



**Iowa Crop Tour results**  
190.8 bu. per acre  
1,218 pods in 3'x3'

**Minn. Crop Tour results**  
177.4 bu. per acre  
1,027 pods in 3'x3'

## Pro Farmer national corn and soybean crop estimates

**Corn: 15.116 billion bu.; Average yield of 177 bu. per acre**

Corn +/- 1% = 15.267 billion bu. to 14.965 billion bu.; 178.8 bu. to 175.2 per acre

**Soybeans: 4.436 billion bu.; Average yield of 51.2 bu. per acre**

Soybeans +/- 2% = 4.525 billion bu. to 4.347 billion bu.; 52.2 bu. to 50.2 bu. per acre

The national estimates above reflect Pro Farmer's view on production and yields. They take into account data gathered during Crop Tour and other factors like crop maturity, acreage adjustments, historical differences in Tour data versus USDA's final yields, areas outside those sampled on Tour, etc. That's why the state yield numbers below differ from the Crop Tour figures in the box above and on News page 2. For corn, we raised harvested area by 910,000 acres (based on FSA data) versus USDA's June estimate. USDA in August estimated the corn crop at 14.750 billion bu. on a national average yield of 174.6 bu. per acre. It estimated the bean crop at 4.339 billion bu. on a 50.0 bu. per acre yield.

### Corn

**IOWA:** 198 bu. per acre. We saw a lot of good corn, a fair amount of bad corn and plenty in between. That's unusual for Iowa and it will hold back the final yield.

**ILLINOIS:** 212 bu. per acre. Will there be enough pockets of excellence to offset nicks from dryness and wind, enabling the crop to hit USDA's lofty 214 bu. per acre peg? We doubt it, but it could come close. Late-season rains are needed to maintain the yield potential we measured.

**NEBRASKA:** 190 bu. per acre. Irrigated corn is going to pull up yields, offsetting some dryland losses. We measured a more mature crop that needs some rain to hold onto the yield potential it has. If rain doesn't fall on dryland corn soon, it will go backward.

**MINNESOTA:** 170 bu. per acre. Minnesota corn has the appearance of a dry-season crop, but we were surprised just how well it held on. The crop built yield early and was spoon-fed rain in the nick of time. Central areas of the state where drought is more severe will hold down yields, but our numbers suggest USDA cut too deep with its Aug. 1 estimate.

**INDIANA:** 200 bu. per acre. Who would've thought Indiana would join the 200 bu. club before Nebraska? Consistency was unbelievable. Scouts pulled just one sub-100 bu. per acre sample there. But again, rain is needed to finish strong.

**OHIO:** 190 bu. per acre. This is often a hit or miss state, and this year there weren't many misses. The yield factory is there for a record crop.

**SOUTH DAKOTA:** 140 bu. per acre. Heat and dryness are going to keep the crop subpar, and scouts measured yield more so than yield potential, which is rare for the state. Rains are needed and the risk is to the downside.

### Soybeans

**IOWA:** 57 bu. per acre. We were underwhelmed by Iowa's bean crop. Soil moisture was up 10.5% from last year's dry crop but down 31% from average. If the state doesn't get rains, yields could fall even further from USDA's Aug. 1 58-bu.-per-acre peg.

**ILLINOIS:** 66 bu. per acre. The crop has a better chance than corn of hitting USDA's forecast, in our opinion. Plants were loaded with pods and rain fell during Tour. But more will likely be needed to maximize yield potential.

**NEBRASKA:** 58 bu. per acre. We sampled a pretty average Nebraska soybean crop. That said, we've learned never to underestimate the ability of the Nebraska bean crop to build yield late in the season. Disease and insect pressure was limited, but the crop needs rain.

**MINNESOTA:** 46 bu. per acre. Scouts found fewer pods and less moisture than last year. And last year's crop didn't finish well.

**INDIANA:** 62 bu. per acre. USDA is calling for a record crop, but getting there would require ideal conditions until harvest. The verdict is still out on whether the state will have the moisture to finish and fill pods that are there.

**OHIO:** 60 bu. per acre. A big crop is in the works, especially if it catches a few more rains, but the crop may have a bit too much variability to hit maximum yields. Rains fell as scouts sampled fields, which will help. But a hot, dry stretch could erode yield potential in a hurry.

**SOUTH DAKOTA:** 41 bu. per acre. Spotty rains resulted in pod counts all over the board, resulting in a fairly ordinary South Dakota bean crop. If expected rains don't develop soon, the crop will set back.

# 2021 Pro Farmer Crop Tour

— If rain falls, the east will have a beast of a crop; variability held back crops in the dry western Belt —

A clear theme developed early: “The East is a beast and the West is a wildcard.” Timely planting, emergence and rains helped crops in the eastern Corn Belt to thrive and hold up well in the face of recent crop stress. Several eastern states should deliver record yields if they get a drink. Scouts on that leg encountered rain and heavy fog during Tour. In contrast,

**Ohio: 185.1 bu. per acre; 1,195 pods in 3'x3'**

USDA put a record yield on the Ohio corn and soybean crops, and the yield factory is there for Ohio to deliver if it continues to rain. The good growing season started last fall. The crop was planted in a timely manner and caught rains at the right time. Ear counts and grain length were both up 5.1% from year-ago, pushing our Tour yield estimate up 10.4%.

Ohio's beans are dark green and uniform. If the crop gets more rain, it could really be an attention-grabber. Pod counts were up 3.4% from last year and 13.2% from the three-year average, but pod counts were down 4.2% from 2018's big crop. Insect, disease and weed pressure was light.

**Indiana: 193.5 bu. per acre; 1,240 pods in 3'x3'**

Scouts found a consistently strong corn crop in Indiana, with sample yields congregating around 200 bu. per acre. Areas of the state are dry, but the crop's ability to hold onto yield potential is a testament to good early season conditions. Year-over-year gains in ear counts and grain length drove a 7.6% jump in yield potential from 2020. The crop could be a record-breaker if it catches more rain. If not, it could go backward.

There are some really good beans in the Hoosier state, but consistency was lacking and pod counts were down 3.2% from 2020. That said, rains could still help the crop, meaning a record-breaking crop is still possible.

**Illinois: 196.3 bu. per acre; 1,280 pods in 3'x3'**

When USDA issues an all-time high 214 bu. per acre average yield estimate for a state, you expect to see a stellar crop. Illinois' corn was indeed impressive. Ear counts averaged a whopping 104.2 in 60 feet of row, up 5.0% from last season, driving yield potential up 3.6% from 2020. But grain length and kernel rows around were down from year ago.

We were more impressed by the state's soybeans. Pod counts in 3'x3' jumped 2.6% from year-ago and 7.4% from the 2018-2020 average. Fields were clean and the crop had clearly been planted in a timely fashion, though some areas to the north have been pushed by recent dryness. Soil moisture was down 14.5% from average. Rain will be needed for a strong finish.



Follow us on Twitter:

@ProFarmer @ChipFlory @DavisMichaelson  
@BGrete @MeghanVick @BruceBlythe

western Corn Belt states are dry and crops have been rushed. If rain doesn't fall soon, crops will go backward into harvest. Rain is in the near-term forecast for the Dakotas, but it's unclear how far east they will stretch. One thing that was consistent across the Midwest: cleaner fields. That's a testament to farmer management, breeding programs and seed treatments.

**S. Dakota: 151.5 bu. per acre; 997 pods in 3'x3'**

Heat and dryness early in the season clearly pushed the corn crop, and it didn't get a chance to slow cook after pollination. Tipback was limited, but ears were shorter than normal. Scouts measured a more mature crop, with yield potential down 15.5% from last year. That potential will erode if rains don't fall soon. An early harvest is likely, and it will take more kernels to make a bushel this year.

Stress resulted in soybean variability and a 20.3% year-over-year drop in pod counts and a 3.8% dip vs. the three-year average. Given the 48.8% dive in soil moisture vs. the three-year average, many were surprised how well the crop had held on.

**Nebraska: 182.4 bu. per acre; 1,226 pods in 3'x3'**

Crops got off to a good start, but drought stress is building and the corn crop has been pushed. Most pivots were running hard as scouts traversed the state, and soil moisture was down 24% from the three-year average. Dryland crops built yield potential early, but the question is whether they will hold onto that potential. That hinges on rain. Dryland acres will go backward in a hurry if rains don't fall soon. But we pulled a higher percentage of irrigated yields this year for both corn and soybeans—the highest percentage of irrigated corn samples we ever have on tour. That lifted yield potential. Average corn yield potential was up 4.1% from 2020; soybean pod counts were down 5.5%.

**Iowa and Minnesota crop observations**

There were a lot of ups and down across Iowa, which is not usually the case for the major producing state. Crops in the southwest corner of the state once again showed they can perform well in dry years. But scouts encountered more dryness and crop stress as they traveled to the east and north, with cracks visible in the ground and stalks firing in some pockets. Scouts were generally noncommittal about the Hawkeye state's soybean crop, with some describing it as “average” and others saying there's not a lot of room for improvement.

Southern Minnesota is also dealing with dry conditions, but scouts were impressed with how well the corn crop built yield potential ahead of the late-season stress. Some areas of the state, like southeast Minnesota, have received some timely rain. Scouts were less impressed by the state's beans.

Crops in both states need rains to finish. Waterhemp problems were evident in both states, but not overwhelming.

## #PFTour21 Crop Comments...

Please send crop comments to [editors@profarmer.com](mailto:editors@profarmer.com).

*"Ohio crop is goooooood. Nine stops this morning on my route. Corn: 202.6 bu. per acre; 2020: 172.4 bpa; three-year average: 168.8 bpa. Pods in 3'x3': 1,205.22; 2020: 1,193.16; three-year average: 1,067.35."*

*"Ten corn stops in southeastern SD found an average corn yield of 148.7 bpa; 2020 average tour yield in District 9: 178.1 bpa; three-year average: 169.5 bpa. Grain length and stand disappointed more as we moved south. Got drier too."*

*"Central IN on this foggy Tuesday. Corn crop seems to be further along than what we saw in OH and eastern IN. Beans are variable throughout all of our stops thus far."*

*"We are looking at some really decent corn here in IN, too — after six stops, only one was under 200 bpa."*

*"As we crossed from IN into IL, our biggest takeaway from the corn southwest of Indianapolis was consistency. Ear counts and size were very consistent, contributing to strong, consistent yields from 211 bpa to 234 bpa. IL corn has been similar thus far."*

*"235.7 bpa in De Witt Co., IL. Ears were very uniform and a good stand. Our highest average pods per plant also came from this county. Good crops south of Clinton."*

*"Made two stops in Henry Co., IL. We noticed wind damage in the center part of the county. Both samples were over 190 bpa."*

*"Thayer Co., NE: Corn 110.6 bpa. Small ears and the population wasn't there. Beans 609 pods."*

*"Four stops between Grand Island and Kerney, NE in District 5. All irrigated. Corn at 276.93 bpa, 226.13 bpa, 237.92 bpa and 252.45 bpa. Besides some gooseneck, corn looks really good."*

*"Our best and worst of the day: Route on Highway 75 and Highway 30 in NE. 309 bpa on some dryland corn and 140 bpa on some irrigated."*

*"Otoe Co., NE. Best corn yet. 219 bpa. Beans 959 pods in a 3'x3'. Beans could add to with water. Of course you know what happens otherwise. Big cracks in the ground."*

*"Crawford Co., IA. Highest yield estimate we've seen so far. First time I've used the phrase 'baseball bats' this year. Yield check: 251.5 bpa."*

*"Two stops so far in Hardin Co., IA. The theme is dry, curled up leaves, and cracked ground. Kernel depth is definitely being affected."*

*"Six stops in SW MN: average corn yield 210.9 bpa. ... Soils are dry but the crops are looking pretty good. Looks like the area caught timely rain this year."*

*Delmarva (DE, MD, VA) Peninsula corn tour: "As of July 1, we had the best looking corn we have ever had. ... Then July hit and it got very hot and no rain. ... an 'average' predicted crop compared to other years."*

## Corn, bean ratings drop

USDA surprised the market by cutting the amount of corn and soybeans rated "good" to "excellent" by two and three percentage points to 62% and 57%, respectively. Recent rain events were lighter and less widespread than hoped, allowing drought conditions to spread and intensify over the past week. Rains fell in the Northern Plains late this week, aiding crops like corn and beans but coming too late for spring wheat. But forecast for September is warm and dry for the region and northwest Corn Belt. In contrast, the eastern Belt is expected to get the rain needed to finish strong.

## Bean buying spree

USDA announced a daily soybean sale for 11 days in a row (through Aug. 19). This has included 1.245 million metric tons (MMT) in new-crop sales to China, 1.322 MMT in sales of primarily new-crop beans to "unknown" (often China) and 331,470 metric tons in sales to Mexico. That's just shy of 2.9 MMT in sales since Aug. 5.

China is also buying a lot of grain. Through July of 2021, its corn imports of 18.16 MMT are up 298% from year-ago, its wheat buys are up 46% at 6.25 MMT, its barley imports of 6.42 MMT are up 125% and its sorghum imports of 5.9 MMT are up 157%.

## July crush smallest in four years

Members of the National Oilseed Processors Association (NOPA) crushed just 155.11 million bu. of soybeans during July, which was nearly 4 million bu. lighter than anticipated and the smallest July crush since 2017. Plant downtime, tight supplies and high prices slowed processing. USDA's crush forecast of 2.155 billion bu. for 2020-21 is likely too high. We expect a crush of 2.140 billion bushels.

## China's sow herd contracts

China's sow herd contracted 0.5% from June to July, the country's state planning office reports. That's the first month-to-month decline in the herd in nearly two years, though sow supplies are still up 25% from year-ago. A June collapse in Chinese hog prices fueled panic selling and the country is working to replace unproductive sows. An executive with WH Group, the world's biggest pork processor, warned live hogs prices could spike the latter half of 2022. China's pork imports slipped 19% from year-ago during June, but its year-to-date buys are up 3.9% from 2020.

## Taliban take over Afghanistan

The Taliban swiftly took over of Afghanistan, stranding Americans in the country and raising terrorists threats. Markets are in risk-off mode.



# Will the East's big crops make up for bushels lost in the West?

by Pro Farmer editors

**ProFarmer**

Trusted Analysis. Professional Insight.

The 2021 growing season has been a story of the so-called “haves” and the “have-nots.” That story unfolded further as we pulled a record of more than 3,400 samples from across the seven Crop Tour states. The answer to whether there could be enough “extra” bushels in the eastern Belt to offset “lost” bushels in the western Belt became clearer during Crop Tour.

## East is a beast

USDA forecast record corn and soybean yields in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio in August. That set the bar high. The eastern Corn Belt got off to a strong start, built big yield potential early and crops must now maintain as many bushels as possible into harvest.

We found the best corn crops we’ve seen on Crop Tour in both Indiana and Ohio — and the Illinois corn crop isn’t too far behind the best we’ve seen.

The Illinois soybean crop was the best we’ve ever seen in any state. Pod counts are strong and starting to fill. Much of the state should have enough moisture to finish well. The Indiana and Ohio soybean crops weren’t as consistent as in Illinois, but the pods are there to produce record yields if these states get some timely late-season rains.

## The western Corn Belt is trying to hold on

Dryness has already robbed yield potential in the western Corn Belt. Corn ear counts were up in all but Minnesota, but grain length is lacking in the drier areas as moisture stress caused ears to abort kernels at the tips. That will keep a lid on yields. But the crop is holding onto yield potential better than it would seem possible in many of the dry areas.

Soybean pod counts were down versus year-ago in South Dakota, Nebraska and Minnesota. Iowa’s pod counts were up. The question is whether soybeans will get enough rains to finish strong. Some rains were rolling through the far western Belt Aug. 20. Areas that missed out on these rains will need a drink soon to avoid losing yield potential.

## The ‘factory’ is there for record yields

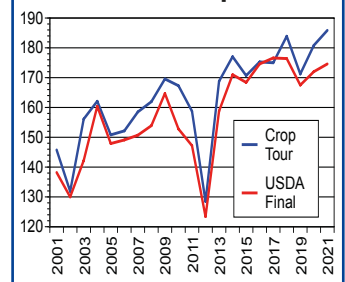
A common theme from Crop Tour samples was high ear counts. Pod counts weren’t as consistently strong, but many of the states were near the historical “sweet spot” we’ve found over the years that produce optimal yields. Bottom line: The “factory” is there to produce record yields for both crops. Our all-samples number for corn suggests the corn yield could be even higher than our estimate.

**Historical Difference —  
Tour Yield Vs. USDA Final  
(avg. since 2001)**

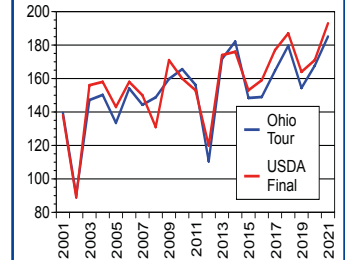
Ohio	ADD	3.6 bu.
Indiana	ADD	3.0 bu.
Illinois	ADD	2.4 bu.
Iowa	ADD	5.4 bu.
Nebraska	ADD	14.6 bu.
Minnesota	SUB	7.8 bu.
S. Dakota	SUB	5.6 bu.
7-State	SUB	6.2 bu.

Corn yields generated by Crop Tour typically find the year-to-year trend in each state. Apply the “historical difference” to the calculated yield in each state. Most importantly, use the historical difference on the “All Samples” average yield to get close to USDA’s final yield.

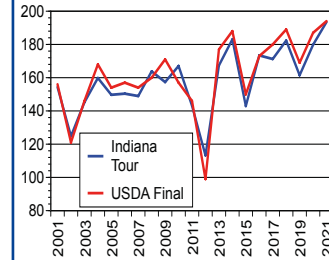
**All Samples**



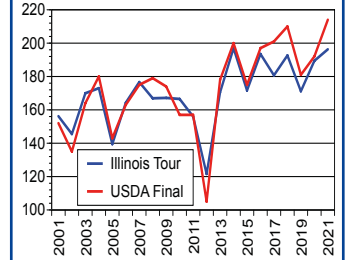
**Ohio**



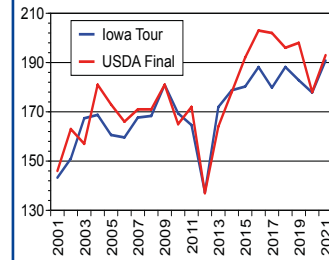
**Indiana**



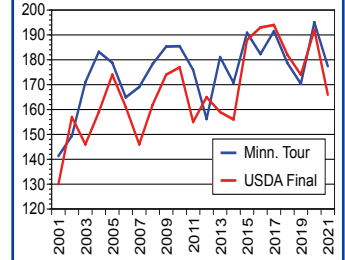
**Illinois**



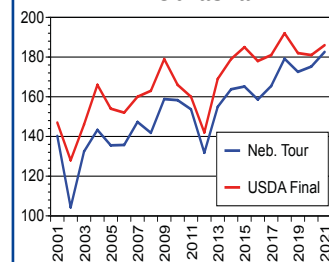
**Iowa**



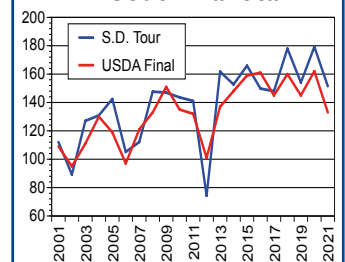
**Minnesota**



**Nebraska**



**South Dakota**



On each of the charts above, USDA’s 2020 yield is the Aug. 1 yield estimate. For all other years, USDA’s yield is the final yield.