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Market and Farm Policy Outlook: **Corn Backgrounder**

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Abstract

Corn ranks first among U.S. field crops in area planted, production, and cash receipts, and the U.S. is the world's largest corn producer, consumer, and exporter. Planted acreage has exceeded 90 million acres several times in the past decade, producing roughly 14–15 billion bushels annually, with farm-level cash receipts from corn sales reaching a nominal record high of \$87 billion in 2022. Most of the crop is used domestically as livestock feed and to produce ethanol fuel. U.S. farm legislation offers risk management tools through several of its titles (sections). Specifically, Farm Bill Title I includes programs like Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), which provide direct government payments in times of low prices or revenue. Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) support producers with working capital and potential Government payments. Title XI focuses on crop insurance that protects against yield or revenue declines and offers subsidized premiums. The 2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA; Pub. L. 119-21) included provisions increasing commodity support levels for ARC, PLC, MALs, and crop insurance subsidies and coverage levels, increased base acres up to a certain limit, and reauthorized these Farm Bill programs through 2031. This report outlines U.S. corn market developments, highlights 2018 Farm Bill programs and subsequent updates contained in OBBBA, and reviews past and projected Government payments from these programs to corn producers.

Keywords: Corn, trade, policy, risk management, Farm Bill

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Market and Farm Policy Outlook: Corn Backgrounder

Introduction

U.S. corn planted acreage grew mostly steadily from 79.6 million acres in 2000/01 to a peak of 98.8 million acres in 2025/26 as policies designed to boost fuel ethanol production (made mostly from corn) were enacted—especially after the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (Pub. L. 110-140)—and as corn use for animal feeding expanded (USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), 2026). Corn exports have been volatile over the past several decades due to fluctuations in yields and foreign demand, but the export trend has generally been flat as domestic corn use for ethanol and animal feed increased their shares of use. The United States remains the world's leading corn exporter, with the exception of the 2022/23 marketing year, but its share of the global export market has diminished as production and exports by Brazil, Argentina, and, until recently, Ukraine, have increased.¹ The U.S. accounted for as much as two-thirds of global corn exports in the early part of the century but the share has dropped to an average of 33 percent during 2022/23 to 2025/26 (USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), 2026).² *USDA Agricultural Projections to 2035* (also known as the Baseline projections) anticipate a modest decline in U.S. planted acreage but steady growth in production due to rising yields and a rising volume of exports (USDA, Office of the Chief Economist (OCE), 2026).³

With most provisions of the 2018 Farm Bill (the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (AIA) (Pub. L. 115-334) reauthorized in 2023 and 2024, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA; Pub. L. 119-21), signed into law in July 2025, modified provisions contained in the 2018 Farm Bill. These changes enhance risk management tools to current corn producers and those with a historical record of production (base acres) through modifications to Commodity Programs (Title I) and Crop Insurance (Title XI).⁴ Title I programs offer direct Government payments under certain market conditions to eligible farmers through price and revenue protection programs such as Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), as well as through marketing assistance loans. Title XI covers crop insurance programs that subsidize premiums for policies protecting against yield or revenue declines.⁵

This report provides an overview of market developments for U.S. corn, describes key programs (Title I and Title XI) authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill, addresses changes to these programs authorized in OBBBA, and examines the extent to which corn producers have received or are projected to receive payments from these programs.

¹ These three countries accounted for 53 percent of global corn exports during 2022/23–2025/26.

² As of February 25, 2026.

³ The USDA long-term projections to 2035 were completed in November 2025 and assumed that policies in place at that time continue throughout the projection period. Market data for 2025/26 and earlier are from USDA, NASS, Quickstats database as of late February 2026, unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Base acres refer to a farm's historical planted acres for a specific commodity and are used for administering certain USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs. Base acres do not necessarily represent a farm's current planted acreage. Further, the number of base acres is mostly static and does not change based on new plantings. Thus, additional base acres may only be obtained by acquiring land with existing base acres or a policy-driven update to base acres.

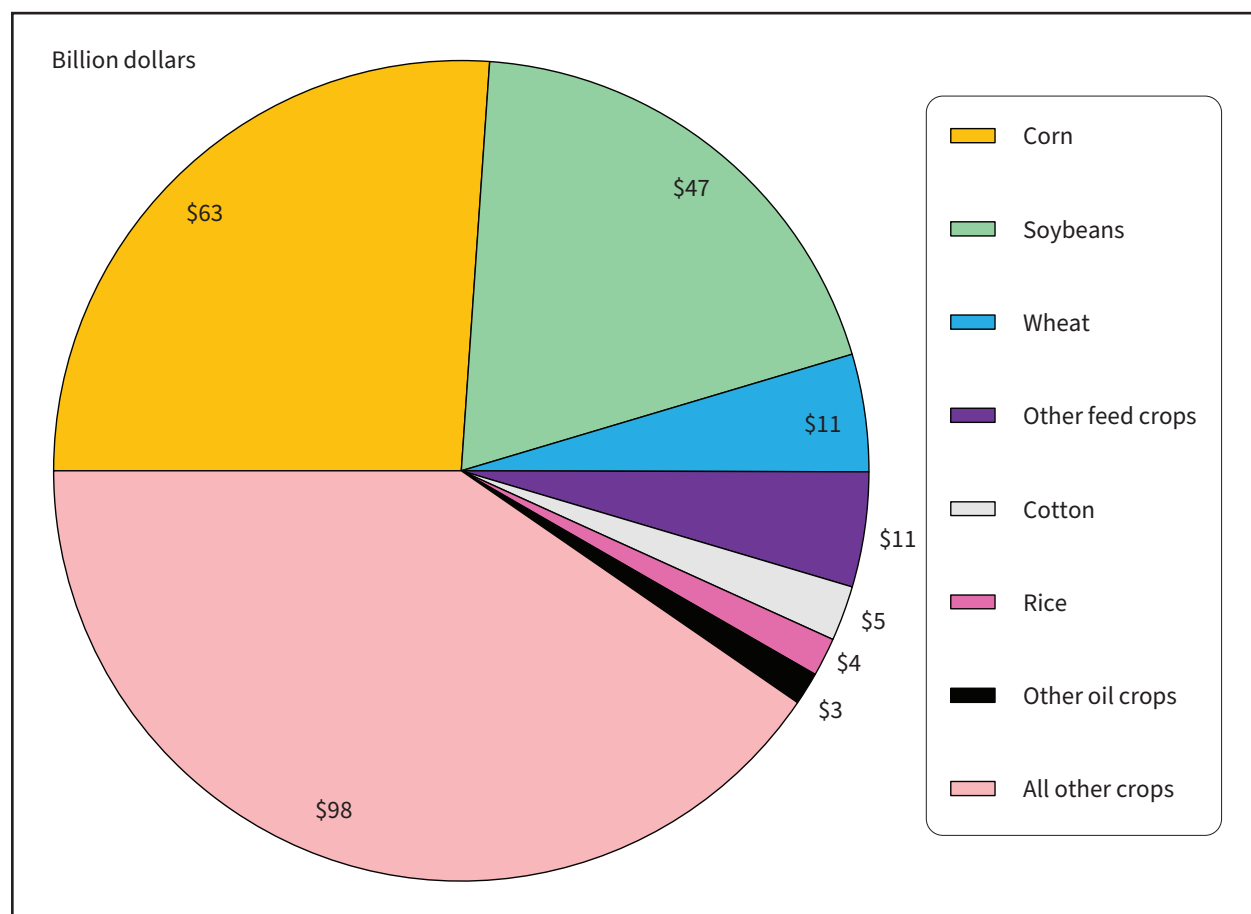
⁵ The premium subsidies benefit farmers but are not considered direct Government payments.

U.S. Corn Supply and Use Background

Corn ranks first among U.S. field crops in planted acreage, production, and cash receipts, followed by soybeans and wheat (figure 1). During the 2022/23–2025/26 marketing years (September–August), U.S. corn farmers produced an average of 15.2 billion bushels of corn grain on an average of 84.9 million harvested acres.⁶ Area planted to corn experienced significant growth from 2001/02 through 2012/13 as increased demand for corn for ethanol use more than offset declining animal feed and residual use. Prices and net returns (revenue minus costs) were generally favorable for producers during that time frame. Since 2010/11, corn acres have ranged between 88.0 million acres (in 2015/16) and 98.8 million acres (in 2025/26) as prices and net returns oscillated.

Figure 1

2024 U.S. cash farm receipts by crop commodity in nominal dollars



Note: All other crops includes tobacco, rye, fruits and nuts, and vegetables and melons.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Farm Income and Wealth Statistics as of February 20, 2026.

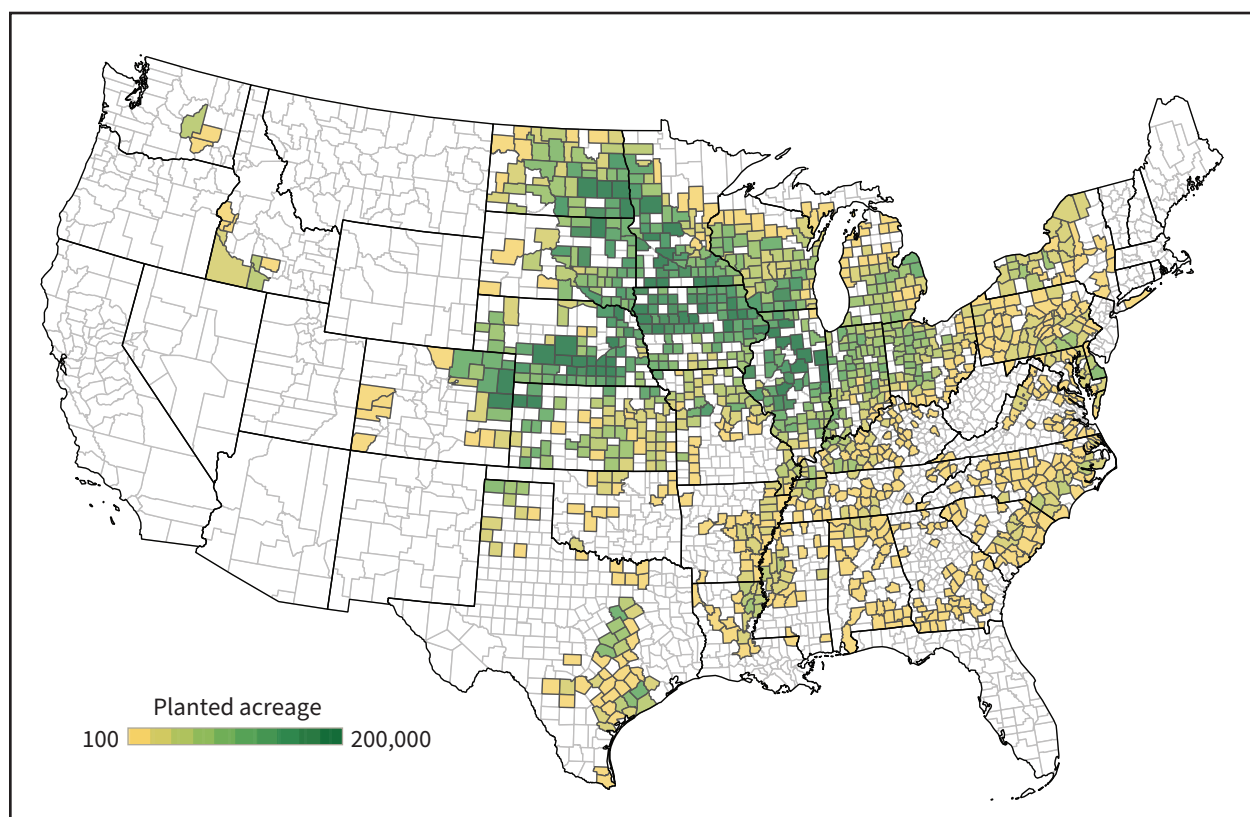
⁶ As of February 2, 2026.

Domestic Supply Developments and Prospects

Domestic Acreage Plateauing but Production Rising

Corn is grown in most U.S. States, but production is concentrated in the Heartland region (figure 2), also known as the Corn Belt. Subsequent to the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (FAIR; Pub. L. 104-127),⁷ farmers had greater flexibility on crop planting decisions based on the most profitable crop for a given year. As a result, corn acreage in the United States climbed from an average of 77 million acres per year during the 1990's to an average of 82 million acres per year during the 2000's, and an average of 91 million acres per year in the 2010's. Although planted area is projected to decline from a forecast of 98.8 million acres in 2025/26⁸ to a projected 91.0 million acres in 2035/36 (USDA, OCE, 2026), the rapid growth in area and production earlier this century was a result primarily of expanding ethanol production, which now accounts for nearly half of total domestic corn use (USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS), 2025b).

Figure 2
Planted corn acreage, 2024



Note: The shaded area indicates the number of corn planted acres. The darker areas indicate a higher volume, and the lighter yellow colors indicate a lower volume. White/black areas indicate the value is zero for that county.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service Quickstats data as of March 2026.

⁷ Specifically, the 1996 Farm Act strengthened the market orientation of crop planting by eliminating the requirement that farmers maintain base acreage of a crop to qualify for Government payments, with these new provisions remaining in place in all subsequent farm bills.

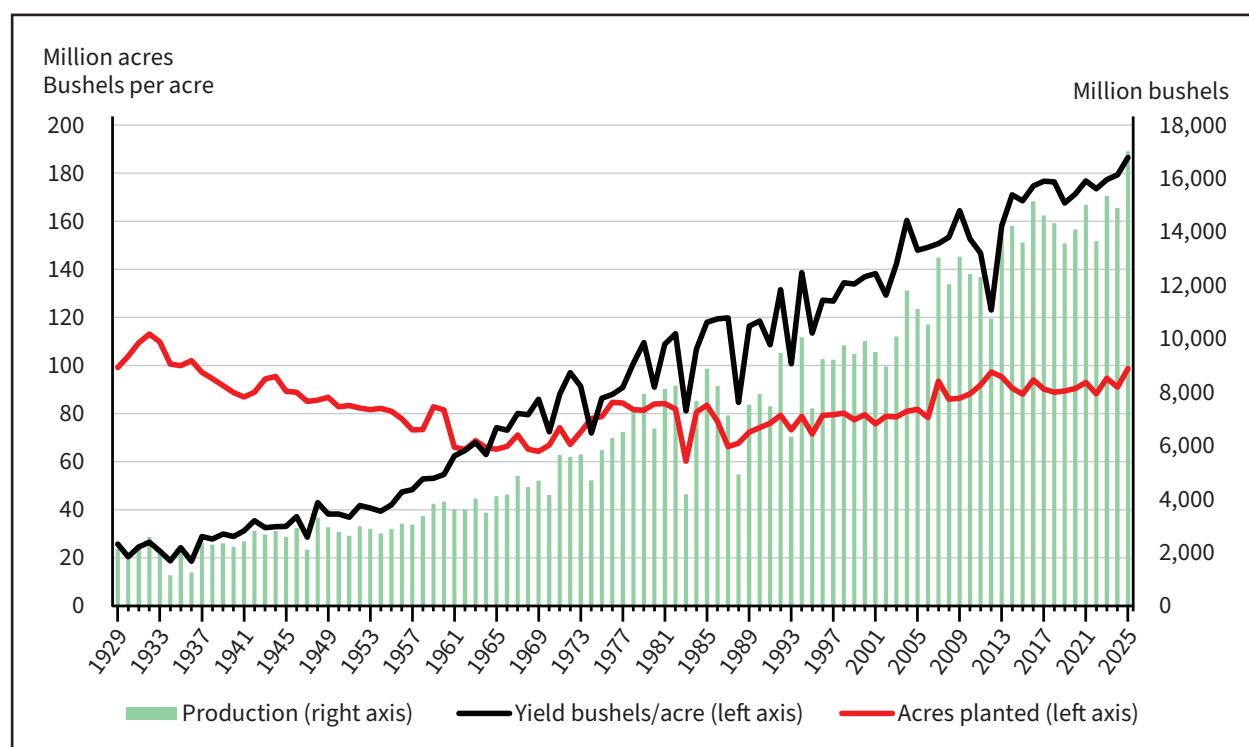
⁸ As of February 2, 2026.

Corn production has risen over time due to both increased area (compared to earlier in the century) and higher yields. Improvements in technologies and production practices have significantly boosted yields and production over the past two decades (figure 3).⁹ Observers point to new seed varieties, improved fertilizer and pesticide applications, equipment, and production practices such as crop rotations and improved pest management systems as underlying this yield growth (Saavos et al., 2021). Corn production has also expanded to non-traditional growing areas, especially in the Northern Plains, following the development of short-season hybrids.

Corn (and soybean) area has increased during this century at the expense of wheat area due to wheat's comparatively lower net returns and yield growth and the comparative strength of domestic and global demand for corn.¹⁰ Producers either stopped planting wheat or changed their rotations to include a greater share of more profitable corn or soybean crops (Sowell & Williams, 2024). This gap in profitability is reflected in a comparison of costs and returns for the three crops. For example, the national average value of production less operating cost for corn more than doubled from \$274 per acre in 2017 to a peak of \$651 per acre in 2022, while wheat returns grew from about \$102 per acre to a peak of \$182 per acre in the same time span (USDA, ERS, 2025c).¹¹ Net returns have declined since 2022 for corn, soybeans, and wheat, but corn returns per acre are still the highest of the three.

Figure 3

U.S. corn planted area, yield, and production, 1929–2025



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service QuickStats data as of February 20, 2026.

⁹ Corn yields grew 72 percent between 1979–83 and 2020–24 while wheat yields grew only 36 percent. Yield growth for soybeans was comparable to corn.

¹⁰ Wheat plantings lost ground to coarse grains and oilseeds due to technological innovations that improved production prospects for corn and soybeans. Genetic improvement has also been slower for wheat due to the food grain's significantly more complex genetics and lower potential returns from research investments (Yong, 2018).

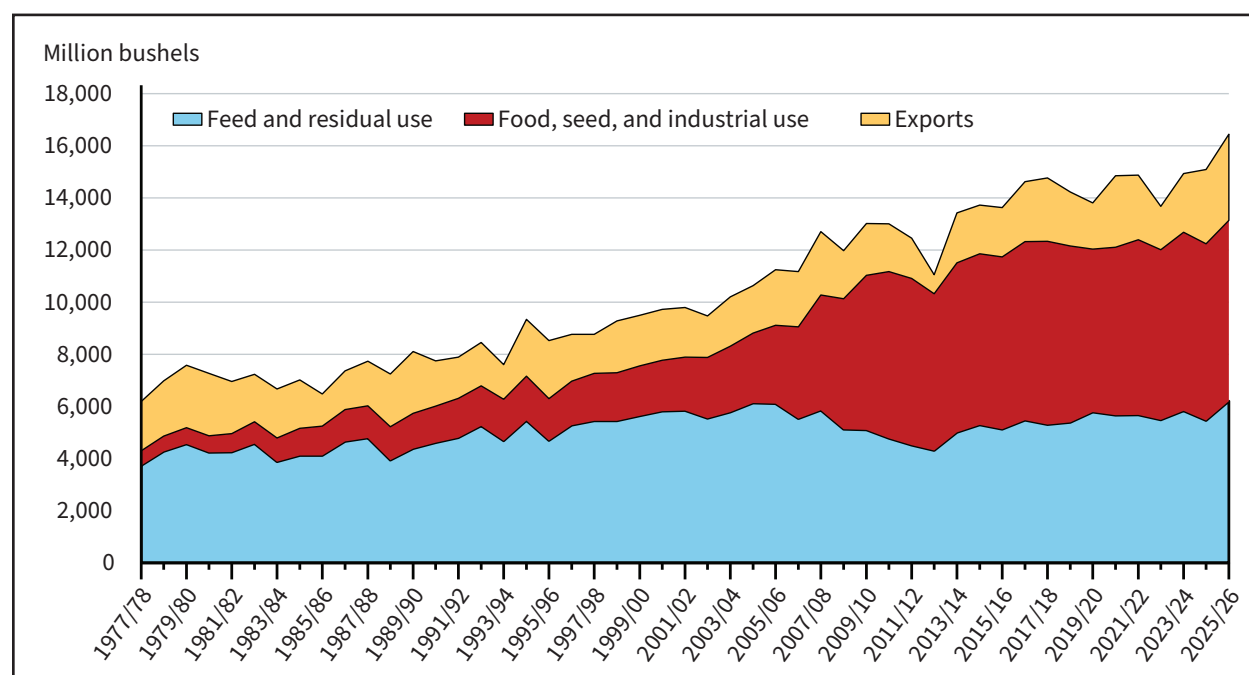
¹¹ The figure for soybeans grew from almost \$297 in 2017 to over \$441 per acre in 2022. Net returns fell for all three crops in 2023 and 2024, with the biggest drop to corn returns.

Corn planted acres are projected to fall from 98.8 million acres in 2025/26 to a projection period low of 91.0 million acres in 2035/36 as prices remain below recently elevated levels, according to USDA long-term projections to 2035 (USDA, OCE, 2026). At the same time, yield growth is projected to offset the decline in area, resulting in gradually rising production.

Corn Utilization

Corn supplies in any given marketing year are the combination of domestic production, imports, and beginning stocks (supplies carried over from previous years). The primary uses for corn produced in the United States include feed and residual use,¹² ethanol (alcohol) and other industrial products, exports, food use and, to an extent, seed used for planting (figure 4).

Figure 4
U.S. corn utilization



Note: The marketing year for corn is from September to August.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Feed Grains: Yearbook Tables as of February 11, 2026.

Feed Use and Ethanol Production Dominate Domestic Corn Consumption

Corn provides a major share of livestock feed rations in the United States. Feed use is considered a derived demand because it is closely related to the number of animals (cattle, hogs, and poultry) that are fed corn. Although it is not directly measured and is combined in a residual category in the corn balance sheet, feed use typically accounts for close to 40 percent of total domestic corn use. The amount of corn used for feed also depends on the price of corn and other feed ingredients and the preferred composition of feed rations among different livestock species.

¹² Unlike the other categories listed (e.g., ethanol use, exports, stocks), feed use is not directly measured so this category includes a residual (unmeasured) component.

Food, seed, and industrial (FSI) uses are also a major component of corn use, with ethanol use being the most significant share. Total FSI makes up about 55 percent of total domestic corn use. Other products in this category include high-fructose corn syrup, glucose and dextrose, starch, alcohol for beverages and manufacturing, cereals and other products, and seed. Since the early 1980s, use of all these products has increased, but not nearly to the extent that ethanol use has increased (USDA, ERS, 2025).

Corn is also processed for human consumption and other industrial uses. During processing, corn is either wet or dry milled depending on the desired end products:¹³

- Wet millers process corn into high fructose corn syrup, glucose and dextrose, starch, corn oil, beverage alcohol, industrial alcohol, and fuel ethanol.
- Dry millers process corn into flakes for cereal, corn flour, corn grits, corn meal, and brewers' grits for beer production.

U.S. Corn Trade

The U.S. is the World's Leading Corn Exporter

Corn dominates the global feed grain trade (corn, sorghum, barley, and oats), generally accounting for about 80 percent of the total volume over the past decade. The United States is typically the world's largest corn exporter with between 10 and 20 percent of its total production volume going to export markets.¹⁴ The largest international markets for U.S. corn in 2024 were Mexico, Japan, Colombia, and South Korea (USDA, FAS, 2025). Corn export competition from Brazil, Argentina, and Ukraine¹⁵ has grown over time in response to increased worldwide demand. Total shipments from these three countries now account for more than 50 percent of global corn exports and represent over 85 percent of global exports when U.S. exports are included. Rising global populations and incomes, especially in low- and middle-income countries, have driven increased world corn consumption (primarily to support increased meat production), driving higher demand for corn exports.

The U.S. accounted for as much as two-thirds of global corn exports in the early part of this century. This share dropped to an average of 33 percent from 2022/23 to 2025/26 (figure 5) (USDA, FAS, 2026). USDA long-term projections to 2035 anticipate that modest growth in U.S. corn production will contribute to a rising volume of exports.

World Corn Trade

Global demand for corn is expected to rise over the next decade, largely driven by growing livestock production as rising populations and income raise demand for animal products. To satisfy anticipated growth in demand, exports from the United States and other major exporters are expected to rise in

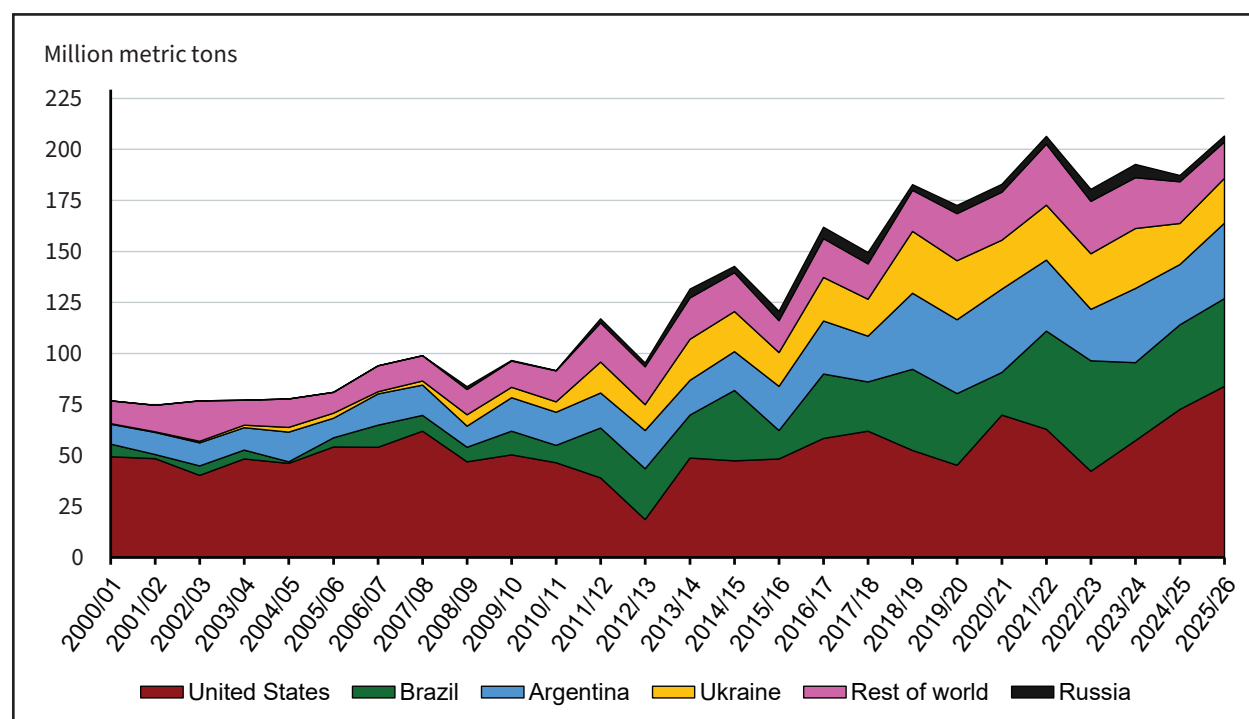
¹³ Corn wet-milling is a process of breaking corn kernels into their component parts: corn oil, protein, corn starch, and fiber. It uses water and a series of steps to separate the parts. In the dry milling process, corn kernels are hammer milled into a medium-to-fine grind meal (AMG Engineering, 2025).

¹⁴ The recent exception being in 2022/23, when Brazil was the leading exporter after a relatively small U.S. crop.

¹⁵ Although Ukraine's corn exports have diminished somewhat since its war with Russia started in February 2022, it is still a major exporter and actually achieved near-record exports in 2023/24.

tandem. Mexico's corn imports have grown tremendously over the past few decades, with imports rising from under 10 million metric tons before 2011/12 to an estimated 26 million tons in 2025/26. With increased livestock inventories, Mexico is expected to remain a top destination for corn exports going forward. Other major corn importers typically include China, Japan, the European Union, South Korea, Vietnam, and Colombia.

Figure 5
Global corn exports



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service, Production, Supply, and Distribution data as of February 20, 2026.

Although China entered the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, China's corn imports from the United States—particularly for corn—did not begin to strengthen until the early 2010's. For the next decade, U.S. corn shipments to China remained variable until the U.S.-China Phase One Trade Agreement was enacted in January 2020. U.S. corn export volumes to China increased substantially during 2020–22 (exceeding 18 million metric tons in 2021), but U.S. exports to China tapered off in 2023 and 2024, falling to 1.41 million metric tons 2024 and almost none in 2025 (USDA, FAS, 2025). China has strengthened trade relationships with major U.S. competitors, primarily Brazil and Argentina, and Chinese imports from those countries have increased.

Brazil's and Argentina's economies heavily revolve around their agricultural sectors. The introduction and implementation of double cropped soybeans and corn have contributed to the evolution of Brazil's second season (safrinha) and largest corn crop. The adoption of these production practices by major producing regions in Brazil have not only ramped up production levels but also export prospects. Once contributing 25 percent of total export volumes, Brazil's safrinha crop (harvested largely in July and August) now constitutes roughly 75 percent of its corn exports, boosting Brazilian exports just as the U.S. crop is beginning to be harvested in September and October. With larger profits generated from the safrinha crop, Brazil made significant changes to its transportation and export infrastructures (Meade et al., 2016; Valdes et al., 2023). Argentina, to a lesser extent, has boosted corn production and exports as well (USDA, FAS, 2026).

Ukraine's corn output levels steadily increased during the first decade of the 21st century; however, it was not until the early 2010's that volumes expanded rapidly—more than tripling between 2010/11 and 2011/12 from 5 million tons to 15 million tons—allowing them to compete as a major global exporter.¹⁶ Ukraine's corn exports peaked at over 30 million tons in 2018/19, and although the war with Russia has truncated the growth in Ukraine's corn production and exports, it is still considered a major global corn supplier (figure 5).

Alongside higher U.S. corn exports over the past few decades, U.S. export volumes of ethanol and ethanol byproducts (distiller's dried grains or DDGs) have also increased. Between 2000 and 2005, ethanol exports began to climb and increased substantially during the second half of the decade.¹⁷ U.S. ethanol export volumes were relatively stable in the 2010's but have since grown, initially spurred by Brazil's demand for ethanol. However, Brazil has made significant strides by expanding its ethanol infrastructure and now imports less from the United States. Policies in countries like Canada and the U.K. to increase the use of renewable fuels allowed these countries to displace Brazil's share of U.S. ethanol exports (Ramsey et al., 2023).

Corn Prices Surged Beginning in 2021 but Are Returning Closer to Historical Levels

Due in part to general economy-wide inflation, U.S. corn prices surged as supplies grew tighter both in the U.S. and globally in 2021/22 and 2022/23 (figure 6). Ending stocks (a measure of reserves carried over from one marketing year to the next) in the United States fell by 38 percent in 2020/21 and remained tight through 2022/23. Global stocks also declined below historical average levels. After averaging \$4.41 per bushel between 2010/11 and 2020/21, U.S. corn prices rose to \$6.00 per bushel in 2021/22 and peaked at a near-record \$6.54 per bushel in 2022/23.

Already elevated global corn prices rose even further when the war between Russia and Ukraine began in 2022 (USDA, ERS, 2022). The surge in prices reflected the market's uncertainty about the continuity of corn exports from this region. This uncertainty, coupled with the prospects of a smaller than average U.S. crop due to poor weather, led corn prices to hit multi-year highs in June 2022. Ultimately, U.S. production and exports fell significantly for the 2022/23 marketing year, while Ukrainian exports held relatively stable despite lower production.

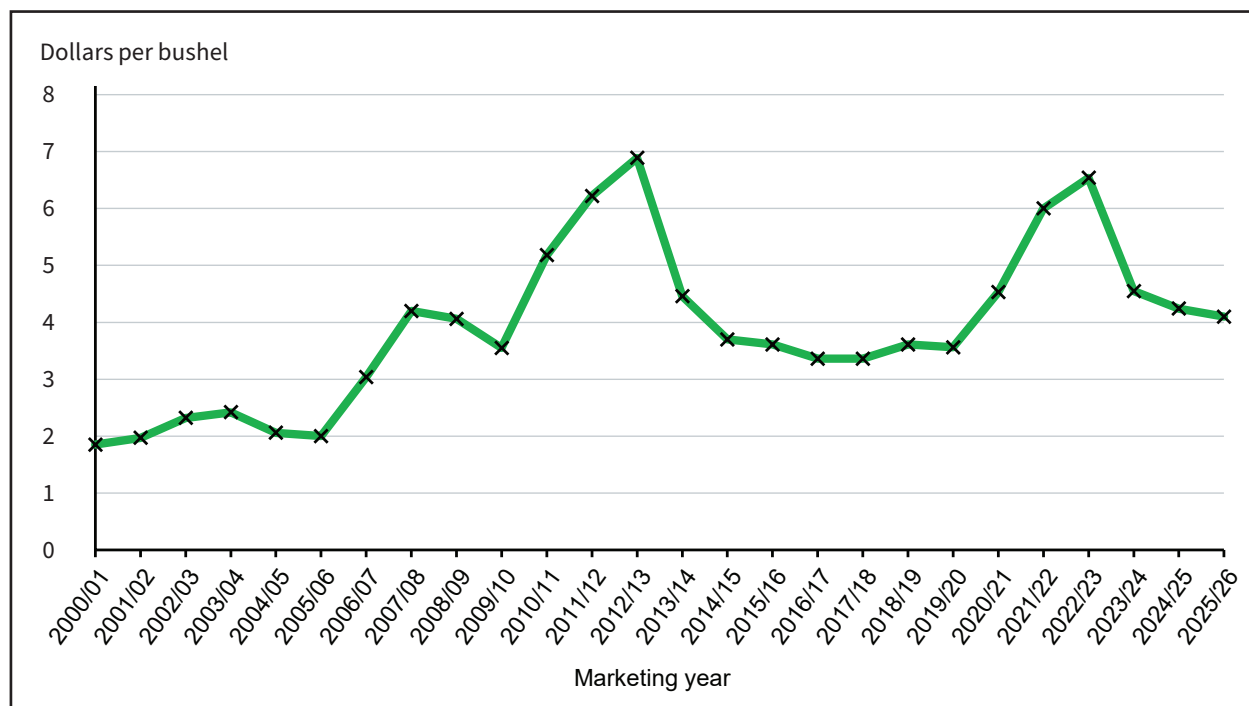
Higher production in the United States and higher ending stocks in 2023/24 put downward pressure on corn prices, and U.S. corn prices were estimated at \$4.24 per bushel for 2024/25 and forecast at \$4.10 per bushel in 2025/26, based on record production.¹⁸ The USDA long-term projections to 2035 anticipate that corn prices will range from \$4.10 per bushel to \$4.40 per bushel between 2026/27 and 2035/36 (USDA, OCE, 2026).

¹⁶ Before 2011/12, Ukraine had never exported more than 5.5 million tons of corn, but a doubling of production between 2010/11 and 2011/12 facilitated the rapid increase in exports from year to year.

¹⁷ The same was generally true of ethanol byproduct DDGs.

¹⁸ As of February 2, 2026.

Figure 6

U.S. corn weighted-average farm price

Note: The U.S. season-average price is based on the monthly price received by farmers, weighted by monthly marketings. Prices do not include an allowance for loans outstanding and government purchases. Latest data are from the *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates*.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Feed Grains: Yearbook Tables as of February 11, 2026.

Current Farm Bill Related Risk Management Programs for Corn: Titles I and XI

With crop prices on a downward trend in recent years and with most provisions of the 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized in 2023 and 2024, OBBBA (signed into law in July 2025) modified parameters contained in the 2018 Farm Bill. Titles I and XI provide risk management tools to current corn producers (via Crop Insurance, Title XI) and those with a historical record of production (base acres) via Agriculture Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage, contained in Title I. Title I also provides marketing assistance loans to producers of certain crops, regardless of whether they have base acres.

These titles provide various approaches to partially offset income losses from either low yields or prices. Overall, the Federal programs traditionally offered under Title I and Title XI provide a safety net that is broad in scope and adaptable to the unique needs of each producer, though decisions on what programs to use, when to use them, and how to use them can be complex (Todd & Subedi, 2021; Key et al., 2017). Table 1 summarizes the main Title I and Title XI programs relevant to corn.¹⁹

¹⁹ Corn and other commodity producers also received benefits under ad hoc programs in response to specific circumstances in recent years (including the Market Facilitation Program, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, and the Emergency Relief Program), but these programs are authorized in legislation outside of Farm Bills.

Table 1

Summary of commodity support programs for crops

Protection type	Crop programs
Price protection	• Price Loss Coverage • Marketing assistance loans/loan deficiency payments
Yield protection/compensation for physical losses	• Yield protection insurance policies • Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program
Revenue protection	• Agricultural Risk Coverage • Revenue protection insurance policies
Crop insurance	• Area and index based insurance policies • Prevented planting coverage offered by Federal crop insurance

Note: The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is available only in situations where crop insurance is not offered. Since most corn production areas are covered by crop insurance, NAP is available in only a small number of counties.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Farm Service Agency and USDA, Risk Management Agency.

Title I Support Programs

Commodity Programs—Crops

Several risk management programs are available through Title I of the Farm Bill for producers of corn and other crops. These programs most notably include the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) program, the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program, and marketing assistance loans (MALs).

Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage

The ARC and PLC programs, which were introduced as part of The Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill; Pub. L. 113–79) and later reauthorized under the 2018 Farm Bill, are designed as income support programs to mitigate price and/or revenue risk, respectively. Congress further amended these programs with the enactment of OBBBA in July 2025, which includes provisions increasing commodity support levels under both ARC and PLC. Payments under ARC and PLC are based on the farmer’s historical base acres by crop, which was fixed for the duration of the 2018 Farm Bill and not tied to annual planted acreage.

Base Acre Update Provisions in OBBBA

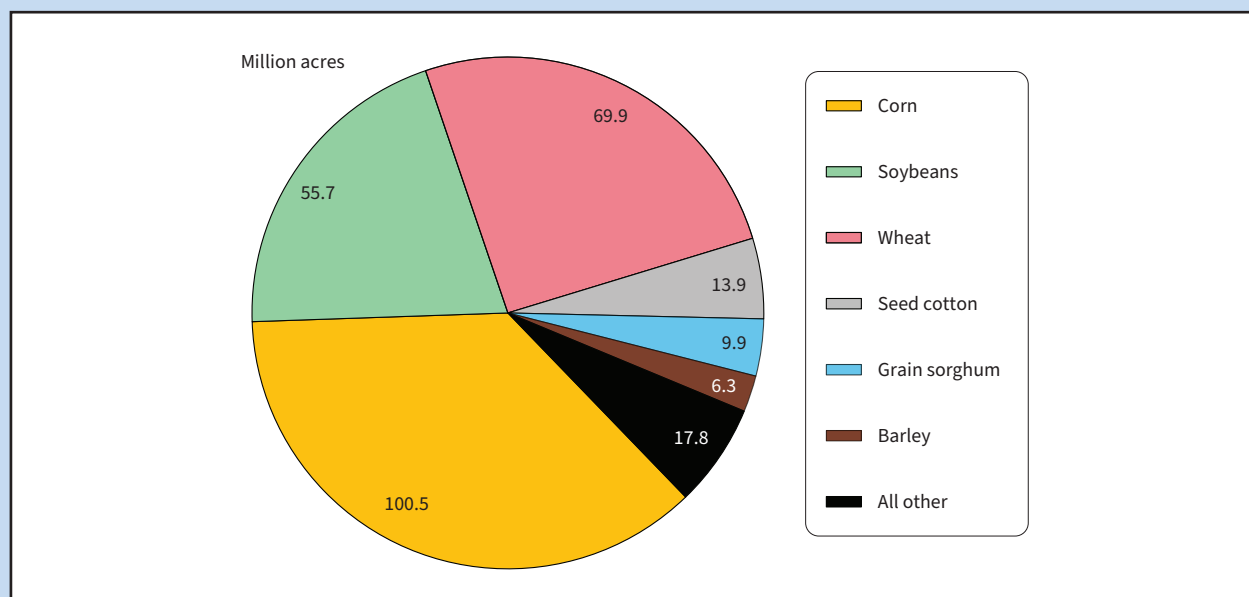
As a part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), farmers have the opportunity to increase their base acreage. The new total base acreage will be calculated as the sum of:

- The 5-year average of the acreage planted to covered commodities¹ for harvest, grazing, haying, silage, or other similar purposes for the 2019–23 crop years;
- Any acreage that producers were prevented from planting during the 2019–23 crop years;
- The lesser of either 15 percent of the total acres on the farm or the 5-year average of noncovered² crops planted from 2019–23, as well as any noncovered crops prevented from being planted during that same time frame.

For farms without base acres, the total base acres will then be allocated based upon the 5-year average share of planted acreage for each covered crop plus prevented plantings for each covered crop. For farms with existing base acres, a farm's average planted and prevented planted acres during that period must exceed the total existing base acres to be eligible for new base acres. Although this provision authorizes a potential increase in total base acreage across the country, it also restricts any base acre increase to no more than 30 million acres on top of the existing 274 million base acres, as of January 14, 2026 (box figure 1). If the total increase is greater than 30 million acres, an across-the-board, pro-rata reduction will be applied to the number of eligible acres to cap the increase at 30 million acres. The new base acres will be in effect beginning in the 2026 crop year.

Box figure 1

Base acres by major covered commodity, 2025



Note: All other includes canola, crambe, dry peas, flaxseed, large chickpeas, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, rapeseed, long-grain rice, medium-grain rice, rice-temperate japonica, safflower, small chickpeas, and sunflower seed.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, Farm Service Agency, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) data as of January 14, 2026.

¹ Covered commodities include wheat, oats, barley, corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe and sesame seed, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, large chickpeas, and peanuts.

² Eligible noncovered commodities means acreage planted on a farm to commodities other than covered commodities, trees, bushes, vines, grass, or pasture (including cropland that was idle or fallow).

ARC has two options: (1) Agriculture Risk Coverage-County (ARC-CO), where payment rates are based on a county revenue per acre for each covered commodity, or (2) Agriculture Risk Coverage-Individual (ARC-IC), where payments are based on farm level per acre revenues. For each farm, producers may participate (elect and enroll) in PLC or ARC-CO on a covered commodity-by-covered commodity basis or ARC-IC for all covered commodities on the farm. Thus, if low commodity prices, low yields, or a combination of both result in lower revenue relative to benchmark metrics (tied to separate Olympic averages²⁰ of historical national prices and county yields for ARC-CO and Olympic averages of farm revenues for ARC-IC), ARC-CO or ARC-IC payments are triggered. PLC payments are triggered if national marketing year average prices fall below a certain threshold (known as an effective reference price or ERP) for the applicable crop.²¹

Enrollment in ARC and PLC has varied over time in response to legislative changes and market conditions. Under the 2014 Farm Bill, producers that chose to participate in ARC or PLC were required to make a one-time election into either program that would remain in effect for the entirety of the 2014 Farm Bill (USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA), 2014). Under the 2018 Farm Bill, program election was only fixed for the first 2 years (2019 and 2020), after which the producer's election became an annual choice (USDA, FSA, 2019). In a one-time occurrence for 2025, producers were automatically enrolled into ARC or PLC based upon which program would result in the highest payment.

The 2018 Farm Bill also introduced changes to reference prices for PLC. These were originally set at fixed values as part of the 2014 Farm Bill and are referred to as statutory reference prices. The 2018 Farm Bill introduced ERPs, which work together with statutory reference prices to establish commodity-specific support levels under PLC. The 2018 Farm Bill specified that the commodity-specific effective reference price equal 85 percent of the 5-year Olympic average of national marketing year prices, bound between a floor of the statutory reference price and a ceiling of 115 percent of the statutory reference price. OBBBA made further changes to PLC, increasing the statutory reference price for corn and other crops through 2031 while maintaining the effective reference price system and raising the commodity-specific ERP from 85 percent of the 5-year Olympic average of marketing year average prices to 88 percent of the 5-year Olympic average of national marketing year average prices, beginning with program year 2025 (tables 2 and 3).²²

²⁰ An Olympic average is defined as the average calculated from a set of numbers after excluding the highest and lowest values.

²¹ For a more detailed discussion of ARC and PLC payment calculations see Turner et al. (2023).

²² The Act states that effective beginning with the 2031 crop year, the reference price shall equal the reference price in the previous crop year multiplied by 1.005.

Table 2

Statutory reference prices for selected covered commodities: 2014 Farm Bill, 2018 Farm Bill, and 2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)

Covered commodities	Statutory reference price (dollars)		
	2014 Farm Bill	2018 Farm Bill	OBBBA (2025)
Corn (bushel)	3.70	3.70	4.10
Wheat (bushel)	5.50	5.50	6.35
Grain sorghum (bushel)	3.95	3.95	4.40
Barley (bushel)	4.95	4.95	5.45
Oats (bushel)	2.40	2.40	2.65
Long-grain rice (hundredweight)	14.00	14.00	16.90
Medium-grain rice (hundredweight)	14.00	14.00	16.90
Soybeans (bushel)	8.40	8.40	10.00
Dry peas (hundredweight)	11.00	11.00	13.10
Lentils (hundredweight)	19.97	19.97	23.75
Small chickpeas (hundredweight)	19.04	19.04	22.65
Large chickpeas (hundredweight)	21.54	21.54	25.65
Peanuts (tons)	535.00	535.00	630.00
Seed cotton (pounds)	Not covered	0.367	0.420

Note: Seed cotton was not a covered commodity under the Agricultural Act of 2014.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using information from the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79 Title 1, Subtitle A, Section 1116), Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334, Title 1, Subtitle A, section 1106, as amended by Pub. L. 115-123, Section 60101), and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Pub. L. 119-21, 2025, Title I, Subtitle C, Section 10301).

Table 3

Effective reference price calculations for the Price Loss Coverage program for selected commodities in program year 2025 as authorized in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA, Pub. L. 119-21)

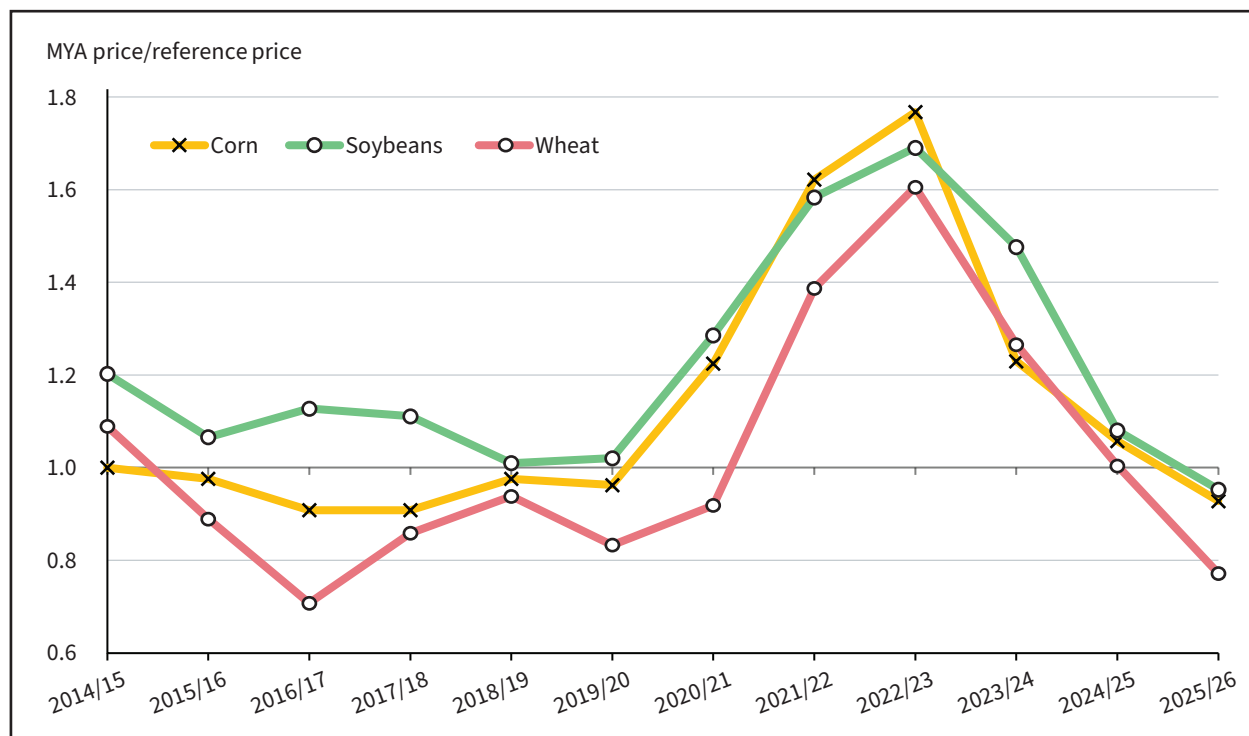
Covered commodities	Effective reference price (dollars) (lesser of A or B)		
	A. 115 percent of the reference price	B. The greater of (i) or (ii):	
		(i) Reference price	(ii) 88 percent of the 5-year Olympic average of market Year average price
Corn (bushel)	4.72	4.10	4.42*
Wheat (bushel)	7.30	6.35*	5.76
Grain sorghum (bushel)	5.06	4.40	4.67*
Barley (bushel)	6.27	5.45*	5.12
Oats (bushel)	3.05*	2.65	3.31
Soybeans (bushel)	11.50	10.00	10.71*
Long-grain rice (pounds)	0.1944	0.1690*	0.1235
Medium-grain rice (pounds)	0.1944	0.1690*	0.1297
Dry peas (pounds)	0.1507	0.1310*	0.1204
Lentils (pounds)	0.2731	0.2375	0.2587*
Small chickpeas (pounds)	0.2605	0.2265	0.2529*
Large chickpeas (pounds)	0.2950	0.2565	0.2798*
Peanuts (pounds)	0.3623	0.3150*	0.2115
Seed cotton (pounds)	0.4830	0.4200*	0.3483

Note: * indicates the effective reference price. An Olympic average is the average of the most recent 5 years of data, excluding the years with the highest and lowest values (2019/20–2023/24).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, Farm Service Agency, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) data as of January 30, 2026.

Since the inception of the PLC program, marketing year average corn prices have been below the statutory or effective reference price in 6 out of 12 program years (2015–19, 2025) (figure 7). By program year 2021, a general trend of rising commodity prices meant marketing year average prices for corn and most other major commodities remained above their respective reference prices from 2021 to 2024. More recently, the 2025/26 marketing year average price for corn was below the effective reference price for corn, as of January 12, 2026.

Figure 7

Marketing year average prices relative to reference prices

Notes: 2025/26 marketing year average (MYA) prices are projected. Final MYA prices for 2025/26 may vary from what is depicted. Values in the chart plot measure MYA prices as a share of the relevant commodity specific reference price (the statutory reference price for 2014–18 and effective reference price for 2019 onward) which is calculated by dividing current year MYA price by the reference price. Values above (below) one indicate current year MYA prices that are above (below) the relevant reference price.

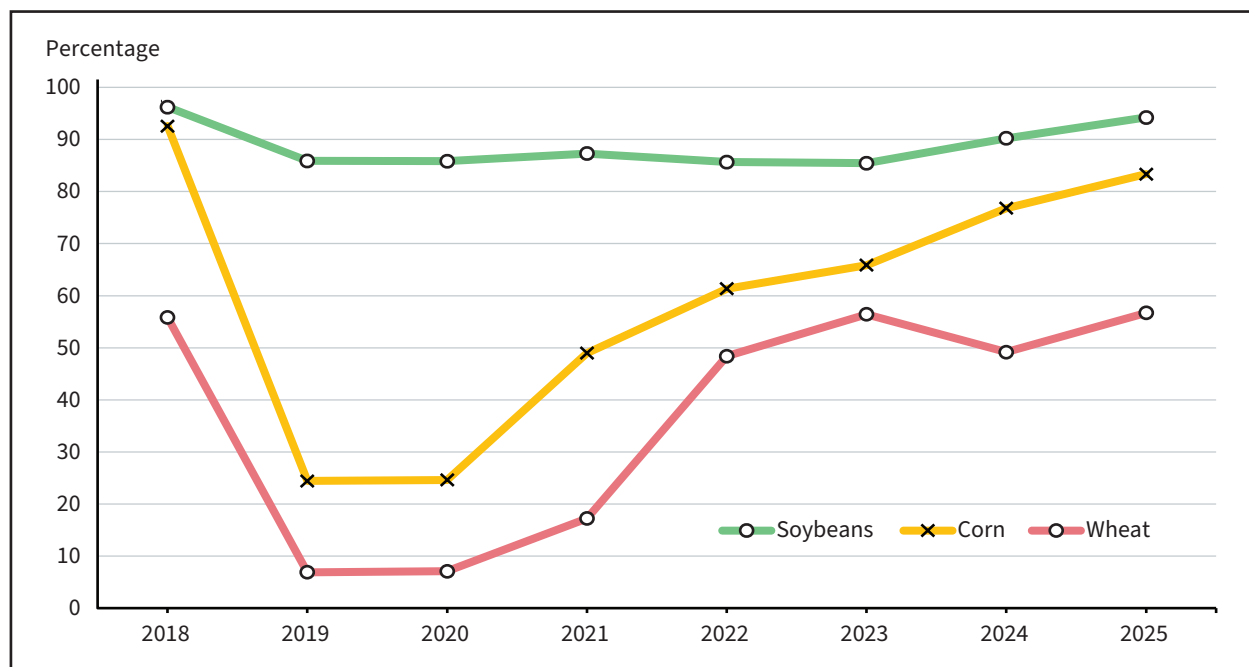
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Farm Service Agency accessed January 12, 2026.

Figure 8 shows the share of enrolled base acres in ARC from 2018 to 2025 for selected field crops (with the remaining share of acres enrolled in PLC). Initial enrollment under the 2014 Farm Bill (with 2014–18 values represented by 2018 in figure 8)²³ saw most corn base acres enrolled in ARC-CO (approximately 93 percent of enrolled corn base acres), with the remaining base acres primarily allocated to PLC (approximately 7 percent of enrolled corn base acres). Initial enrollment into ARC-IC represented less than 1 percent of enrolled base acres.

After the 2018 Farm Bill, the distribution of corn base acres between ARC and PLC shifted with most producers choosing to enroll in PLC (approximately 76 percent of enrolled base acres for 2019). In 2021, the distribution of base acres started to revert more toward the distribution prior to the 2018 Farm Bill. For 2022 through 2025, most corn base acres were once again enrolled in ARC-CO (over 80 percent by 2025), followed by PLC (less than 20 percent by 2025), with ARC-IC still representing a small proportion of base acres (approximately 1 percent).

²³ A producer's initial election was held constant during the period covered by the 2014 Farm Bill (2014–18).

Figure 8

Percent share of enrolled base acres in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) by commodity, 2018–25

Note: Shares represent the sum of enrolled acres in both Agriculture Risk Coverage-County (ARC-CO) and Agriculture Risk Coverage-Individual (ARC-IC). In this chart, base acres not enrolled in ARC are enrolled in Price Loss Coverage (PLC).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Farm Service Agency as of January 14, 2026.

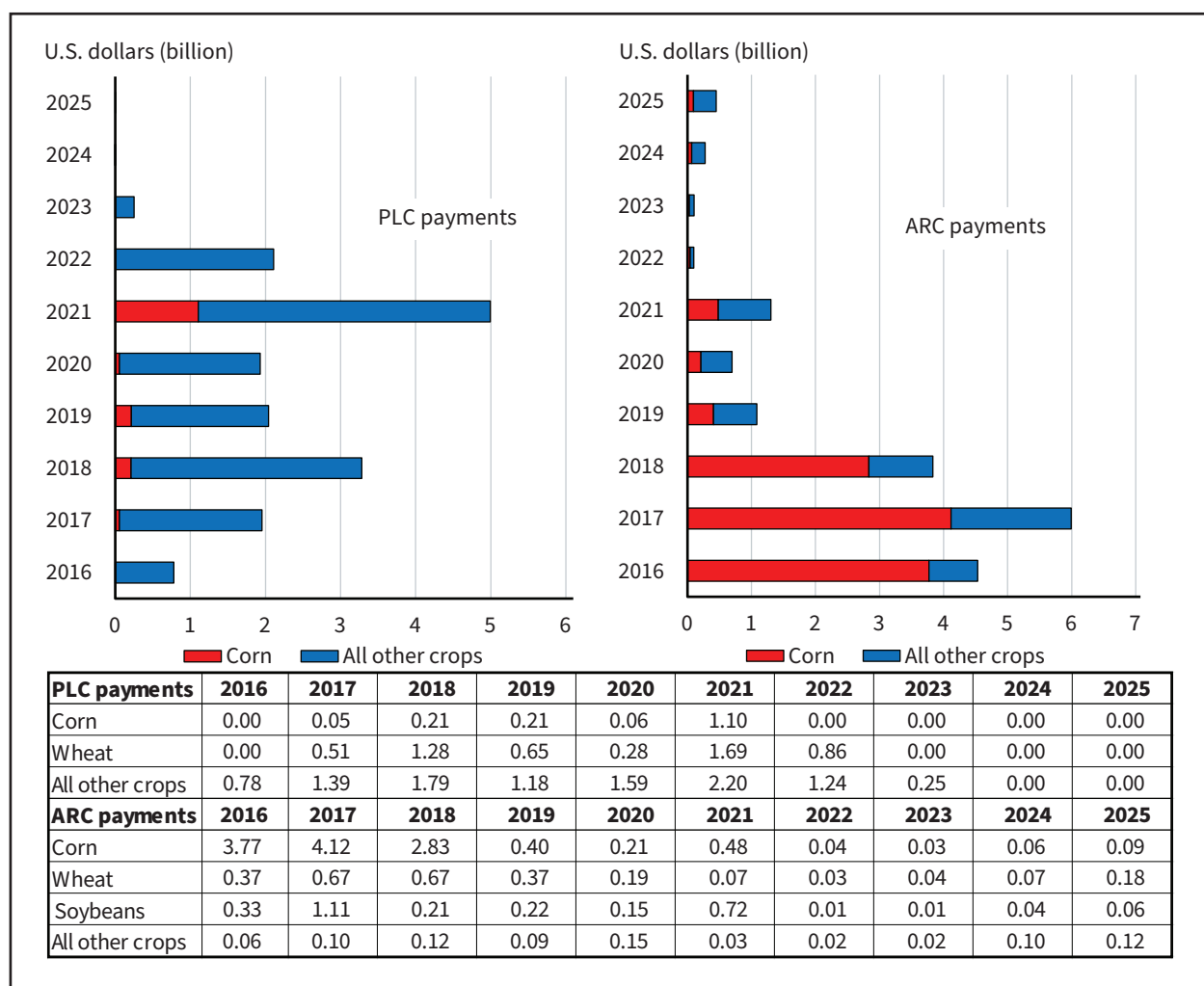
Payments made through ARC and PLC have varied significantly in response to variations in market prices and enrollment (figure 9). From 2014 to 2018, the majority of corn base acres were enrolled in ARC-CO and payments were correspondingly large. After the 2018 Farm Bill gave producers the option to change their enrollment decisions, PLC payments increased substantially for corn in fiscal year 2021 due to a shift in enrolment from ARC-CO to PLC (figure 9).²⁴ However, fiscal year PLC payments for corn were under \$2 million from 2022 to 2025 due to higher commodity prices that exceeded the effective reference price during several program years. The 2025 OBBBA increased statutory reference prices through 2031 and allows enrolled producers to change their enrollment decisions annually.²⁵

²⁴ Note that we use fiscal year data in figure 9 since data is available through fiscal year 2025 and program year data is only available through 2023. There is typically an 18-month lag between program enrollment and receipt of any payment due, as USDA issues ARC and PLC payments in October following the end of the marketing year. Accordingly, there is a lag between fiscal and program year data.

²⁵ For the 2025 program year only, the Secretary shall, on a covered commodity-by-covered commodity basis, make the higher of Price Loss Coverage payments and Agriculture Risk Coverage county payments to the producers on a farm for the payment acres for each covered commodity on the farm (OBBBA; Pub. L. 119-21).

Figure 9

Total Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments by commodity, fiscal years 2016–25



Note: Data for fiscal year 2025 are estimates. There were no PLC payments to soybeans during this time period.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using information from the USDA Office of Budget and Program Analysis (2019–26), USDA Explanatory Notes-Commodity Credit Corporation.

Marketing Assistance Loans

Marketing assistance loans (MALs) provide producers with interim financing at harvest time to meet cash flow needs without having to sell when market prices are typically at low levels (Code of Federal Regulations, 2022). The MAL program offers producers of eligible commodities 9-month nonrecourse or recourse loans at commodity-specific loan rates for stored commodities placed under loan. Table 4 shows the loan rates by crop as authorized in OBBBA for crop years 2026–31, and under the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills. The corn loan rate increased from \$1.95 per bushel in the 2014 Farm Bill to \$2.20 per bushel in the 2018 Farm Bill, and to \$2.42 per bushel beginning with the 2026 crop year under OBBBA.

Table 4

Comparison of national average loan rates under the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills and One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) in dollars per unit

Commodity	Unit	2014 Farm Bill crop years 2014–18	2018 Farm Bill crop years 2019–25	OBBBA
Corn	bushel	1.95	2.20	2.42
Wheat	bushel	2.94	3.38	3.72
Grain sorghum	bushel	1.95	2.20	2.42
Barley ⁽¹⁾	bushel	1.95	2.50	2.75
Oats	bushel	1.39	2.00	2.20
Cotton, upland ⁽²⁾	pounds	0.45–0.52	0.45–0.52	0.55
Cotton, extra-long staple cotton	pounds	0.80	0.95	1.00
Rice, long-grain	hundredweight	6.50	7.00	7.70
Rice, medium-grain	hundredweight	6.50	7.00	7.70
Soybeans	bushel	5.00	6.20	6.82
Other oilseeds ⁽³⁾	hundredweight	10.09	10.09	11.10
Dry peas	hundredweight	5.40	6.15	6.87
Lentils	hundredweight	11.28	13.00	14.30
Chickpeas, small	hundredweight	7.43	10.00	11.00
Chickpeas, large	hundredweight	12.28	14.00	15.40
Peanuts	ton	355	355	390

(1) The barley price is based on the all-barley price. Previously, the barley price was based on the feed barley price.

(2) Under the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills, the loan rate for upland cotton was set by statutory formulas and could not be less than \$0.45 per pound or more than \$0.52 per pound. Under OBBBA, the loan rate is a fixed \$0.55 per pound.

(3) Other oilseeds are sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe, sesame seed, and other oilseeds as designated by USDA.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using information from the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334), and One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 (Pub. L. 119-21).

With nonrecourse loans, producers pledge the commodity as collateral, meaning the commodity cannot be sold into the market while under loan. Before or upon loan maturity, the borrower has the choice to sell the commodity after paying off the loan principal plus interest, or when the loan matures the producer may deliver the pledged collateral (e.g., the stored commodity) to the Commodity Credit Corporation as full repayment for the loan (forfeiture).²⁶ This option can benefit a producer if the market price of the commodity is below the loan rate.²⁷

If the producer repays the MAL when the repayment rate (as determined by USDA) falls below the MAL loan rate, the producer gains a benefit equal to the difference between the MAL loan rate and the repayment rate. This is known as a marketing loan gain (MLG). Producers for most MAL-eligible commodities who choose not to apply for a loan may also receive a comparable payment called a loan

²⁶ Recourse loans are loans for which the commodity offered as collateral does not meet quality eligibility requirements. These commodities may not be forfeited in satisfaction of loan indebtedness and must be repaid in full at principal plus interest.

²⁷ In the context of MAL, the term loan rates refers to a specified dollar value per unit of the commodity that would be received by the producer if the commodity were placed under loan (typically expressed in either U.S. dollars per bushels or U.S. dollars per hundredweight).

deficiency payment (LDP). As with MLGs, an LDP is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the repayment rate.

Marketing loans are not extensively used for most crops, with the exceptions of cotton and peanuts. Among leading crops, the share of production under loan placement averaged 2.0 percent for wheat, 2.6 percent for soybeans, 4.0 percent for corn, and 15.7 percent for rice during 2018/19 to 2025/26.²⁸ Nevertheless, marketing assistance loans are important to some corn producers for short-term financing, with loan placements averaging \$970.2 million dollars during 2020–25 (USDA, FSA, 2026a).

Corn marketing assistance loan use has been low in percentage terms and marketing assistance loan benefits (combined MLGs and LDPs) have been absent for corn since the 2014 Farm Bill was enacted. Nevertheless, producers of several other leading field crops benefitted from marketing loan benefits in recent years, including over \$300 million to cotton in both 2014 and 2015, over \$130 million to wheat in 2016, and \$200 million and \$60 million for cotton in 2019 and 2025, respectively (USDA, FSA, 2026b).

Day-to-day price volatility, regional price differences, and differences in prices by quality characteristics explain why marketing loan benefits can be available even when national average annual or monthly prices for loan eligible commodities remain above the loan rate. In addition, when prices are depressed for a prolonged period, MALs (and LDPs) can be an important support mechanism for producers of corn and other crops. Prior to the period of sustained price increases that began in the mid-2000s, grain and oilseed crops received substantial marketing loan benefits with aggregate benefits across all loan commodities exceeding \$6 billion annually in 1999, 2000, and 2001.

Title XI Support Programs

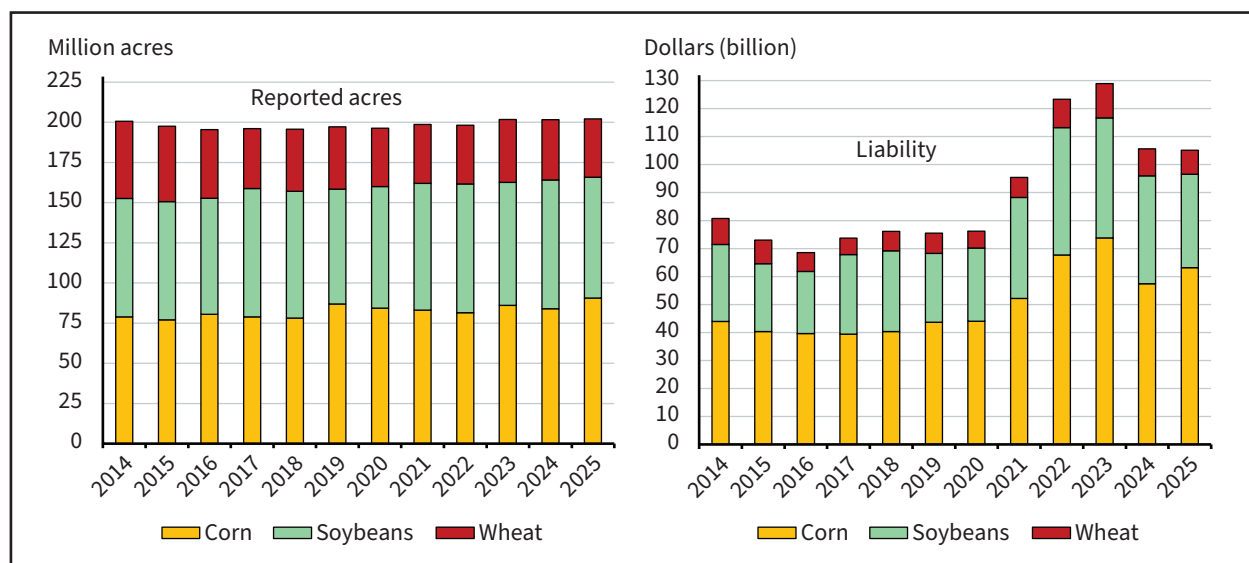
Agricultural insurance available through USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIP) and supported through Title XI of the 2018 Farm Bill offers a variety of products to help producers manage yield and revenue risks.²⁹ The FCIP is governed by the USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), which is managed by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA). From 2000 to 2025, FCIP provided financial and administrative backing to insurance products for more than 150 agricultural commodities, covering an average of 321 million acres each year.

During 2015–25, FCIP provided \$51.1 billion of insurance protection (liability) on 82.8 million acres annually for U.S. corn producers, representing about 81 and 91 percent of total corn production value and planted acreage, respectively (USDA, RMA, 2026a; USDA, NASS, 2026). Over this same period, the program averaged \$4.6 billion in annual premiums collected for corn, with Federal premium support averaging \$2.9 billion each year. Corn's insured acres increased by 7.5 percent from 77.0 million in 2015 to 90.6 million by 2025 (figure 10), while planted acreage rose 12 percent.

²⁸ Loan placements averaged 51.9 percent of the upland cotton crop and 79.2 percent of the peanut crop during 2018/19 and 2025/26, as of January 30, 2026.

²⁹ The private sector also offers limited access to crop insurance, with most private sector options being limited to a single peril. The vast majority of crop insurance policies sold in the United States originate from the FCIP.

Figure 10

Federal Crop Insurance Program net reported acres and liability for corn, soybeans, and wheat, 2014–25

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Risk Management Agency, Summary of Business as of February 2, 2026.

FCIP offers producers a wide array of insurance plans (Turner et al., 2023; Tsiboe & Turner, 2023). These plans can be categorized into two main types: individual-based policies and area- or index-based policies.³⁰ Individual policies compensate based on the specific loss experiences of an individual insured unit. In contrast, area or index plans depend on the experiences of a broader group of producers (e.g., county or other geographic area), which might not align precisely with an individual producer's experience (Tsiboe et al., 2023).

Both individual and area- or index-based policies are further distinguished based on the outcome protected (i.e., yield versus revenue). Yield-based policies are designed to safeguard against a decrease in production quantity, essentially protecting producers from low yields. On the other hand, revenue-based policies ensure a certain level of income by covering risks associated with low output prices and/or a reduction in production quantity. Additionally, area- or index-based policies also offer the option for margin protection in some counties. Most crop producers electing individual-based policies can opt to insure 50–85 percent (in 5 percent increments) of the producer's expected yield or revenue.³¹ Producers participating in area and index plans can insure 50–95 percent (in 5 percent increments) of their group's expected yield, revenue, or margin.

Individual revenue-based plans for a single commodity are the dominant form of protection among corn producers, accounting for an estimated 90 percent of total corn liability and 95 percent³² of insured corn acreage in 2025. In terms of liability, individual revenue-based plans are followed by area/index plans for a single commodity (6.7 percent of liabilities) and then individual yield plans for a single commodity (3.5 percent of liabilities). From 2015 to 2025, corn growers predominantly selected coverage levels in the 75–80 percent range, but typical coverage levels vary by location.

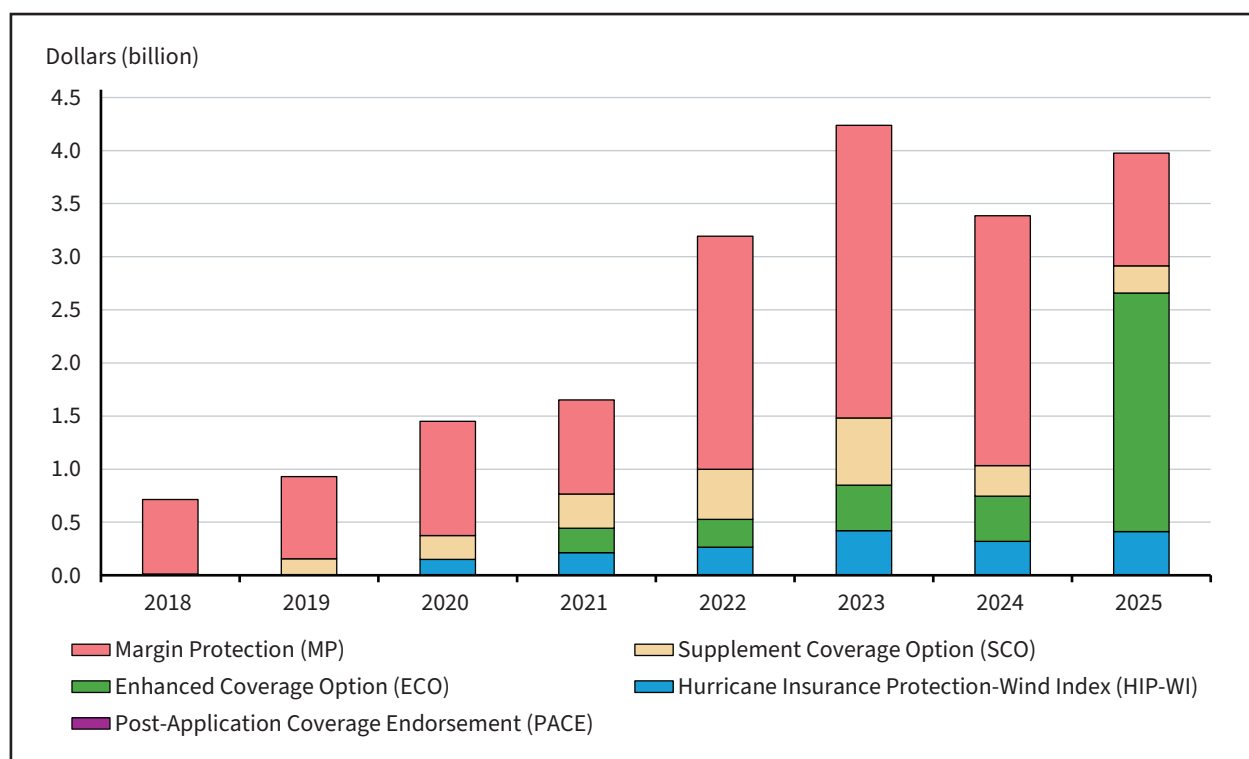
³⁰ Even within these categories there are additional types of policies. For example, potentially relevant to corn producers, one type of individual-based policy is Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP), through which producers can insure up to \$17 million in revenue for all commodities produced on the farm under one policy.

³¹ All coverage level choices are not universally offered. Available coverage levels are dependent on the crop being insured and the county where production is taking place.

³² This is calculated based on the insured acreage of the base policy and does not include companion/endorsed acres.

Some types of area and index plans can be purchased as standalone policies, while others must be purchased as supplements to an underlying policy. These supplemental policies complement individual yield- and revenue-based plans offered as basic provisions, where the special provisions and endorsements are “stacked” on top of a traditional policy to address certain risks or provide a higher level of protection. The trend and usage level by corn producers for supplemental plans is shown in figure 11. In 2025, the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) was the dominant form of supplemental protection for corn, accounting for an estimated 56 percent of total liability (figure 11). It was followed by Margin Protection (MP)³³ at 27 percent, Hurricane Insurance Protection-Wind Index (HIP-WI) at 10 percent, Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) at 6.5 percent, and Post-Application Coverage Endorsement (PACE) at less than 0.1 percent (USDA, RMA, 2025a). The use of ECO expanded significantly in 2025 following an increase in premium support for ECO to 65 percent (up from the prior rate of 44 percent for underlying individual revenue coverage or 51 percent for underlying individual yield coverage), while the use of MP declined.³⁴

Figure 11
Liability by companion/endorsed program for corn, 2018–25



Note: Margin Protection can also be purchased as a standalone policy, but the figure reports only companion/endorsed acres on top of another underlying policy.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Risk Management Agency Summary of Business as of February 20, 2026.

³³ Margin Protection can also be purchased as a standalone policy, but the figure reports only companion/endorsed acres on top of another underlying policy. Over 90 percent of corn acres insured under margin protection are insured as endorsed acres in connection with another underlying policy.

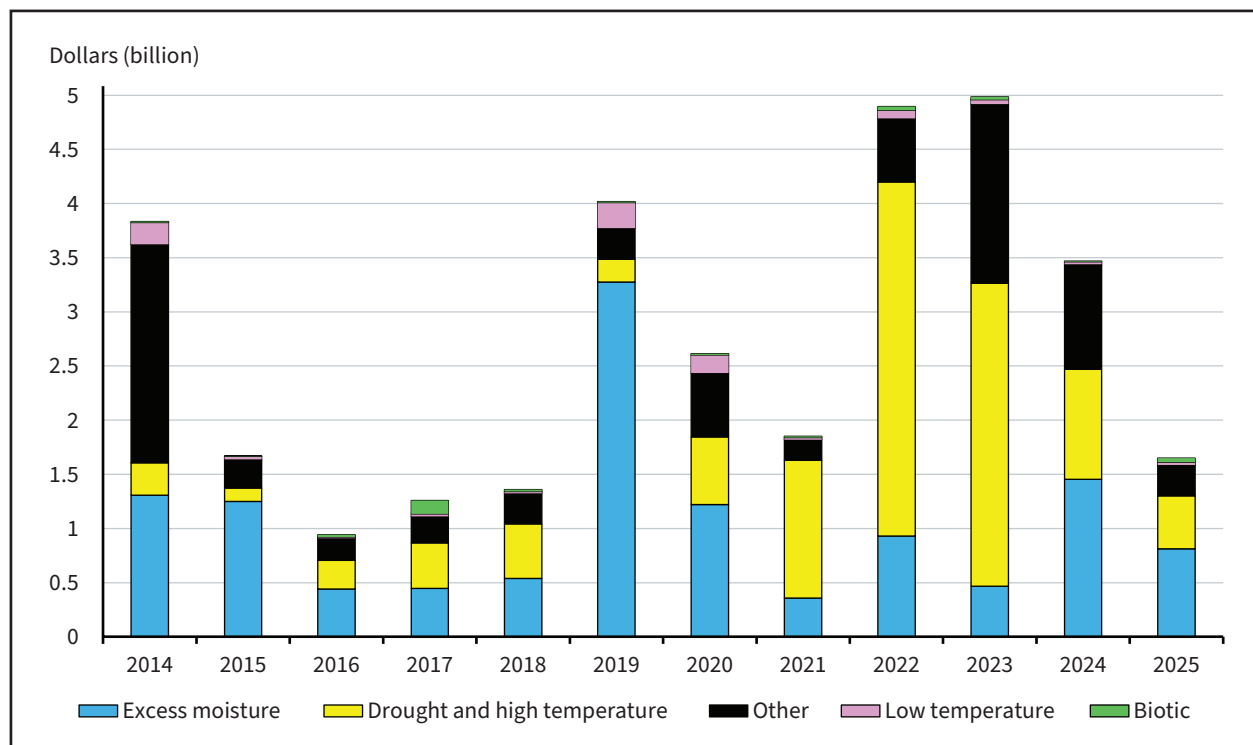
³⁴ For further discussion on the impact of this change to ECO, see Zulauf et al. (2025).

OBBBA made several changes to FCIP which expanded coverage options and lowered the cost to producers of purchasing certain policies. The bill raised premium support levels by 3–5 percent across coverage levels from 55 percent to 85 percent. It also raised premium support for SCO policies from an initial level of 65 percent to 80 percent, reducing the cost of this supplemental, area-based coverage for producers. In addition to raising premium support for SCO, OBBBA also raised the coverage level for SCO from 86 percent to 90 percent. Finally, OBBBA removed the restriction that producers must elect PLC in order to purchase an SCO policy—producers may now enroll in either ARC or PLC and also purchase SCO coverage.

Many factors can influence the magnitude of FCIP indemnified losses for corn, including changes in producers' demand for crop insurance, prevalence of extreme weather events, and changes in corn prices over time. Figure 12 provides an overview of the causes of corn losses covered by crop insurance from 2014 to 2025, highlighting the total indemnity amounts associated with each peril. Since 2014, annual indemnity payments have ranged from \$941 million (2016) to \$4.98 billion (2023). Although the cause of indemnified losses varies year to year due to prevailing weather conditions, drought and high temperatures or excess moisture are often leading causes of losses (USDA, RMA, 2025b). Since 2014, excess moisture has been responsible for 38 percent of total indemnity payments while drought and high temperatures accounted for 35 percent.³⁵

Figure 12

Total indemnity for corn losses covered by crop insurance by cause, 2014–25



Note: Drought and high temperature includes indemnities due to drought, failure of irrigation supply, failure of irrigation equipment, inability to prepare land for irrigation, heat, hot wind, and fire. Excess moisture includes indemnities due to excess moisture, precipitation, rain, and flood. Low temperature includes indemnities due to cold wet weather, cold winter, freeze, and frost. Biotic includes indemnities due to plant disease, wildlife, insects, and mycotoxin. Other includes indemnities due to all other causes not explicitly listed.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, Risk Management Agency Cause of Loss data as of February 20, 2026.

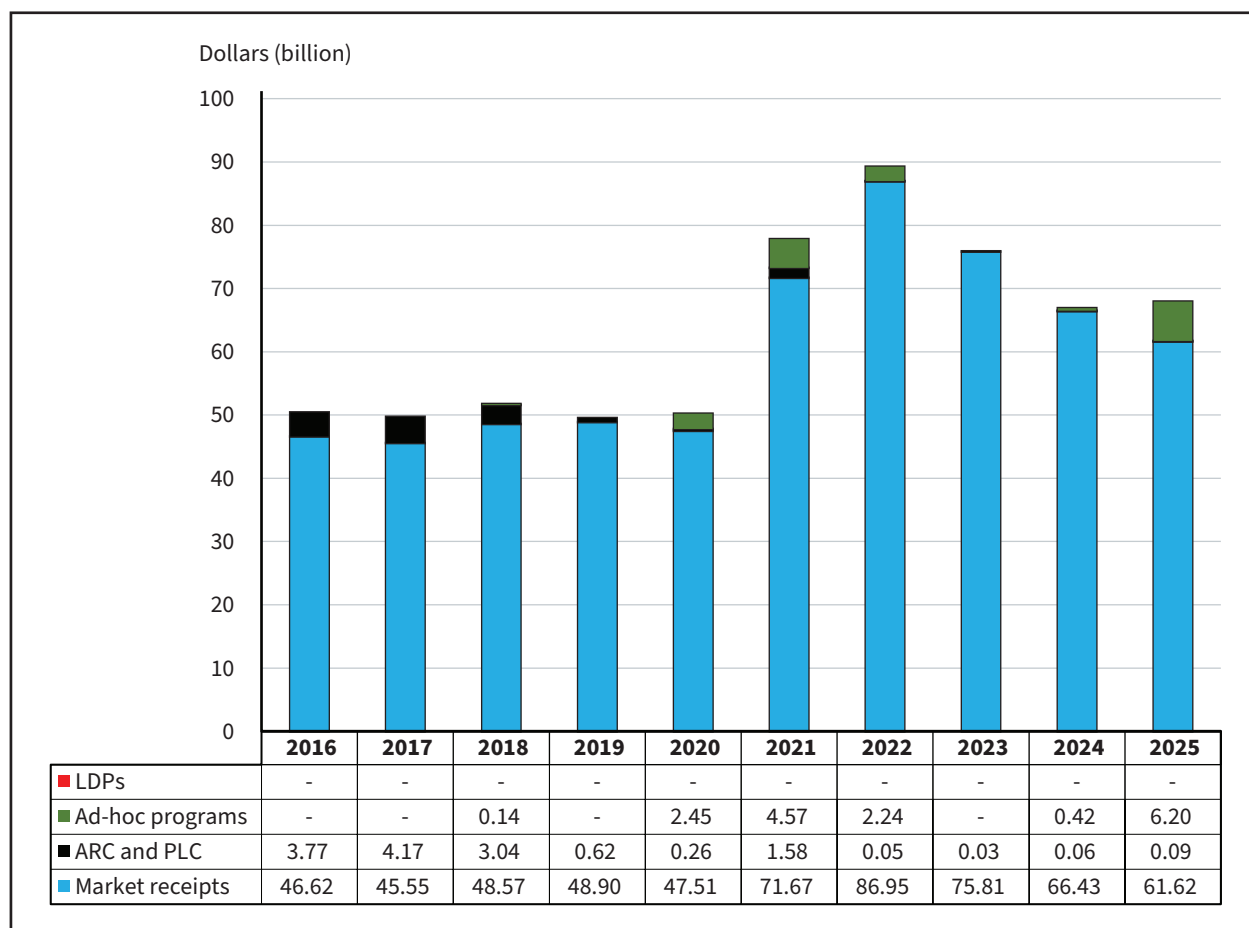
³⁵ Note that the determination is made in the field and it can be difficult to distinguish between damage caused by drought, insects, disease, or high temperatures.

Payments to Corn Producers and Budget Issues

The U.S. corn sector receives various forms of Government assistance through farm and ad hoc programs that occurred outside the scope of farm legislation (such as the Market Facilitation Program and the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program). Figure 13 shows annual support by program for corn (or corn base acres) from fiscal year 2016 to 2025 (including ad hoc programs).

Figure 13

Market revenues and Title I Government payments for corn, fiscal years 2016–25



Note: Cash receipts are reported on a calendar year basis, while Government payments are all on a fiscal year basis. Payments from ad hoc programs are reported in the fiscal year when the bulk of program payments were received. Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) include Agriculture Risk Coverage-Individual (ARC-IC), Agriculture Risk Coverage-County (ARC-CO), and PLC payments. Ad-hoc programs payments include payments from the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 1 and 2, the Market Facilitation Program, the Emergency Relief Program, the 2022 Emergency Relief Program, the Emergency Commodity Assistance Program, and the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program. Loan deficiency payments (LDP) include payments received through the Loan Deficiency Payment program.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) calculations based on USDA, Office of Budget and Program Analysis; USDA, Farm Service Agency, Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Dashboard 2020 and 2021; USDA, Farm Service Agency, Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Dashboard 2022; USDA, Farm Service Agency, Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) Dashboard; USDA, Farm Service Agency, Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) Dashboard; USDA, Office of Budget and Program Analysis, USDA Explanatory Notes–Commodity Credit Corporation, multiple years; USDA, ERS, Farm Income and Wealth Statistics.

Direct payments for corn, which consisted of payments to ARC and PLC, peaked in fiscal year 2017 at \$4.2 billion, with 99 percent of those payments coming through ARC. ARC and PLC payments fell to \$30 million by 2023 as higher prices pushed payments lower but turned higher in 2024 and rose to nearly \$100 million in 2025. Corn producers received no loan deficiency payments between 2016 and 2025.³⁶

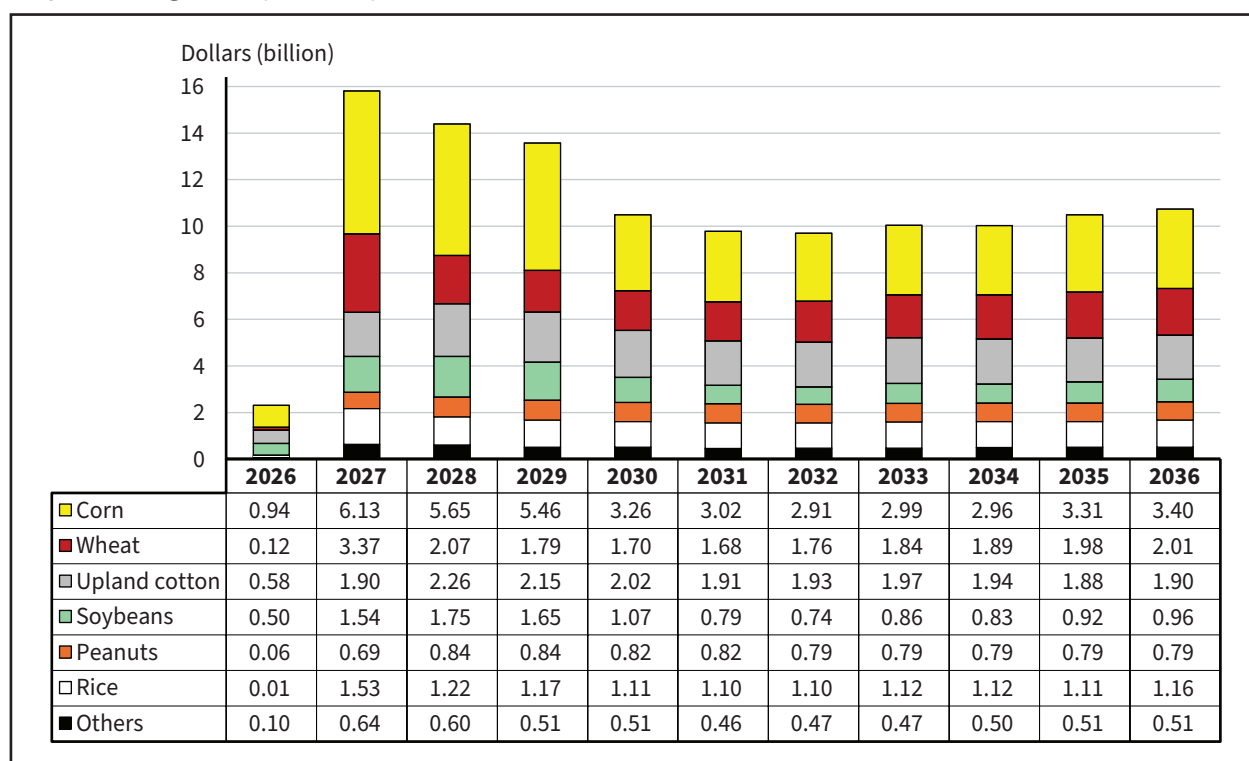
Corn producers have also benefited from a series of temporary supplemental assistance programs authorized outside of the Farm Bill.³⁷ Corn farmers received a total of \$136 million in 2018 through the Market Facilitation Program, which compensated producers impacted by retaliatory tariffs. From 2020 to 2022, corn producers who were impacted by Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic-related market disruptions received over \$7 billion in payments through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, with the bulk of those payments received in 2021. The Emergency Relief Program (ERP) and Emergency Relief Program 2022 (ERP 2022) also provided assistance to corn producers for losses suffered due to wildfires, drought, hurricanes, winter storms, and other eligible disasters, with payments totaling \$2.2 billion from ERP and \$421 million from ERP 2022. In March 2025, USDA launched the Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) to mitigate the impacts of high input costs and low commodity prices on producers of eligible commodities for the 2024 crop year, as authorized in the American Relief Act, 2025 (ARA; Pub. L. 118-158). Up to \$10 billion in payments were authorized for ECAP. The ECAP payment rate for corn was set at \$42.91 per acre, with USDA, FSA reporting that \$3.76 billion had been disbursed for corn as of March 2026 (USDA, FSA, 2026c). Then in July 2025, USDA launched the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP), also authorized by ARA, which provided assistance to eligible producers for losses experienced due to certain natural hazards occurring in calendar years 2023 and 2024 (USDA, 2025). USDA estimated that SDRP would use approximately \$16.09 billion of the authorized \$30.78 billion contained in ARA for disaster assistance purposes. Under the first phase of SDRP, USDA disbursed \$2.4 billion for corn producers as of March 2026 (USDA, FSA, 2026d). Finally, in December 2025, USDA announced that it would make available \$11 billion to producers of certain row crops (including corn) under the Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) Program, with payments initiated in early 2026.

Looking ahead, the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) February 2026 projection of Title I Farm Bill expenditures through 2036 (under 2025 OBBBA parameters) showed that total spending through ARC, PLC, and marketing loan benefits were projected to average \$10.7 billion annually for all crops between 2026 and 2036. Corn ranked first in projected total payments, accounting for 34 percent of all crop outlays under these programs (figure 14) (CBO, 2026).

³⁶ Although not considered direct Government payments, crop insurance subsidies for corn producers represent a somewhat larger Government expenditure relative to Title I crop payments (excluding marketing assistance loans), averaging \$3.4 billion from 2020 to 2025.

³⁷ For more information on recent developments in ad hoc assistance programs, see Baldwin et al. (2024).

Figure 14

Projected program payments by crop

Note: Programs include Price Loss Coverage, Agriculture Risk Coverage-County, and total marketing loan benefits. Others is comprised of sorghum, barley, oats, other oilseeds, wool, mohair, honey, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, and large chickpeas.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using the Congressional Budget Office February 2026 Baseline for USDA Mandatory Farm Programs.

These projections were released after the July 2025 passage of OBBBA, which increased loan rates and reference prices and authorized the addition of up to 30 million new base acres (as previously discussed). Although CBO's projected commodity outlays are, on average, significantly larger than payments since 2018, commodity payments such as ARC, PLC, and marketing loan benefits have historically represented a relatively small share of overall Farm Bill outlays and were projected to remain a smaller share of spending from 2026 to 2036 behind food and nutrition assistance programs and crop insurance expenditures.

Conclusion

The United States is the leading corn producer and exporter globally and both are projected to continue to grow over the coming decade, along with market receipts. Policies play an important role in the farm safety net, and stakeholders in the corn sector are projected to receive increased payments subsequent to the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA; Pub. L. 119-21). The changes made in OBBBA are expected to increase expenditures due to higher loan rates and effective reference prices, as well as the addition of up to 30 million new base acres and higher support for, and increased coverage levels on, Federal crop insurance.

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