Boosting Demand for American Corn](#)
- [New Study: Unrestricted Sales of E15 Would Fuel the Economy](#)
- [NCGA: Farmers Report Grim Economic Outlook](#)
- [USDA ERS Farm Income Forecast](#)
- [USDA WASDE](#)
- [USDA AMS Grain Inspected for Export](#)

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