



# U.S. planting intentions: Less corn, more soybeans

By RHIANNON BRANCH  
*FarmWeek*

U.S. farmers intend to plant 95.3 million acres of corn in 2026, down 3% from last year, and 84.7 million acres of soybeans, up 4% from last year, according to USDA's prospective plantings report released March 31.

"The survey suggested corn acres would be switching to soybeans in the season ahead, as expected, but not to as deep of a degree as had been anticipated coming in," Joe Camp with CommStock Investments told FarmWeek. The average trade guesses were for 94.3 million corn acres and 85.5 million soybean acres.

All wheat planted area for 2026 is estimated at 43.8 million acres, down 3% from 2025. If realized, it would be the lowest total wheat acreage since 1919. Winter wheat planted area, at 32.4 million acres, is down 2% from both the previous estimate and from last year.

The estimates are based on surveys completed by nearly 74,000 farm operators across the nation during the first two weeks of March. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service reported a survey response rate of just 37.6%, down from 44.3% last year.

Camp said the natural swing of crop rotation and commodity prices favoring soybeans are big drivers of the acreage shift, but those who do not have inputs locked in could still be swayed as fields are planted.

"Coming into the report, we were considering the caveats of this season being different because of what's transpired over the last month," Camp said. "The changes since (the survey period) are most particularly tied to what's going on in the Middle East and its ramifications for the energy market, which link back to fertilizer costs and how those go into the decision-making."

## U.S. CROP ACREAGE ESTIMATES

Crops	2025 Plantings	March 2026
Corn	98.8 mil	95.3 mil
Soybeans	81.2 mil	84.7 mil
Wheat	45.3 mil	43.8 mil

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

Illinois farmers intend to plant 10.9 million acres of corn this season, down 3% from last year, and 10.5 million acres of soybeans, up 2%.

USDA also released its quarterly grain stocks report. Corn stocks totaled 9.02 billion bushels, up 11% from the same time last year, and slightly below trade expectations.

Camp said it is interesting to think about how much stocks are up relative to usage in the previous quarter.

"Corn stocks are up 11% from a year ago. That is taken into context with last year being a record 17-plus billion-bushel crop that was 14% bigger than the previous season, so you can have some suggestion about the relative strength of usage here for this last corn crop," Camp said.

On-farm corn stocks were up 21% from a year ago, while off-farm stocks were down 2%.

"The ratios of off-farm to on-farm stand out," he said. "If (corn) is largely held on-farm, it's possible that it's largely still owned by the farmer. That's a lot of crop, relatively speaking, that is still left to take to the market, so we think about how that can come into play going forward."

Soybeans stored as of March 1 totaled 2.10 billion bushels, up 10% from the same time last year. On-farm soybean stocks were up 3% from a year ago, while off-farm stocks were up 16%.

Wheat stored in all positions totaled 1.30 billion bushels, up 5% from a year ago. On-farm all wheat stocks were down 3% from last year, while off-farm stocks were up 8%.

Initial market reaction to the reports was positive for soybeans and slightly negative for corn, but Camp said there weren't any standout bullish numbers.

"I think it leaves the market possibly vulnerable going forward to then getting right back to what's going on in outside markets and the volatility that we have in the financial spaces and across the broader commodity because of the geopolitical uncertainties and everything else that's going on," he said.

Implications from the war remain a sticking point in his long-term market outlook.

"We're set up for this spring being more of a war market potentially than it is so often a weather market," he said.

"This big report is now in the rear view and it's back to trading some very big-ticket items in terms of broader market impacts that we could continue to see with the latest volatility in equities, interest rates, currencies, the metals and oil," Camp said.

This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.

# Sangamon Experience launches rural initiative, inviting historical societies and teachers to apply

Edited By TODD MARVER  
*Enquirer-Democrat Reporter*

The Sangamon Experience at the University of Illinois Springfield announces the launch of its new rural initiative, a collaborative summer program designed to preserve, share and bring to life the rich local histories of communities across central Illinois.

Titled "Beyond City Limits," the initiative invites local historical societies and K-12 educators to partner in a unique, place-based project that connects community history with classroom learning.

Running from May through August, the initiative will support one central Illinois county, selected from Bond, Cass, Christian, Fayette, Greene, Jersey, Macon, Macoupin, Mason, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon and Scott. The program will document and digitize local historical materials while developing engaging curriculum resources for students. The goal is to highlight a different community each summer by collecting and sharing local stories.

The initiative is made possible by a donation from the Land of Lincoln Community Foundation.

A call for community partners

The Sangamon Experience is seeking historical societies and local history organizations interested in participating. Selected partners will work closely with project staff to identify and share key artifacts, photographs and

stories that reflect their community's unique heritage.

Through this partnership, historical societies will:

Have up to 20 items from their collections digitized and preserved

Gain increased visibility through an online exhibit for community members and educators

Expand public access to their collections for educators, students and researchers

Strengthen connections with local schools and communities

This is an opportunity for organizations to ensure that local stories, often overlooked, are preserved and shared in meaningful, accessible ways.

Opportunities for teachers

The initiative also invites elementary and secondary teachers from participating counties to apply for two paid summer positions as curriculum writers.

Selected educators will:

Develop standards-aligned lesson plans using local historical materials

Create adaptable units for both elementary and secondary classrooms

Collaborate with historians, graduate students and community partners

Present materials to local educators and school districts

Applicants should have at least two years of teaching experience and a strong interest in integrating local or rural history into their classrooms.

Bridging community and classroom

At its core, the initiative

connects the work of historical societies with the needs of today's classrooms. By transforming local artifacts into dynamic teaching tools, the project helps students see their own communities as part of the broader American story.

"This initiative is about elevating the voices and histories of rural Illinois," said Anne Moseley, director of the Sangamon Experience. "By partnering with local historical societies and educators, we are creating resources that not only preserve the past but also inspire the next generation to engage with it."

How to apply

Historical societies and teachers interested in participating are encouraged to apply. Counties will be selected based on:

Interest and participation from a local historical organization

Teacher applications from the district

Location within the Sangamon Experience's service region

Online applications are due May 15, 2026, and can be found at:

Historical Organization Application

Educator Application

About the Sangamon Experience

The Sangamon Experience at the University of Illinois Springfield is dedicated to preserving and sharing the histories of central Illinois through digital storytelling, public history projects and community partnerships.

## Meet the Author

and experience  
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## HELP WANTED at Lake Williamson Christian Center

**We are looking to hire a Guest Services Supervisor to join our Christian Oriented Team! Full-time Position with Benefits.**

Before guests arrive, our Guest Services Team is responsible for setting up all meeting spaces to the specifications of our groups (*which will require a high level of physical labor and lifting*), ensure all spaces are clean, and will set up, operate, install, and troubleshoot Audio/Visual equipment. While our guests are on the grounds, our Guest Services Team is the main contact for the leadership of each group to talk with regarding anything they may need, problems they may be experiencing, and they will offer solutions in every situation. Our Guest Services Supervisor must be willing to work in all departments when needed, be willing to get their hands dirty, be organized, and to manage themselves and a small team well. The ideal candidate will offer stellar guest service, provide pleasant hospitality experiences to all guests, and be energized by working in a Christian Team oriented environment.

**If you want to Serve in Christian Ministry, we want to meet you!**

### Responsibilities:

- Set up, operate, install, and troubleshoot Audio/Visual equipment to ensure events run smoothly.
- Clean and set up meeting spaces for guests; this will require a high level of physical labor and lifting.
- Oversee check-in and check-out procedures, including financial transactions.
- Actively listen to and resolve complaints.
- Any and all other duties as assigned.

### Job Qualifications/Skills:

- Computer experience and knowledge in Microsoft Office programs.
- Attention to detail.
- Communicate clearly to convey information to guests and/or coworkers.
- Strong human relation and interpersonal skills - ability to work harmoniously with different personality types.
- Excellent problem-solving and multitasking skills.
- Ability to Work Flexible Hours, including nights and weekends.
- Must have a valid Driver's License.
- Must be able to lift/move 60 lbs unaided.

Salary will be Based on Experience and Qualifications

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