

IOWA HOUSE REPUBLICANS

December 4, 2025

IowaHouseRepublicans.com

Appropriations

Farm Income in Iowa – Doing Much Better Than Some Would Have You Believe

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Last month, members received an email that attempted to portray a significant difference in the farm economies of Iowa and Nebraska. The email cited two news reports about farm income outlooks for Nebraska and Iowa. One trumpets findings that Nebraska farm income increased by a whopping 42 percent in 2025, while the other headline claims Iowa farm income will drop 24% in 2026. Those were followed with a different article, reporting that Nebraska-produced ethanol was shipping carbon dioxide through the Tallgrass pipeline to Wyoming. The implied message was simple – Nebraska is already profiting from a CO2 pipeline. But as often is the case, what was being presented in the email does not give the complete picture. So now, as Paul Harvey used to say, it is time for the rest of the story.

The farm income numbers come from the University of Missouri’s Rural and Farm Finance Policy Analysis Center. This group works with ag economy experts at various land grant universities in Midwestern states to evaluate USDA’s annual farm income estimates and predict future ag revenue. The reports are put out twice a year, spring and fall, and are available to be reviewed on the University of Missouri’s website: <https://raff.missouri.edu/farm-income/>

What do these reports say? Working in conjunction with the Center for Agricultural Profitability at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Missouri projects that net farm income in Nebraska will rise this year by \$2.48 billion to a total of \$8.42 billion for the year. This comes out to a 42 percent increase in net farm income, just ahead of the national average of a 41 percent increase.

What the email didn’t note were the reasons why net farm income was rising this year in Nebraska. Missouri’s report makes that pretty clear – higher receipts from livestock sales and increases in direct government payments. Income from crop receipts are expected to fall this year by five percent.

The Nebraska Farm Income Outlook also makes a projection for net farm income in 2026. The report expects farm income in Nebraska to drop to \$8.37 billion next year, with receipts from crops and livestock rising, while direct government payments returning to an average level.

More interesting is the Iowa report. The University of Missouri works with ISU Extension and Outreach to formulate the projections for Iowa. They project 2025 net farm income in Iowa will rise by \$5.32 billion. This growth means Iowa’s net farm income is expected to rise 76 percent to \$12.32 billion this year. That is significantly more growth than what Nebraska is having or the national average. Like Nebraska, the growth in Iowa’s farm income is coming from livestock receipts and direct government payments. And just like Nebraska, income from crops are expected to decline in Iowa, dropping six percent.

What about 2026? The email highlights that Iowa net farm income is expected to decline next year by 24 percent. And that is what report is projecting, with the lower figure being driven by a decline in crop inventory value and direct government payments falling back from this year’s high levels. But net farm income for 2026 would still total \$9.33

billion, which is significantly higher than the 2024 level of \$7 billion. And compared to Nebraska's 2026 forecast, net farm income in Iowa is expected to be nearly one billion dollars more.

Looking at the totality of these reports, there is clarity on several items. Iowa's ag economy is in a much stronger position than Nebraska's in 2025, with net farm income being nearly 50 percent higher. And Iowa's net farm income is still projected to be higher than Nebraska's in 2026. And now you know the rest of the story.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Agriculture

Sign-Up Window for Iowa's Crop Insurance Discount Program Opens

On Monday, December 1, 2025, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release in which Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig announced that the [sign-up is now open](#) for the IDALS annual Crop Insurance Discount Program. The innovative program offers farmers a \$5 per acre premium reduction for fall-planted cover crops.

The [online sign-up](#) is open December 1, 2025, through January 23, 2026. Participants should enroll at apply.cleanwateriowa.org by contacting their crop insurance agent. The Crop Insurance Discount Program, part of the implementation of Iowa's Nutrient Reduction Strategy, provides a \$5 per acre premium reduction for fall-planted cover crops. There is no acreage cap for eligible acres. To qualify, cover crop acres cannot be enrolled in other IDALS or USDA-NRCS cost-share programs. Certain insurance policies, including Whole-Farm Revenue Protection or those covered through written agreements, may be excluded. Farmers should work directly with their crop insurance agencies to maintain eligibility.

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig, IEDA Lead Trade Mission to Vietnam and Indonesia

On Tuesday, November 25, 2025, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release in which announced that IDALS Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig and a 12-member delegation have returned from a trade mission to Vietnam and Indonesia. The mission, coordinated by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), included representatives from Iowa's grain and protein commodity groups. The purpose of the mission was to strengthen trade relationships and promote Iowa's high-quality corn, soybeans, pork, beef and biofuels in two of Southeast Asia's fastest-growing markets. Vietnam and Indonesia represent significant opportunities for U.S. agricultural exports. Vietnam is among the top 10 global importers of U.S. agricultural products, purchasing more than \$4.5 billion in 2024, while Indonesia imported \$3.8 billion during the same period. In 2024, Iowa companies exported approximately \$223.4 million in agricultural goods to Vietnam and \$297.6 million to Indonesia.

(Source: USDA and WISERTrade)

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Commerce

Improving Prior Authorizations for Patients and Providers

This session, the legislature passed House File 303 to set up timelines for determination from health insurers on prior authorizations, require insurers to review health care services that require prior auth, require reporting to the state regarding prior authorizations and allows the state to investigate complaints.

Now insurers are required to provide a determination to a request for prior authorization from a health care provider:

- Within 48 hours of an urgent request
- Within 10 days of a nonurgent request
- Within 15 days of a nonurgent, complex/unique situation, or when experiencing a high volume of requests
- Respond that the PA request was received within 24 hours

The bill requires an annual report to the Insurance Division by all health insurers with information on prior auth approvals and denials and the average/median time between the request and the decision. This report will be made public within 60 days. These first reports are due August 31, 2026.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Economic Growth

Empower Rural Iowa Grants

IEDA recently announced \$490,000 in Empower Rural Iowa grants supporting 16 communities across the state. The funding will help expand housing, strengthen child care, and encourage business and community growth. Six communities each received \$50,000 to increase and improve housing. Grants were awarded to Fairfield, Keosauqua, Red Oak, Decorah, Kalona, and Spencer.

Additionally, grants of \$20,000 were awarded to the cities of Forest City, Imogene, Lake Mills, Manchester, and West Burlington, as well as the Clarion Development Alliance. These communities will partner with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to assess housing needs and guide local development strategies.

Grants of \$20,000 were awarded to Little Smiles & Company, Adair; the city of Lake Park; and Mahaska Health, Oskaloosa. Working with the national nonprofit First Children's Finance, recipients will analyze local data and identify solutions to meet specific child care needs.

Additionally, the city of Manning received a \$10,000 grant through the Rural Building Ownership and Organization by Strengthening Teams (BOOST) program, which helps community and business leaders plan for next-step growth. Manning will work with a BOOST team of experts to explore new uses for a former nursing home — the community's only vacant downtown building — and implement recommendations.

Administered by IEDA's Center for Rural Revitalization, Empower Rural Iowa grants are funded through an appropriation from the Iowa Legislature for the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa initiative. Applicants are required to provide matching funds and are evaluated on economic need, partnerships, project readiness and alignment with strategic goals. Programs support Iowa communities with fewer than 20,000 residents that are not adjacent to cities of 40,000 or more.

(Contact: Kristi Kiouss 2-5290)

Education

State Board of Education to Do First Reading of the Revised Social Studies Standards on Thursday, December 4

The Iowa State Board of Education will hold its regular meeting on Thursday, Dec. 4, at the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, State Board Room (second floor), 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines. The meeting is scheduled to run from 9:00 a.m. to 1:35 p.m. and will be held in person.

Members of the public may join the meeting in person at the Grimes State Office Building or remotely through video conferencing or by telephone. In-person seating is limited. Instructions for joining remotely are available in the [meeting agenda](#).

The meeting agenda includes the first reading of the revised Social Studies Standards done at the direction of HF2545. You can find a link to those here: <https://educate.iowa.gov/media/12139/download?inline>

(Info from Iowa Department of Education)

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Environmental Protection

EPA Debunks False Claims that Agency Recently Approved "Forever Chemical" Pesticides

On Wednesday, November 26, 2025, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a press release from the EPA Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention from experts with decades of experience in pesticide evaluation, concerning a comprehensive fact-check addressing dangerous misinformation circulating about EPA's recent pesticide approvals. On Tuesday, November 25, 2025, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin [corrected the record](#) on the fake news from Democrats and their media allies. In an X post, Administrator Zeldin reaffirmed the EPA's unwavering commitment to rigorous, science-based standards and full compliance with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The Administrator made clear that protecting American families remains the top priority—ensuring that every approved pesticide undergoes thorough safety evaluation and poses no health risks when used as directed.

BOTTOM LINE: EPA-Approved Single Fluorinated Compounds Are NOT Forever Chemicals and Pose No Safety Concerns When Used According to Label Instructions

- **FACT #1: It was Actually the Biden EPA That Officially Ruled Single Fluorinated Compounds Are NOT PFAS or "Forever Chemicals"**
In 2023, EPA's Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics officially defined PFAS, after conducting a comprehensive public rulemaking process, as chemicals containing **two or more** fluorinated carbons. This deliberate exclusion of single fluorinated carbons was based on extensive scientific evidence and public input demonstrating that molecules with only one fluorinated carbon lack the persistence and bioaccumulation properties that are commonly associated with forever chemicals. The recent false claims that EPA approved a "forever chemical" represents a fundamental misunderstanding of chemistry and toxicology.
- **FACT #2: No Human Health Risks of Concern Identified When Used According to Label**
EPA's rigorous evaluation process found no human health risks of concern when these approved pesticides are used according to their approved labels. This assessment included:
 - Comprehensive toxicity studies across multiple species and life stages

- Specific evaluation of children's safety and developmental effects
- Assessment of reproductive and chronic health impacts
- Environmental fate and exposure analysis
- *FACT #3: Extensively Studied and Safer Than Alternatives*
 These modern pesticides underwent the same gold-standard scientific evaluation required for all EPA pesticide registrations under FIFRA, including studies mandated by 40 CFR 158. The compounds represent significant safety improvements over older alternatives.
 We've moved away from truly problematic chemicals like organochlorines – DDT, dieldrin – that actually do persist and bioaccumulate. These newer, approved single fluorinated carbons are precisely the safer alternatives that modern agriculture has long been seeking.
 There has also been some confusion as to whether these compounds are the same as those that are commonly used to fluoridate drinking water. These compounds are NOT the same and would have no fluoridation uses; they just happen to contain fluorine atoms, like many other naturally occurring and synthetic compounds.
- *FACT #4: Historical Precedent Across Multiple Administrations*
 Dozens of pesticides containing single fluorinated carbons have been registered over the past several decades by both Republican and Democrat administrations, including:
 - The Biden Administration's 2023 registration of fluazaindolizine, a pesticide containing single fluorinated carbon
 - Dozens of similar approvals spanning multiple previous administrations
 - International approvals by the European Union, Canada, Australia, and other countries with stringent safety standards
- *FACT #5: Consumer Choice*
 For consumers who remain concerned despite the safety data, organic products remain available and popular. However, in the interest of full disclosure and total transparency, it must also be noted:
 - Organic farming also relies on pesticides for crop protection
 - Some organic-approved pesticides have higher toxicity profiles than modern synthetic alternatives
 - Organic does not mean pesticide-free
- *FACT #6: Why Pesticides Matter for Food Security*
 Pesticides serve critical functions in modern agriculture:
 - Protecting crops from devastating pests and diseases
 - Ensuring affordable, abundant food supply that provides healthy and nutritious meals to all Americans
 - Preventing crop losses that would increase food prices
 - Reducing the need for additional farmland through improved yields
 - Reducing soil erosion and loss of soil nutrients

International Scientific Consensus Confirms Safety

The safety of these single fluorinated carbons has been validated by regulatory agencies worldwide, including:

- European Union (known for stringent environmental standards)
- United Kingdom
- Canada
- Australia
- Brazil, Argentina, New Zealand, and South Korea

Journalists have a responsibility to investigate the source and accuracy of claims before publication. Simply repeating activist talking points without examining their scientific basis or political motivations disservices the public and

undermines trust in evidence-based regulation. [Read more information about Pesticides Containing a Fluorinated Carbon.](#)

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Health and Human Services

Cancer Prevention and Treatment Focus of Rural Health Transformation Plan

Recently, Governor Reynolds submitted Iowa's application for federal funding from the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) for the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). Iowa's application totals \$1 billion over 5 years. The application can be found here:

https://hhs.iowa.gov/media/17491/download?inline=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

Iowa's plan is titled Healthy Hometowns and has 5 initiatives, with a major initiative being Combat Cancer: Prevent and Treat. The cancer initiative will invest \$183 million to increase screening access, University of Iowa Cancer analyses, cancer hubs, and radon mitigation.

The application makes significant investments in cancer prevention and treatment in the state. This session the legislature began funding radon test kits, and this application builds on that by funding 30,000 radon tests annually and subsidizing mitigation for 500 rural homes per year to combat lung cancer rates in rural Iowa. The plan also includes investments in screening for lung, colorectal, and skin cancers.

Additionally, the funding will go towards regional hubs to have local rural facilities provide diagnostics, chemotherapy and infusion services, and follow-up care, with telehealth consultations with cancer experts. The plan will expand Iowa's oncology workforce along with other health care workforce initiatives throughout the plan.

This work will build on the legislature's \$1 million appropriation to the University of Iowa to study factors that are contributing to cancer in Iowa.

Currently the federal government is reviewing all 50 state applications and will receive awards by December 31, 2025. Iowa stands in a good position to receive the entire application funding based on the significant rural aspect of our state. 47.5% of Iowa's population resides in rural areas, compared to only 17% of the total U.S. population.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Labor

New Work-Based Learning Webinar Coming In January: Launching a High School IT Community Help Desk

Join Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa Department of Education for a new webinar to discover how work-based learning (WBL) can make a real impact in the lives of both students and older Iowans. This January 27, 2026, webinar will showcase how to create a High School IT Community Help Desk to assist residents of senior living facilities with everyday tech tasks - such as attaching a photo to an email and installing a solitaire app without ads - while helping students develop technical and customer service skills that support their long-term success.

The webinar will feature the partnership between NewAldaya Lifescapes in Cedar Falls and the Waterloo Career Center and provide a firsthand look at how employers and schools can collaborate to offer this opportunity locally.

Work-Based Learning Webinar: Launching a High School IT Community Help Desk

January 27, 2026

3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

[Register for the Webinar \(Zoom\)](#)

View Handout: [Launch Your High School IT Community Help Desk](#)

For more information on the current webinar series, visit [Second Work-Based Learning \(WBL\) Webinar Series Summary](#).

Past recordings include “How Iowa Fire Departments Are Expanding High School EMT Training,” “Employers and Educators: Building the Foundation of Work-Based Learning,” “Growing Employer High School Internship Programs,” and “Work-Based Learning: A Key Strategy to Address Iowa’s Healthcare Workforce Shortage.”

(Info from Iowa Workforce Development)

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Natural Resources

DNR Announces 2026 Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant cycle

On Tuesday, December 2, 2025, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release announcing that Iowa’s cities and counties can now apply for funding through the [Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program](#), which provides financial support for outdoor recreation projects at the local level. The grant cycle is open Dec. 1, 2025 through March 6, 2026. Created by Congress in 1964 and administered in Iowa by the DNR, the grant program provides funding for a wide range of outdoor recreation projects. The program provides up to 50 percent cost share in the form of reimbursement grants, with annual assistance of up to \$250,000 per proposal. Examples of projects include: acquisition of land to build new parks and open spaces; development of recreational facilities such as playgrounds, campgrounds, trails, skateparks and more. The LWCF has a history of broad impact, supporting projects in all 99 Iowa counties. Funding is available exclusively to local governments including cities and counties. For more information on the program and how to apply, please [visit the Iowa DNR LWCF web page](#).

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Public Safety

Minnesota: Land of Fraud

Minnesota may be known as the land of 10,000 lakes, but it has also become the land of more than one billion dollars in fraud. The scale of the abuse uncovered in recent years is staggering. Organizations entrusted with serving the most vulnerable—children, homeless families, the elderly, and people with disabilities—instead diverted public funds into personal luxuries, expensive homes, exotic travel, and international investments. All of this occurred under the administration of Governor Tim Walz, who at the time was elevating his national political ambitions.

Luxury cars, lakefront properties, Dubai vacations, high-end fashion, and real estate abroad—these weren’t funded by private wealth, but by taxpayer-funded money meant to feed children and support struggling families. Court records

reveal that numerous nonprofits and community programs exploited state and federal aid at unprecedented levels. According to the U.S. Attorney’s Office, some of the major schemes include:

- **Feeding Our Future** – Tasked with feeding children, one site claimed to serve 6,000 meals a day, but served only about 40 meals over six weeks. More than **\$250 million** was fraudulently distributed.
- **Autism Therapy and Medical Services** – Instead of providing autism care, the organization falsified diagnoses to extract reimbursements, costing more than **\$100 million** in state and federal funds.
- **Bilal Mosque Inc.** – Created fraudulent meal sites, costing taxpayers **\$1.1 million**.
- **Multicultural Resource Center Inc.** – Fabricated meal service locations and siphoned off more than **\$1.1 million**.
- **Shamsia Hopes** – Submitted inflated invoices and recruited participants to join in the fraud. The total losses are still being investigated but are estimated in the millions.
- **A cluster of nonprofits located at the same address** – Billed for nonexistent services exceeding **\$300 million**.

Throughout this period, concerns were raised repeatedly by employees inside the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and others. Yet whistleblowers were ignored, discouraged, or even threatened. When state officials attempted to scrutinize Feeding Our Future, the organization filed a discrimination lawsuit against MDE, effectively chilling oversight and intimidating regulators into backing off.

While fraud should be prevented through neutral, unbiased enforcement, Minnesota officials allowed identity politics and fear of backlash to impede investigations. A 2024 audit found that investigators withdrew or softened inquiries out of concern that they would be accused of racism. This failure of leadership—and failure of courage—allowed more than a billion dollars to disappear while Minnesotans in real need went without support.

As of today, 86 individuals have been federally charged, and 59 have been convicted, with others awaiting trial. 78 of these individuals are of Somali descent.

On December 1st, the U.S. Treasury Department opened an investigation into whether any of this stolen money was diverted to criminal or extremist organizations abroad, including the terrorist group al-Shabaab. Governor Walz’s administration allowed this system of corruption to develop and persist. Now, the Trump administration has been forced to step in and clean up the failures at the state level. The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Minnesota has taken aggressive action to expose and prosecute those who exploited public resources and betrayed the public trust.

(Contact: Amanda Wille 1-5230)

State Government

Public Retirement Systems Committee Will Meet Next Week

The Public Retirement Systems Committee is a statutory committee composed of 10 legislators, 5 senators (3 from the majority party and 2 from the minority party) and 5 representatives (3 from the majority party and 2 from the minority party). The committee is required to continuously survey pension and retirement developments and periodically review the state’s policy and standards in view of these developments and changing economic and social conditions.

The Committee will meet on Tuesday December 9 at 9:00 a.m., in Room 103 of the Capitol. Members of the

committee will hear presentations from the Judicial Retirement System, Iowa Public Employees' Retirement System (IPERS), IPERS Investment Board, Peace Officers' Retirement System, Municipal Fire & Police Retirement System of Iowa, and the Department of Administrative Services. The meeting is available to the public or can be viewed online at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov>.

IPERS is the most well-known retirement system of the four and the largest with over 400,000 active members. IPERS provides defined benefits for Iowa's public employees, including sheriff and deputies, law enforcement officers, and fire fighters.

The Municipal Fire and Police Retirement System of Iowa (MFPRSI) was created to provide a "statewide" system for 49 cities (whose population was over 8,000 in 1990) to coordinate a retirement system for their Fire Departments and Police. With over 9,300 members it is the second largest public retirement system in the state. The FY2025 MFPRSI Actuarial Report can be found [here](#).

The Peace Officers' Retirement, Accident and Disability System (POR) membership is comprised of 1,332 sworn peace officers of the Iowa Department of Public Safety. The FY2025 PORS Actuarial Report can be viewed [here](#).

The Judicial Retirement System (JRS) is the mandatory retirement system for the Iowa's judges (magistrates and other judicial branch employees are covered under IPERS). Relatively small, JRS has over 400 members.

These presentations will give committee members in-depth reviews of the FY2025 actuarial reports for each fund. As well as information on the status of the funds and investment policies to achieve a deeper understanding of the current and future status of the public retirement funds in the state. The responsibility of ensuring that the system is healthy and performing well is constant. That is why there are regular Investment Board meetings, reviews of performance and policies, legislative review of the performance, and high standards and regulations for the administration of the fund. Overall, the system continues to move in a positive direction and the current funded ratio is the highest funded ratio since the "Great Recession".

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Transportation

Governor Extends Harvest Proclamation Through December 19

Governor Kim Reynolds has extended her annual proclamation relating to the weight limits and transportation of grain, fertilizer, and manure.

The proclamation allows vehicles transporting soybeans, corn, hay, straw, silage, and stover to be overweight (not exceeding 90,000 pounds gross weight) without a permit, for the duration of this proclamation.

The Governor's order applies to loads transported on all highways within Iowa (excluding the interstate system) and those which do not exceed a maximum of 90,000 pounds gross weight, do not exceed the maximum axle weight limit determined under the non-primary highway maximum gross weight table in Iowa Code § 321.463 (6) (b), by more than 12.5 percent, do not exceed the legal maximum axle weight limit of 20,000 pounds and comply with posted limits on roads and bridges.

The harvest proclamation now runs through December 19, 2025.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Illinois Continues to Tax Hard Working Americans' Tips and Overtime

As if Iowa's neighbor to the east did not tax its citizens enough—Illinois has now decided to opt out of the new income tax exemption on tips and overtime that the Trump administration passed. If you are working hard for tips and overtime in Illinois you will see any tax benefit at the state level – only at the federal level. It appears Governor Pritzker's disdain for hard working law abiding citizens extends beyond his indifference to public safety. This will no doubt cause confusion and require those workers to seek professional tax preparers to help them sort it out.

Iowa enacted rolling conformity with federal tax law years ago. This means that for the most part—your Iowa income tax return starts with your federal taxable income. So, if the feds don't tax it—it won't be taxed in Iowa. This makes our income tax return much easier and less complicated than states like Illinois without rolling conformity. In Iowa tips and overtime will be exempt from tax without any action by the legislature.

LSA has estimated that for fiscal year 2026, exempting tips will put \$19.0 million back in those Iowans' pockets and exempting overtime will come in at a \$141.0 million tax cut. That is significant savings for those hard-working Iowans. I would not want to be waiting tables in Chicago next year.

(Contact: Kristi Kiouss 2-5290)