



Farmer sentiment drops as concerns about input costs increase

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WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind., Oct. 6, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- In the September [Purdue University/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer](#) survey, 52% of respondents cited higher input costs as their top concern, marking a new record high. Alongside an 18-point drop in the Index of Current Conditions, overall farmer sentiment weakened in September, falling from 135 points in August to 123. Although the Long-Term Farmland Value Expectations Index also reached a new high of 168, up 5 points from August, the Index of Future Expectations fell 9 points, as more respondents expected their operation to be worse off financially (35%) than better off (22%) a year from now. The survey was conducted among 400 farmers across the nation from Sept. 14-18.

"Producer sentiment this month reflects a growing divide between concerns about the near term and expectations for the longer term," said [Michael Langemeier](#), the barometer's principal investigator and director of Purdue's [Center for Commercial Agriculture](#). "While higher costs and financial pressures are clearly shaping producers' views of current conditions, strong expectations for farmland values point to a more positive outlook for some aspects of the agricultural economy."

Growing pessimism about financial prospects over the next 12 months was reflected in the Farm Financial Performance Index, which fell from 103 in August to 90 in this month's survey. This negative outlook on current financial conditions coincided with a 6-point drop in the Farm Capital Investment Index to 39.

This month's survey included three sets of questions for corn and soybean producers, covering expectations for cash rents, cover crop use, and soybean exports and competitiveness. A majority of producers (73%) expected cash rents to remain the same in 2027. Of the 22% who expected cash rents to increase next year, about 47% anticipated an increase of 0% to 5%. A little less than half (46%) of this month's respondents said they currently plant cover crops, with about one-third of those indicating they have planted cover crops for more than 10 years, and 15% said cover crops are planted on a majority of their acreage. Twenty-two percent of respondents indicated that they have planted cover crops in the past.

When asked about the future of U.S. soybean exports over the next five years, 37% of corn and soybean producers expect U.S. soybean exports to increase, while 10% anticipate a decline. However, competitiveness remains a concern for many producers comparing U.S. soybean production with Brazil's; just under 20% of respondents said they were not concerned about the U.S. position relative to Brazil.

The Short-Term Farmland Value Expectations Index fell 1 point to 126 in September, while the Long-Term Farmland Value Expectations Index climbed to a new high of 168. Respondents cited alternative investments, inflation and interest rates as the three factors expected to have the greatest influence on farmland values.

Since July 2025, producers have been asked whether they believe the U.S. is headed in the "right direction" or on the "wrong track." The share of producers who said the U.S. was headed in the right direction averaged 71% in the final six months of 2025 and 62% in the first six months of 2026. That share fell to between 51% and 54% in July and August before dropping below 50% in September. September marks the first time since the question was introduced that fewer than half of respondents said the U.S. was headed in the right direction.

About the Purdue University Center for Commercial Agriculture

The [Center for Commercial Agriculture](#) was founded in 2011 to provide professional development and educational programs for farmers. Housed within Purdue University's Department of Agricultural Economics, the center's faculty and staff develop and execute research and educational programs that address the different needs of managing in today's business environment.

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graduate debt-free.

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