

Will Mild Summer Lead To Big Harvest?

USDA Predicting Record Soybean, Large Corn Crops

BY DAVID PITT
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — A mild summer across much of the nation's heartland has provided optimum growing conditions for the nation's corn and soybean crops. Pair that with high-yield seeds and other new farming technologies, and the U.S. is looking at busting records come harvest time.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture already has predicted a record soybean crop of 3.8 billion bushels. And the corn crop, it said in July, would be large but not bigger than last year's record of 13.9 billion bushels. However, many market analysts and some farmers expect the USDA to revise expectations upward in a report based on field surveys that's due out Tuesday.

"Conditions look just fantastic across most of the country," Texas A&M University grain marketing economist Mark Welch said.

In a typical growing season, at least some corn-growing states would have experienced drought or other production problems. But the 18 states that grow 91 percent of the nation's corn have experienced nearly ideal conditions this year, as adequate rain fell when plants emerged and cooler summer temperatures minimized heat stress.

That's the case in Illinois, one of the nation's top corn and soybean states.

"Illinois has largely been dealt to date pretty close to a royal flush on weather and I'm sure that the yields are going to be very high here," said Scott Irwin, a University of Illinois professor of agricultural and con-

sumer economics.

The expected large harvest has driven corn and soybean prices significantly lower, but it isn't expected to make much of a short-time difference in consumer food prices. However, since the grains are staples in livestock feed, lower prices could eventually lead to a decline in the cost of beef, pork, chicken and milk.

"Eventually the economics will feed through but I wouldn't expect much relief in 2015 yet. It just takes time to go through the systems," Irwin said.

Weather doesn't deserve all the credit for the amount of grain farmers are getting from each acre this year.

Agriculture companies have developed genetic characteristics in seeds that allow plants to be packed more densely per acre and arm them

with resistance to drought, disease, and pests. In addition, larger planters and tractors equipped with GPS programs can run at night if needed, helping farmers adjust planting when weather delays field work.

"When conditions are right we have the ability to get in and get that crop established so much more quickly than we could in the past ..." Welch said. "We're just creating an environment that when the weather cooperates we're capturing more of the potential and the possibilities genetically that are within that corn plant."

During the lifetime of the average U.S. farmer, who's 58, corn yields have more than tripled from a national average of 44 bushels per acre in the 1950s to nearly 150 bushels per acre in recent years.

Average corn yields set a record in 2009 with 164.7 bushels per acre. The USDA previously estimated 165.3 bushels per acre this year, and some

analysts are speculating about exceeding 170 bushels per acre.

The record soybean yield also came in 2009, an average of 44 bushels per acre for a 3.36 billion-bushel harvest. The USDA expects a national average of 45.2 bushels per acre and a crop of 3.8 billion bushels this fall.

The downside of a bumper crop is depressed prices for the farmers' haul, meaning they could break even or lose money.

The price for corn scheduled for December delivery, widely considered a benchmark, was \$3.66 per bushel Friday. That's at least 50 cents a bushel below what most farmers spent on seed, fertilizer, pest- and weed-control chemicals and fuel. Some farmers will store grain and sell when prices improve, while others may use a portion of their federal crop insurance that kicks in when prices fall below certain thresholds.

Regents Work On Proposed NSU Project

PIERRE (AP) — A committee of the South Dakota Board of Regents is downsizing a proposed fine arts center project at Northern State University after it came in over budget.

The regents recently discovered the overhaul of the Johnson Fine Arts Center is \$4.5 million more than expected.

Architects have been able to trim the budget by eliminating plans for a new black box theater.

The regents agreed Friday in a building committee meeting to hire a construction manager at-risk to shave the additional \$2.8 million off the project.

Regent Terry Baloun says the board has to get this project right because it will affect the school for the next 50 years.

Officers Seek Man With Bloody Hands

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Omaha-area law officers have been searching for a man who hospital employees say had blood on his hands when he reported having a body out in his car.

Authorities say the man went into Methodist Women's Hospital around 9 a.m. Friday, told hospital workers about the body and then hustled outside. Hospital workers say they went out to the car and saw no body but reported seeing some knives.

The man drove away. Officers say the car's license plates were issued in western Nebraska's Lincoln County.

Sheriff's Capt. Eric Sellers says officers aren't sure whether they're looking for a killer or someone with mental issues.

The hospital and a nearby elementary school that hasn't yet opened to children for the year have ended their precautionary lockdowns.

Slain Neb. Soldier Recalled As Hero

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Mourners joined the wife and two young children of Army Staff Sgt. Benjamin Gill Prange to honor the slain soldier as an American hero.

Prange died July 24 after the vehicle he was riding in hit an explosive device in Afghanistan.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that the Rev. Michael Ryan described the 30-year-old Prange as a hero in many ways.

He was a hero after losing his parents at a young age and helping raise his brother and sister. And he was a hero when, after marrying his wife, Elizabeth, he decided he needed to enlist in the military in part to provide for them.

Ryan noted, "We thank God for giving us Benjamin." Flags lined a 3 1/2 mile route to the Lincoln cemetery where Prange was buried.

Woman Sentenced For Planning Escape

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A woman accused of spending \$30,000 to help a paroled inmate plan an escape for a prisoner has been sentenced to five years behind bars.

Authorities say Jamie Klinghagen and paroled inmate Lloyd White Face had planned to free Silver McClanahan from the South Dakota State Penitentiary. The plan was foiled by corrections officials in June after McClanahan admitted to lying about a medical problem in an attempt to get an appointment with an out-of-prison doctor.

McClanahan is serving time for manslaughter.

The *Argus Leader* reports that detectives found a van filled with numerous weapons, bullet-proof vests, camping supplies and food.

The attorney for the 46-year-old Klinghagen says his client was blinded by romantic advances from White Face, who instead planned to run away with McClanahan if he escaped.

Man Sentenced To Prison For Assault

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A South Dakota man has been sentenced to seven years in prison on an assault charge.

Rigoberto Ortiz, of Mission, pleaded guilty in May to assault with a dangerous weapon. He was also charged with first degree burglary, use of firearm during a crime of violence, and possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance.

Authorities say the incident happened in December 2013. The 45-year-old Ortiz allegedly fired two shots into the door of a residence before forcing the door open. Authorities say he held a gun to one victim's neck and another victim's forehead.

SD Trade Mission To Russia Might Be Postponed

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota's Agriculture Department is analyzing whether to postpone a trade mission to Russia that was scheduled for October.

Russia banned most food imports from the West on Thursday in retaliation for sanctions over Ukraine.

The *Capital Journal* reports that the state Agriculture Department has made two trade missions to Russia in recent years, mainly to arrange the importation of registered, purebred American beef cattle. Ty Eschenbaum with the department says officials haven't decided whether to continue with the planned October trade mission.

South Dakota Beef Indus-

try Council President Ron Frederick says Russia stopped buying beef from the U.S. some time ago because of its concerns about an additive in American cattle feed. He says he isn't sure how the ban will impact Russia's importation of U.S. livestock.

GFP Meeting

Mountain Lion Changes Nixed

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

FORT PIERRE — The state Game, Fish and Parks Commission decided Friday against making changes to the 2014-2015 hunting season for mountain lions in South Dakota and one member raised the possibility of allowing non-resident hunters in the future.

Commissioner Scott Phillips of New Underwood asked whether it is the right time to consider making "a couple hundred" licenses available for non-residents. Currently only South Dakotans are allowed to take one mountain lion annually but there's no limit on the number of licenses.

License sales hit a record 4,351 for the 2013 season, when 61 lions were taken. Sales dropped back to 3,293 for the most recent season, which ran from late December through March 31, 2014.

The 2014 harvest was 53 total — 22 males and 31 females — and hunters could have taken 75 total or up to 50 females.

Phillips indicated there would seem to be room for some non-residents to be permitted to take part in the season.

He said deer and elk hunters would support it because those animals are

most of the prey for lions.

"It would be a good thing for the Black Hills to bring a couple hundred out-of-staters in," Phillips said.

The two GFP biologists making the presentation, John Kanta and Chad Lindbloom, didn't reject the idea.

"I wouldn't have any objections to that," Kanta said.

Biologically it doesn't matter, Lindbloom said.

The management goal for the Black Hills is a population of 150 to 200 lions. The biologists said Friday they estimate there were 234 to 240, including sub-adults and kittens, at the start of 2014.

The method used for one of the estimates during the past three years had a potential variance of 40 to 50 percent.

Biologists have used radio collars on lions to track their behavior for more than the past decade. Lindbloom and Kanta said Friday they won't be placing radio collars on any more lions but will continue to monitor the one to two dozen left with collars.

Lindbloom said DNA comparisons are now being used to make the population estimates. Rather than capture lions using tranquilizers and placing collars on them, he said it's easier to tree a lion using hounds and shoot a

biopsy dart into the lion.

"The dart falls out of the lion and we have a tissue sample from that," Lindbloom said.

GFP requires that hunters present their harvested lions to conservation officers. DNA samples from the harvested lions are placed in a database and are compared with the DNA samples taken from the biopsy darts.

Commission chairman John Cooper of Pierre said the lion population should be considered in relation to management goals for deer, elk and bighorn sheep.

"The general public, especially the sportsmen, are going to say, please watch this," Cooper said. "I just want you to know that's some of the discussion that goes on."

Cooper said he's personally comfortable with lion estimates but caution is needed to make sure the trend line "doesn't keep on creeping over the hill."

GFP game chief Tom Kirschenmann assured the commission that would be the case. "It's high on the radar," he said.

The season will run Dec. 26, 2014, through March 31, 2015, for the Black Hills. The rest of South Dakota is open year-round and doesn't have quotas.

Nebraska

Ex-Chief Says He Became Too Controversial

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A former director of Nebraska's corrections department told legislators investigating problems in the prison system that he resigned in September 2013 because he had become controversial.

Former director Robert Houston told a special legislative investigative committee that he left following criticism about actions by inmates outside the prison, the *Lincoln Journal Star* reported. He previously had defended his record and said the inmate problems hadn't prompted his departure.

Those problems included an inmate who crashed a state-owned prisoner-trans-

port van into a minivan, killing the other driver, as well as the arrest of two inmates on charges that they robbed a bank while on work release. The majority of criticism centered on the release of Nikko Jenkins, who was convicted of killing four people in Omaha soon after he left prison despite his pleas to be committed to a mental health institution.

Houston, who became director in 2005, said he realized it was time he should quit.

"The governor didn't need it. I didn't need it. The Department of Corrections certainly didn't need it," he said.

The committee is investi-

gating the Department of Correctional Services' failure to follow two Nebraska Supreme Court rulings that limit when certain prisoners can be released. Those miscalculations, first reported by the *Omaha World-Herald*, led to the early release of hundreds of inmates. The panel initially was formed to study Jenkins' case.

Legislators questioned Houston on a number of topics as they tried to grasp the corrections department's problems, including sentence miscalculations, prison overcrowding, mental health services for inmates and the decision to release Jenkins.

"Houston's given us sort

of the view from 30,000 feet," said Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop, who is leading the committee.

During discussions about overcrowding, Houston said he never talked with Gov. Dave Heineman about a 2006 master plan that called for adding 1,300 prison beds at a cost of \$88 million to handle an expected increase in inmates. Heineman never called for building more prisons. Nebraska's prisons are now at 160 percent of capacity.

Asked about a letter Jenkins had written to prison officials in which he promised to kill people after his release, Houston told lawmakers he hadn't seen the letter.

'Prayer Rock' Won't Go To Crazy Horse Memorial

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A 3-ton boulder believed to have been used by Native Americans to worship decades ago will not be moved from a Sioux Falls museum to the Crazy Horse Memorial in western South Dakota.

The Siouland Heritage Museums board on Thursday rejected a request by a local artist to have the "prayer rock" moved from its spot outside the Pettigrew Museum.

Richard Perkins believes the rock's spiritual significance gets overlooked at its current location and that it would be better appreciated at the memorial being built in the Black Hills to the Oglala Lakota warrior.

The museum governing board unanimously rejected the request, finding that there was no solid reason for moving the rock.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)

This is an excellent opportunity for a CRNA seeking a part-time job with possibility of more hours in a beautiful setting in the Northern Black Hills in western South Dakota. This is a CRNA-only practice with a close-knit supportive group of advanced practice professionals. Requires knowledge of spinal & epidurals with experience in ultrasound peripheral nerve blocks & PICC lines. Must be a team player, have excellent people skills & be comfortable with independent practice. If this job interests you, go to www.regionalhealth.com for more information & apply online. We offer excellent benefits & competitive pay. It's a great place to work & beautiful place to live!

Human Resources
1440 N. Main, Spearfish, SD 57783
PH: (605) 644-4086
Fax: (605) 644-4089

SPEARFISH REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Announcing... **Yankton Citywide Rummage**

SEPT. 11th - 14th

\$28.30 prepaid
(20¢ per word over 30 words)

Stop By The Press & Dakotan To Place Your Ad
OR email classifieds@yankton.net

Includes:

- Your ad (30 words, 1 address per ad) placed in the special Citywide Rummage Sale section published on Wednesday, September 10th & Saturday, September 13th
- Your ad will also appear on-line at www.yankton.net
- Garage Sale Kit: 2 Yard Signs with Balloons

DEADLINE: 5PM, SEPT. 5TH

sponsored by the: **PRESS&DAKOTAN**