

Cost to Produce Corn and Soybeans in Illinois—2025

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In 2025, the total of all economic costs per acre for growing corn in Illinois averaged \$1,190 in the northern section, \$1,216 in the central section for farmland with “high” soil ratings, \$1,170 in the central section for farmland with “low” soil ratings, and \$1,117 in the southern section. Soybean costs per acre were \$874, \$910, \$857 and \$820, respectively (see Table 1). Costs were lower in southern Illinois primarily because of lower land costs. The total of all economic costs per bushel in the different sections of the state ranged from \$4.98 to \$6.50 for corn and from \$12.07 to \$16.09 for soybeans. Variations in these costs were related to weather, yields, and land quality.

These figures were obtained from farm business records kept by farmers enrolled in the Illinois Farm Business Farm Management Association. The samples included only farms with more than 500 acres of productive and nearly level soils in each area of the state; these are farms without livestock. Farms located in the 22 counties north and northwest of the Illinois River are included in the sample for northern Illinois. Farms from 36 counties below a line from about Mattoon to Alton are in the sample for southern Illinois. The remaining 44 counties make up the sample for central Illinois. The sample farms averaged 1,661 tillable acres in northern Illinois, 1,622 acres in the central section with high soil ratings, 1,660 acres in the central section with lower soil ratings, and 1,777 acres in southern Illinois. This economic analysis includes some factors in the cost of doing business that non-agricultural businesses may not include. These factors are not used as expense items on income tax returns. Examples include the charge for labor performed by the farm operator, a rental charge for the use of owned and rented land, and an interest charge on equity in machinery and inventories of grain and livestock. In the short run, farm operators may continue to produce without covering these total economic costs of production. However, if returns do not equal the total economic cost of production, in the long run, it will be difficult to maintain the same level of resources in the farm business. Also, producers will be challenged to lower their cost of production or increase volume as profit margins remain narrow.

Nonland Costs

Soil fertility costs for soybeans were allocated on the basis of phosphorus, potassium, and lime removal, with the residual cost allocated to corn. The costs of fuel, machine hire, and machinery repairs were reduced by income received from custom work. Labor costs included the cash value of hired labor, plus a charge for available unpaid labor at a rate of \$4,450 per month. This rate represents a charge for only the physical labor input, not including a charge for management. Building and storage costs were for repairs and depreciation only. The nonland interest rate in 2025 was set at 7.0 percent. This figure was then multiplied by the sum of half the average inventory value of crops at the beginning and the end of the year, the remaining economic depreciation value of machinery and buildings, and half the total operating expenses. The result is the total nonland interest charge. Overhead costs included insurance, utilities, the farm share of light vehicle

expenses, and miscellaneous items. As mentioned above, no charge has been made in this analysis for management, but it may normally be about 6 percent of the total cost per bushel or 33 cents for corn and 80 cents per bushel for soybeans.

Land Costs

Land costs were the weighted average of owned, crop share and cash rent costs. Owned land costs include real estate taxes and an interest charge on owned land. For 2025, the land interest charge was 1.80 percent. The land cost for crop shared acres is the labor and equipment charges needed to produce a crop on non-revenue acres (acres the operator does not receive production from). Cash rent costs are the amounts paid to cash rent landlords. Caution is needed in interpreting differences in land costs between areas.

Cost Per Bushel and Acre

Costs **per bushel** of corn in 2025 as compared to 2024 were lower in all regions of the state, except southern Illinois. Costs per bushel were lower due to less nonland interest and land costs. Costs per bushel were 11 cents lower in northern Illinois, 10 cents lower in central Illinois with the higher rated soils, 15 cents lower in central Illinois with lower rated soils and 64 cents higher in southern Illinois.

The average corn yield in 2025 was 2 bushels per acre higher than in 2024 in northern Illinois, 2 to 3 bushels lower in central Illinois and 25 bushels lower than in southern Illinois. The 2025 average corn yield in the different geographical locations ranged from 21 bushel lower to 10 bushels per acre higher than the five-year average from 2021 to 2025.

Costs **per acre** for corn were lower in all the different geographic regions in Illinois compared to 2024. Across the state, total costs per acre to produce corn decreased from 1 to 4 percent. The non-land interest charge decreased the most statewide.

Production costs **per bushel** of soybeans in 2025 in Illinois compared to 2024 decreased across the state except for southern Illinois due to lower yields. Costs per bushel decreased due to yields staying similar to 2024, but with the same cost decreasing as for corn. Soybean yields ranged from 5 bushels less to 3 bushels per acre higher in 2025 compared to 2024. Changes in costs per bushel ranged from 78 cents lower in northern Illinois to 68 cents higher in southern Illinois.

Total costs **per acre** for soybeans decreased in Illinois when compared to 2024. Costs decreased \$16 per acre in northern Illinois, \$21 per acre in central Illinois with the higher rated soils, \$28 per acre in central Illinois with the lower rated soils and \$43 per acre in southern Illinois when compared to 2024. Average soybean yields in the different areas ranged from 7 bushels lower to 4 bushels higher per acre when compared to the five-year average from 2021 to 2025.

State Averages

Total costs to produce corn for all combined areas of the state were \$1,187 per acre. This is \$34 per acre lower than 2024. Variable costs decreased \$10 per acre or 2 percent, other nonland costs

decreased \$20 per acre, and land costs decreased \$4 per acre. In 2025, variable cash costs accounted for 47 percent of the total cost of production for corn, other nonland costs were 30 percent, and land costs were 23 percent. The average corn yield for all combined areas of the state was 230 bushels per acre resulting in a total cost of production of \$5.16 per bushel. The average corn yield in 2025 was the second highest on record, only 5 bushels lower than 2024 which was the highest on record. Total costs per acre were the third highest on record while total costs per bushel were 4 cents less than 2024.

Total cost per acre to produce soybeans decreased, from \$903 per acre in 2024 to \$878 per acre in 2025. Variable cash costs accounted for 33 percent of the total cost of production for soybeans, other nonland costs 36 percent and land costs 31 percent. The average soybean yield for all combined areas of the state was 70 bushels per acre resulting in a total cost of production of \$12.54 per bushel. The cost per bushel to raise soybeans in the last five years averaged \$12.31 per bushel.

Cost Comparison

Average variable costs per bushel of corn for the five-year period 2021 through 2025 ranged from \$2.41 in northern Illinois to \$2.85 in southern Illinois. Total costs per bushel ranged from \$5.06 in central Illinois with the lower rated soils to \$5.71 in southern Illinois. Total costs per bushel were higher in southern Illinois due to lower yields over the five-year period from 2021 through 2025.

Average variable costs per bushel of soybeans for the five-year period 2021 through 2025 ranged from \$3.95 in central Illinois with higher rated soils to \$5.15 in southern Illinois. Total costs per bushel varied from \$11.90 in central Illinois with higher rated soils to \$14.05 in southern Illinois. Like for corn, soybeans total cost per bushel were higher in southern Illinois due to lower yields during the most recent five-year period.

2026 Forecast

Forecasts for Illinois production costs in 2026 look to increase using the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois's 2026 crop budgets and the USDA's Cost-of-Production Forecasts as a guide. For corn, 2026 variable costs are projected to increase 1.5 percent, mainly due to higher soil fertility costs. For 2026, soybeans have a projected percentage increase of variable costs of 1.4 percent. This increase is also primarily due to higher soil fertility costs. These increases coupled with slightly higher overhead costs and lower land costs have the possibility to lead to higher costs with currently lower projected grain prices for 2026. These projections are prior to the Iran Conflict; however, many farmers had already paid for the majority of their inputs prior to this conflict, making it hard to project the impact on the 2026 crop costs.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to acknowledge that data used in this study comes from Illinois Farm Business Farm Management (FBFM) Associations across the state. Without their cooperation, information as comprehensive and accurate as this would not be available for educational purposes. FBFM, which consists of 4,900 plus farmers and 70 plus professional field staff, is a not-for-profit organization available to all farm operators in Illinois. FBFM field staff provide on-farm counsel

with recordkeeping, farm financial management, business entity planning and income tax management. For more information, please contact the State FBFM Office located at the University of Illinois Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at 217-333-8346 or visit the FBFM website at www.fbfm.org.

References

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Figure 1. Total Costs Per Acre to Grow Corn on Illinois Grain Farms

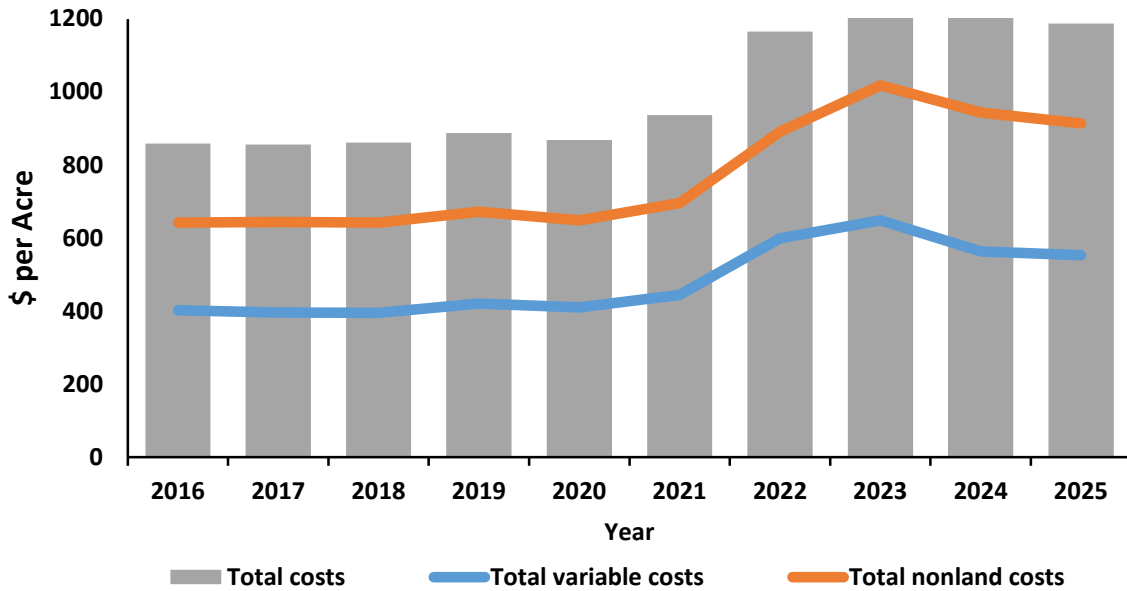


Figure 2. Total Costs Per Acre to Grow Soybeans on Illinois Grain Farms

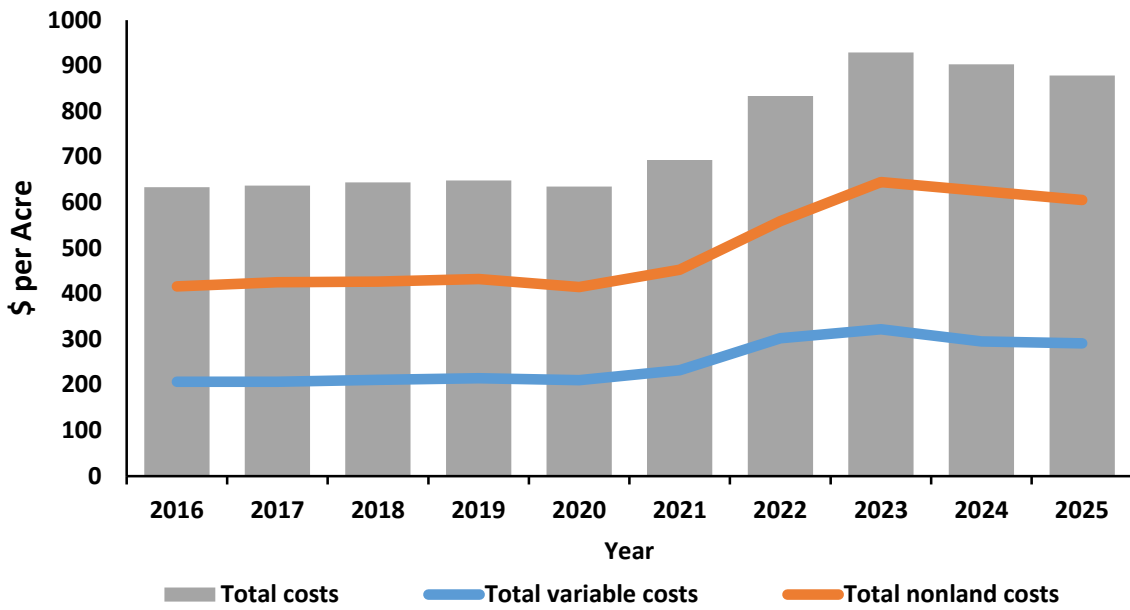


Table 1. Cost Per Acre for Growing Corn and Soybeans on Illinois Grain Farms Without Livestock in 2025

	Corn				Soybeans			
	Northern	Central ¹ High	Central ² Low	Southern	Northern	Central ¹ High	Central ² Low	Southern
Number of Farms	284	511	267	158	284	511	267	158
Acres in crop	980	834	875	716	638	766	759	858
NONLAND COSTS								
Variable Costs:								
Soil Fertility	\$199	\$210	\$208	\$211	\$58	\$63	\$61	\$63
Pesticides	98	116	117	107	61	70	71	70
Seed	133	130	130	128	82	84	76	78
Drying	14	14	12	8	-	-	1	0
Repairs, fuel and hire	103	88	90	86	89	77	81	78
Total variable costs.....	\$547	\$558	\$557	\$541	\$290	\$293	\$290	\$289
Percent change from 2024	1%	-3%	-4%	0%	0%	-2%	-1%	-4%
Other nonland costs								
Labor	\$54	\$57	\$59	\$66	\$48	\$54	\$56	\$60
Buildings	30	23	24	29	15	19	17	18
Storage	7	14	10	5	3	8	4	4
Machinery depreciation	88	91	82	98	75	79	70	84
Nonland interest	111	115	105	106	92	103	92	99
Overhead	67	66	70	69	65	62	65	63
Total, other costs.....	\$357	\$365	\$350	\$373	\$298	\$324	\$304	\$328
Total, nonland costs	\$904	\$923	\$907	\$914	\$588	\$617	\$594	\$617
Percent change from 2024.....	-1%	-3%	-5%	-4%	-2%	-3%	-4%	-6%
LAND COSTS								
Total land costs ³	\$286	\$293	\$263	\$203	\$286	\$293	\$263	\$203
TOTAL, all costs	\$1,190	\$1,216	\$1,170	\$1,117	\$874	\$910	\$857	\$820
Percent change from 2024.....	-1%	-3%	-4%	-3%	-2%	-2%	-3%	-5%
2025 yields, bushels per acre	239	242	234	172	71	75	71	51
Nonland costs per bushel	\$3.78	\$3.81	\$3.87	\$5.32	\$8.28	\$8.22	\$8.37	\$12.11
Total, all costs per bushel	\$4.98	\$5.03	\$5.00	\$6.50	\$12.31	\$12.13	\$12.07	\$16.09
2021-2025 average yield	229	235	225	193	67	74	68	58
Nonland costs per bushel	\$3.95	\$3.93	\$4.03	\$4.74	\$8.78	\$8.33	\$8.74	\$10.64
Total, all costs per bushel	\$5.20	\$5.17	\$5.20	\$5.79	\$13.04	\$12.29	\$12.60	\$14.14

Note: The last two lines of the table are costs based on 2021-2025 average yields

¹ Soil productivity ratings of 86 to 100

² Soil productivity ratings of 56 to 85

³ Weighted average of owned, crop share and cash rent land costs

