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# Iowa corn and soybean county yields

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*New Iowa farm custom rate survey available, continued from page 4*

The Ag Decision Maker offers a Decision Tool to help custom operators and other farmers estimate their own costs for specific machinery operations. The Machinery Cost Calculator (file A3-29) can be found under Crops, then Machinery in the Ag Decision Maker table of contents.

The 2009 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey is available at county Extension offices or online as publication FM-1698 from the Extension online store, or as Information File A3-10, Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey, on the Ag Decision Maker website.

**Average Farm Custom Rates Reported for Iowa**

Operation	1978	1988	1998	2009
Chisel plowing, per acre	\$6.00	\$8.40	\$9.65	\$13.70
Planting, per acre	\$4.40	\$6.80	\$8.85	\$14.10
Spraying, per acre	\$2.40	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$6.00
Combining corn, per acre	\$16.20	\$22.00	\$23.40	\$29.70
Combining soybeans, per acre	\$14.00	\$20.60	\$22.55	\$28.70
Baling square bales, per bale	\$2.21	\$2.29	\$3.36	\$5.50
Custom farming, corn, per acre	\$58.00	\$71.00	\$75.80	\$100.20
Custom farming, soybeans, per acre	\$50.00	\$65.00	\$70.65	\$89.80
Machinery operating wage, per hour	\$3.50	\$5.10	\$7.20	\$12.30

*Source: Iowa State University, Iowa Farm Custom Rate Surveys, FM-1698.*



**Iowa corn and soybean county yields**

*By Ann M. Johanns, extension program specialist, 641-732-5574, aholste@iastate.edu*

The 2008 average corn and soybean yields for counties and districts in Iowa were released in early March 2009. This information is collected by the USDA National Ag Statistics Service Iowa Field Office each year through a County Agricultural Production Survey. The Ag Decision Maker website, we provides this data in Information Files A1-12 and A1-13, Historical Yields by County, which show county averages from 1999 through 2008. This information is helpful for seeing trends in yields over the past 10 years. Information File A1-14, Iowa Corn and Soybean Yields, also shows the 10-year average yield, and the year and yield results for the highest and lowest years for each county. This information is helpful in developing corn and soybean budgets, cash-flow projections, or other types of analysis for producers where the actual production history is not available. The crop yields are reported in bushels per harvested acre, some programs such as Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) use bushels per planted acre.

The USDA National Ag Statistics Service Iowa Field Office conducts the County Agricultural Production Survey each year to collect data that are then used to establish the county level yields as well as livestock inventory. The address for the NASS website for Iowa is: [www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Iowa/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Iowa/index.asp).

Each year, approximately 20,000 randomly selected operators in Iowa are interviewed using an eight page questionnaire. The operator reports the whole farm's acres, planted, harvested, yield and production for corn, soybeans, oat, wheat, and hay, storage capacity, cattle inventory, hog inventory, goat inventory, sheep inventory, and any other livestock. They also are asked to report acres rented from someone else and cash rent paid for those acres.

The data for the sample of 20,000 are collected using several methods; mail, telephone interview, personal interview, or the operator can even report electronically. Data collection begins when corn and soybeans have reached 90 percent harvested in Iowa, typically around mid-November. Trained enumerators or census takers collect the data. The same enumerators are used to collect data for NASS year-round. Strict guidelines are followed by the Iowa office that match steps taken by other state Ag Statistics offices. This ensures comparable results on a national level.

Several steps are taken to check the reliability of the reports. The first step is a check for reasonableness, and any questionable results are double-checked with the operator. The results are then entered into a secure computer system checked again for extreme yields and

*continued on page 6*

Iowa corn and soybean county yields, continued from page 5

outliers in the data. At this point, the data are ready to be analyzed. NASS uses a system called Interactive Data Analysis System or IDAS. With this program, they can graphically look at all data that has been reported. It can be broken down by district and county at this point as well. During this phase, outliers are once again identified but by district and county. These are checked once more with the operator for reliability.

The data are then summarized by district and county indications (or point estimates) for acreage planted, harvested, yield, and livestock inventory. The summary indications are compared against “check data” from Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) at the county level. These finished es-

timates are reviewed by the NASS Ag Statistics Board in Washington, DC. This board reviews Iowa estimates as well as other states to check for consistency and once again for accuracy. After this final review, the yield reports are published and made available online.

Summary information is available on the Ag Decision Maker website. For other county estimates, including average livestock prices, crop reports, and farm numbers, visit the NASS website for Iowa at: [www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Iowa/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Iowa/index.asp).

*This information was provided in part by the USDA National Ag Statistics Service Iowa Field Office and information available on their website.*

Updates, continued from page 1

## Internet Updates

The following updates have been added on [www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm).

**USDA’s Season-Average Commodity Prices** – A2-15 (1 page)

**Transferring Ownership of Farm Machinery** – A3-32 (7 pages)

**Understanding Double Entry Accounting** – C6-33 (14 pages)

## Decision Tools

The following *Decision Tool* has been added on [www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm).

**USDA’s Season-Average Price Calculator** – Use this calculator to estimate the season average price for corn and soybeans.

## Current Profitability

The following profitability tools have been updated on [www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm) to reflect current price data.

**Corn Profitability** – A1-85

**Soybean Profitability** – A1-86

**Ethanol Profitability** – D1-10

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