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Road safety: a shared responsibility

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2012 crop input costs increase, along with profit margin opportunities, continued from page 2

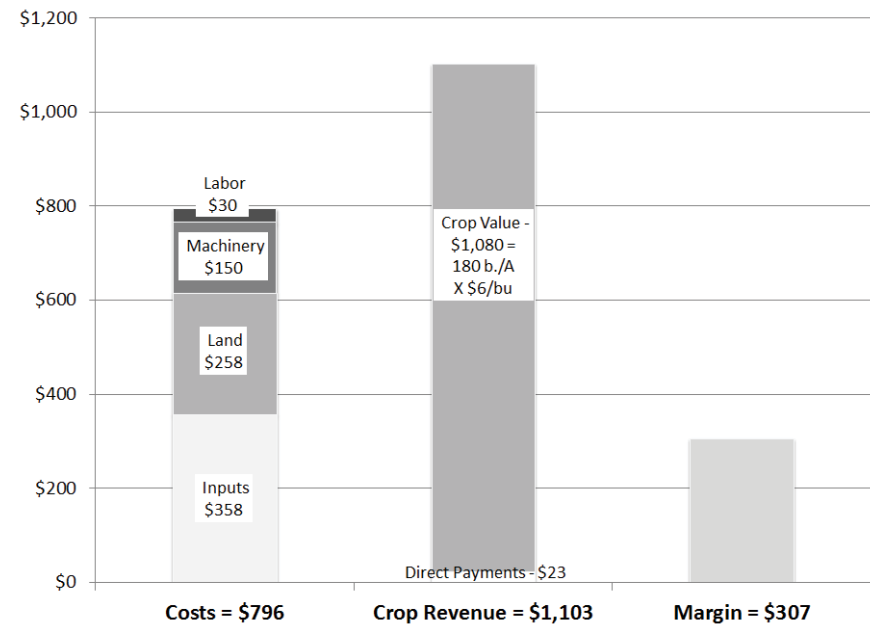
Also the use of crop insurance products to be used in 2012 should be a consideration. While the projected price will not be determined until the month of February 2012, the use of revenue protection (RP) at higher levels of coverage (75 percent or greater) should be considered.

Conclusion

Managing margins is nothing new to row crop farmers, but the increased risk of these high crop prices is that they might lead to a decrease in demand; a very real concern for 2012. While nearby 2011 corn futures prices approach \$8 per bushel, you can expect demand to decline, especially the demand for corn fed by U.S. livestock producers. This demand could be slow to

return in the short run and have a negative impact on 2012 price prospects.

Figure 2. 2012 Margin Estimate: Corn following Soybeans



Source: Duffy & Johnson, ISU Extension Economics, July 2011



Road safety: a shared responsibility

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Getting harvest from the field to market can be dangerous work, but doing it in traffic on Iowa’s highways and county roads extends the hazards to other drivers and their passengers. Conditions creating additional risks on Iowa roadways during harvest are drivers who don’t understand how to avoid collision with agricultural equipment, those who are driving distracted and heavier than normal traffic on rural highways due to flooding and construction detours.

Highway safety is a shared responsibility for both the motor vehicle operators and agricultural equipment operators. Both have reasons and rights to be on those roads.

Agricultural equipment operators need to remember that vehicle drivers, especially those rerouted to rural highways, may not have the necessary understanding to avoid collision with agricultural equipment: how to approach a slow moving vehicle (SMV), left turns of equipment and how to pass oversized equipment and unique shapes of combines. Operators of agricultural equipment are reminded to make sure all SMV emblems are properly mounted, not faded, and to always signal before making turns.

Motorists may be unfamiliar with the outlines of farm equipment, especially at dusk when operators are returning from fields or moving between fields. Unfamiliarity can cause a split-second delay in reaction that, in many cases, can lead to a collision.

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Proper lighting and marking for farm vehicles is only half of the solution. Motor vehicle drivers also must be attentive, watch for farm traffic and heed the signs especially in the weeks ahead.

Motor vehicle operators need to be patient, show understanding and not drive distracted – rushing and not paying attention to the road causes opportunities for collisions. It is important to understand the issue about coming upon a SMV when traveling at a high rate of speed.

Defensive driving tips for rural roads

Defensive-driving tips for rural roads this fall:

- As soon as you see a slow-moving vehicle (SMV) emblem, brake as if you were approaching a stop sign.
- Look for hand or turn signals from the farm vehicle operator, indicating a left turn.
- When passing, make sure you can see the farm vehicle in your rearview mirror before you get back in your lane.

While farm tractors and other farm equipment comprise a small percent of total motor vehicles nationally, the percentage of fatal motor vehicle collisions involving farm equipment is almost five times higher than other vehicle collisions. In

crashes involving farm vehicles, the farm vehicle operator was killed nearly twice as often as an occupant of the other motor vehicle.

The most likely types of collisions are left-turn and rear-end collisions. The left-turn collision happens when the farm vehicle is about to make a wide left turn and the vehicle behind begins to pass. The second most common incident is the rear-end collision, where another vehicle approaches farm equipment and is unable to slow down to avoid a collision. This happens because of large difference in travel speeds of these two types of vehicles.

Vehicle drivers must stay alert, especially in areas where rural roadways are experiencing heavier than normal traffic due to flooding and construction detours. Higher speeds used on rural roads, changeable conditions and a variety of traffic all contribute to injuries. Motorists must stay attentive and watch for farm traffic, which can be difficult to spot, recognizing it travels at much slower speeds than normal traffic.

Remember that agricultural equipment operators in these areas will be limited in their ability to use the shoulder as they move down the road, since shoulder conditions could have changed considerably this summer because of flooding (washed away, weak or steeper than before).



New publication helps farmers use data for tractor selection

by Dana Petersen, Farm Energy Conservation and Efficiency Initiative, 515- 294-5233, petersen@iastate.edu; Mark Hanna, extension engineer, 515-294-0468, hmhanna@iastate.edu

Eyeing a new tractor? Your fleet of farm equipment represents a significant capital investment, second only to land in many farm businesses. Likewise, tractor operations represent a significant portion of annual on-farm fuel costs. A new publication from Iowa State University Extension discusses tractor test data to consider when leasing or purchasing a tractor.

“Fuel Efficiency Factors for Tractor Selection” (PM 2089O) is available to download from the ISU Farm Energy Initiative at <http://farmenergy.exnet.iastate.edu>.

“During the decision making process, tractor test data can be used to evaluate drawbar power and to estimate fuel consumption,” said Mark Hanna, ISU Extension agricultural engineer. “For example,

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