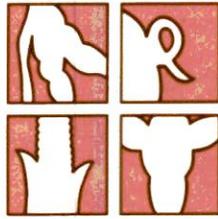




Cooperative  
Extension Service  
University of Illinois  
at Urbana-Champaign



# WEEKLY OUTLOOK

Department of Agricultural Economics  
College of Agriculture  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

February 27, 1985

## PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR 1985

ON FEBRUARY 15 THE USDA RELEASED THE RESULTS OF ITS SURVEY of farmers' planting intentions for 1985. The *Prospective Plantings* report indicates farmers' intentions to switch acreage from oilseeds to feedgrains. Total acreage is expected to be down because of the reduced seedings of winter wheat. Planting intentions for the major crops, excluding hay, totaled 286.7 million acres. That is 6 million acres less than the actual plantings of these crops last year. Excluding 1983, when the PIK program was in effect, these intentions represent the lowest planted acreage since 1978.

Planting intentions for corn totaled 82 million acres, 1.6 million more than planted a year ago. Intentions for the other major feedgrains (sorghum, oats, and barley) totaled 43.2 million acres, up 1.7 million acres from last year. At 125.2 million acres, planting intentions for feedgrains exceed actual plantings for the past seven years. Feedgrain acreage has exceeded 125 million acres in only four of the past twenty-three years.

At 74.7 million acres, intentions for wheat acreage are 4.5 million acres less than a year ago. This reduction is all in winter wheat. Intentions for durum and other classes of spring wheat exceed last year's acreage by almost 1.3 million acres.

Soybean planting intentions were estimated at 64.4 million acres, 3.3 million less than a year ago. If those intentions actually materialize, soybean acreage would be at the lowest level since 1977, excluding the PIK year of 1983. Intentions for sunflowers totaled 3.1 million acres, down 700,000 from last year and about equal to 1983 plantings, which were the lowest since 1978. Intentions for cotton, at 10.96 million acres, are nearly 200,000 less than a year ago.

Planting intentions in Illinois follow the same trends as those for the country as a whole. At 9.1 million acres, soybean intentions are 100,000 less than actual plantings last year. Corn planting intentions totaled 11.4 million acres, up 200,000

from last year. Sorghum acreage intentions are estimated at 450,000 acres, compared to 320,000 last year and only 145,000 acres two years ago. Winter wheat seedings were estimated in December at only 900,000 acres, 50 percent less than seeded the previous year.

The large acreage intentions for feedgrains are somewhat surprising, even though feedgrain prices have been more attractive than oilseed prices, particularly soybeans. It was expected that a high level of participation in the 1985 feedgrain program would prevent an increase in acreage of feedgrains. It may be that actual plantings of feedgrains, particularly corn, may be less than these early intentions. Last year, for example, corn acreage was 1.4 million acres less than February intentions, even though corn prices increased from early February through April and the ratio of corn to soybean prices remained unchanged. The ratio of new crop prices actually moved in favor of corn.

On the surface, the February planting intentions survey indicates that farmers have been slow to sign up for the 1985 feedgrain program. A low level of participation in the program would be surprising and would probably be a mistake on the part of most producers. The major benefit of the program is the potential deficiency payments for the 1985 crop. These payments will be large this year and may well be large again next year.

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