

In response to demand, Nebraska farmers increased corn acres to 10 million

Written by Wauneta Breeze
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The U.S. Department of Agriculture said recently that Nebraska farmers planted 10 million acres of corn this year. That's a 500,000-acre increase from USDA's March estimate and 850,000 acres more than what was planted last year.

"Nebraska farmers clearly saw good demand for corn and responded to that demand," said Kelly Brunkhorst, the Nebraska Corn Board's director of research. "Good spring weather was also a big help. It allowed farmers to get started planting and just keep going."

Brunkhorst noted that 10 million acres is the most corn acres planted by Nebraska's farm families since the early 1930s. It also surpasses the recent high of 9.4 million planted in 2007.

In addition to the increase in acres, Nebraska's corn crop is off to a great start – with 79 percent of the crop in good to excellent condition, according to the weekly crop progress report issued by USDA. "We're encouraged by the progress and condition of the crop, and some sun and warm weather this week was pretty good timing," Brunkhorst said. "The potential is there for a good crop and hopefully the weather will cooperate."

On a national level, USDA said farmers planted 92.3 million acres this year, a 5 percent increase from last year's 88.2 million acres and 7 percent more than in 2009 when 86.4 million acres were planted. USDA's original estimate in March was 92.2 million acres.

"This is the second-highest planted acres since 1944 and just shy of the recent high of 93.5 million planted acres in 2007," Brunkhorst said.

USDA today also reported corn stocks, which is the amount of corn in storage in Nebraska and across the country.

Nationally, corn stocks as of June 1 were 3.67 billion bushels, which is down about 15 percent from last year.

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In Nebraska, there were 435.1 million bushels in storage as of June 1, about 16 percent less than a year ago. Of that total, Brunkhorst said, 190 million bushels were stored on farms and 245.1 million were stored off-farm.

“This is a good supply of corn for this time of year, and more than what most analysts had expected. Overall we’re in very good shape, with plenty of corn in storage and hopefully a good crop on the way,” he said.

The Nebraska Corn Board is a self-help program, funded and managed by Nebraska corn farmers.

Producers invest in the program at a rate of 1/4 of a cent per bushel of corn sold. Nebraska corn checkoff funds are invested in programs of market development, research and education.