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There's No Substitute For A Farmer's Elevator

Farmers Face Troubling Year During 2026 Planting Season

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B
 being hit hard and are cutting ag related production and sales staff.

In addition to the economic loss to the community, there are increased costs to farmers to buy machinery big enough to cover all of that land. A big, new tractor can easily cost a quarter of a million dollars. A big, new combine can go past a million dollars by the time it is field ready.

The changing face of farming has also had an effect on families. Back in those "golden olden" days, every farmhouse was filled with a bunch of kids who would help out around the farm when needed. But that too has changed. Children are expensive and family sizes have shrunk. Family sizes now seldom exceed four or five members, Mom, Dad and two or three children.

You can also expect that Mom will not be a physical part of the operation. She contributes with a job of her own off the farm. In many cases Mom's job provides family health insurance, pays the daycare bills for the youngsters, makes a car payment, helps with the mortgage and buys a few groceries and gasoline before it's gone.

Our farmer friends are right now getting ready to take to their fields. The eternal optimists will dump thousands of dollars' worth of seeds into the ground betting that we will get just the right amount of rain and sunshine over the summer to



Sugarbeets have been the saving crop for many farmers over the past few years. The bottom fell out of that market along with all other local farm economies last fall.

produce a big crop in the fall. For many that bet will prove profitable. For more than a few, it will be a bad crop year and hopefully crop insurance covers the shortfall.

For farmers, this spring is particularly troubling. All of the prices on the board are soft as planting time draws near. Last fall saw wheat struggling to get past \$5 per bushel. New crop wheat for

delivery, this fall can be contracted for \$6.50 to \$6.90 per bushel.

Soybeans have been an erratic crop producing mixed results for farmers the past few years. Beans don't like wet conditions and the flatlands produced those conditions in many areas last year. Yields were all over the boards, anywhere from four to 50 bushel to the acre beans. Finding a market for soybeans

was also a problem last fall as politics and proposed tariffs against Chinese goods softened markets for American beans. As a result, those who had room, stored beans hoping for better days. At less than \$9 per bushel being offered for the beans, the decision to store was not hard to make. Soybeans have now firmed up to about \$12-plus per bushel for fall delivery.

Since last fall there has been a lessening in conflicts between the United States and China and the government is working on a subsidy program to cover costs for farmers caught in the political struggle. The markets are again open and soybeans are again selling for right around \$12 per bushel.

While small grains such as wheat, barley and oats used to rule the cash markets and acreage around here. That is no longer the case. In the past half century, corn has taken over as king of the chosen crops. When the planting dust settles this spring,

roughly half of the planted acres will be devoted to corn.

That was a good bet last year as there were a lot of fields of corn harvested that went over or right around 200-bushel to the acre. That is a goal that is always hoped for but seldom achieved. But last year saw a lot of well-drained and fertilized fields hitting that magic 200-bushel mark. Some of the less productive ground still saw yields in the 150 to 175 bushel to the acre average.

The price being offered for corn at harvest last fall was around \$3.50 per bushel. That has since stabilized at about \$4.50 per bushel for later delivery of the 2025 crop. Future offer about \$4.90 per bushel for March delivery of the 2026 crop. There are a few growers contracting for more than a small amount of the crop at that price.

A safety net for many Barnesville area farmers has been sugarbeets. They have provided a hedge against down markets on other commodities.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8C



The wheat harvest came off the fields a little late due to wet conditions but the yield wasn't bad. The prices, however were horrible, struggling to stay above \$5 per bushel.



The corn harvest last year was huge for most farmers as far as bushels per acre produced. The crop had to be big to make up for some dismal prices being offered. Corn was worth about \$3.50 per bushel at harvest and was getting about \$4 for delivery later in the year if it was stored.



It was a big corn crop at harvest last year with many farmers seeing 200 bushel yields. That big yield was needed as the corn was only bringing about \$3.50 per bushel at harvest. That same corn is bringing about a buck a bushel more than that right now and close to \$5 per bushel for new crop this fall.

Deer Visitors Are Common...



It is not at all unusual to see a whitetailed deer patrolling the Barnesville streets during the summer. There are a couple small herds living in the city. One herd lives between Blue Eagle Park and downtown and another herd resides on the northwest edge of the city. The pesky bugs chase the deer out of their chosen habitat on a few days each summer. The deer are also fond of raiding gardens and flower beds right about sundown.