

Premium Crop Market Opportunities



College of Agricultural,
Consumer &
Environmental Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



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Gary Schnitkey



Nick Paulson



Kelsey Graber



Topics

1. Background/context
2. Specialty/Premium Markets in Illinois
3. Questions

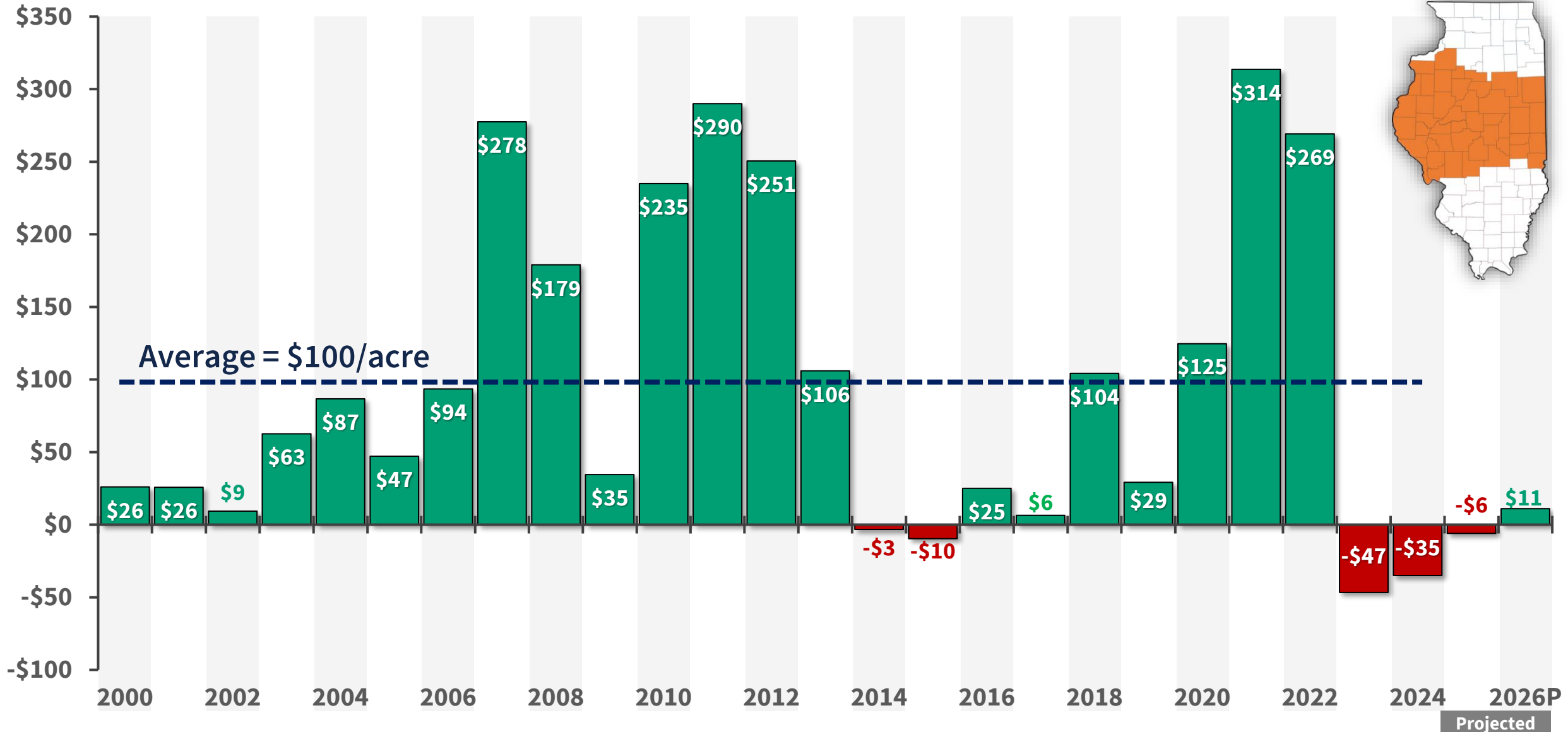
Have you ever considered adding specialty crops to your operation?

- Yes, I have grown specialty crops
- I have considered but have not grown specialty crops
- I have considered but have concerns or don't know how to begin
- No, I have not considered



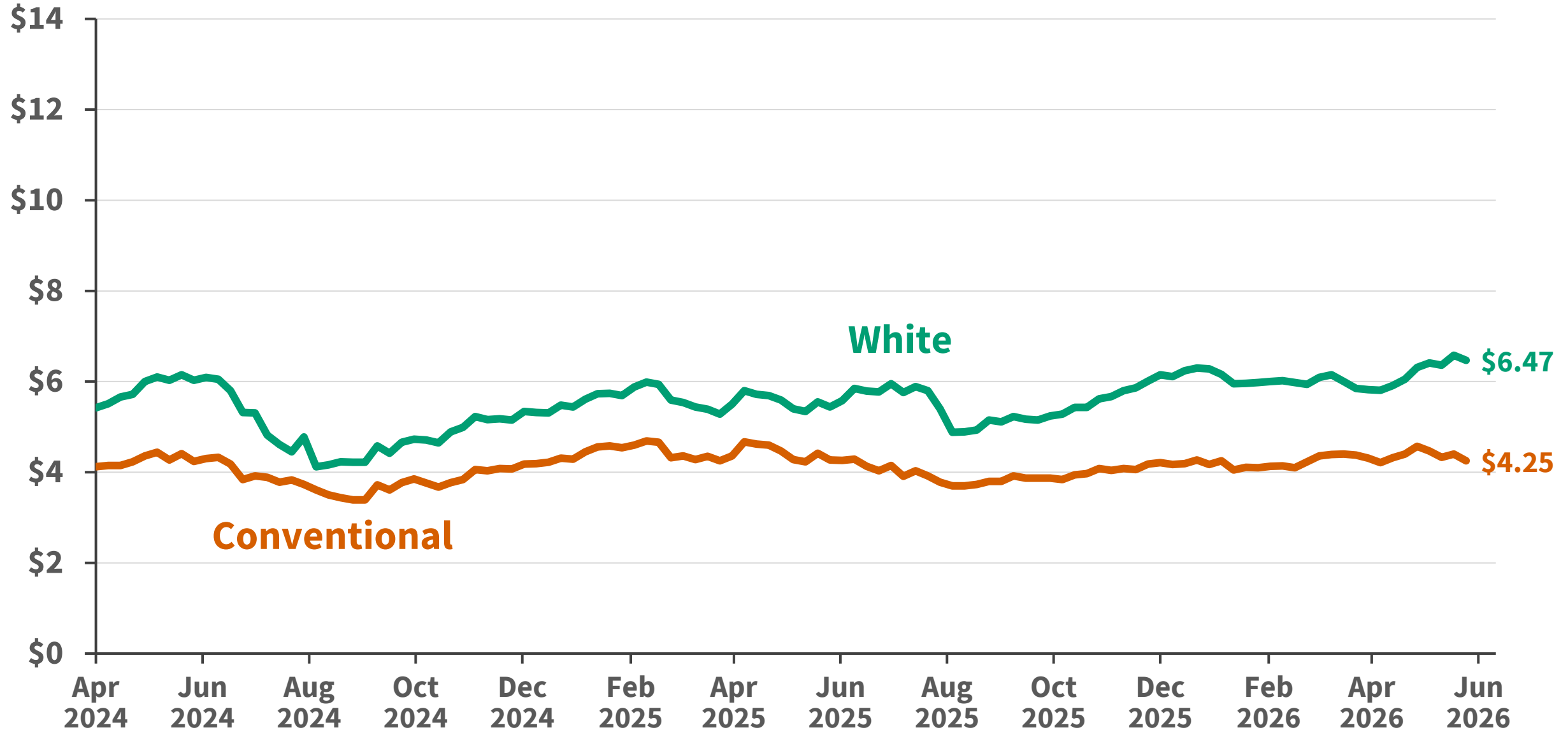
Farmer Returns to a 50% Corn – 50% Soybean Rotation (\$ per acre)

Central Illinois, Cash Rented Farmland, 2000 to 2026P



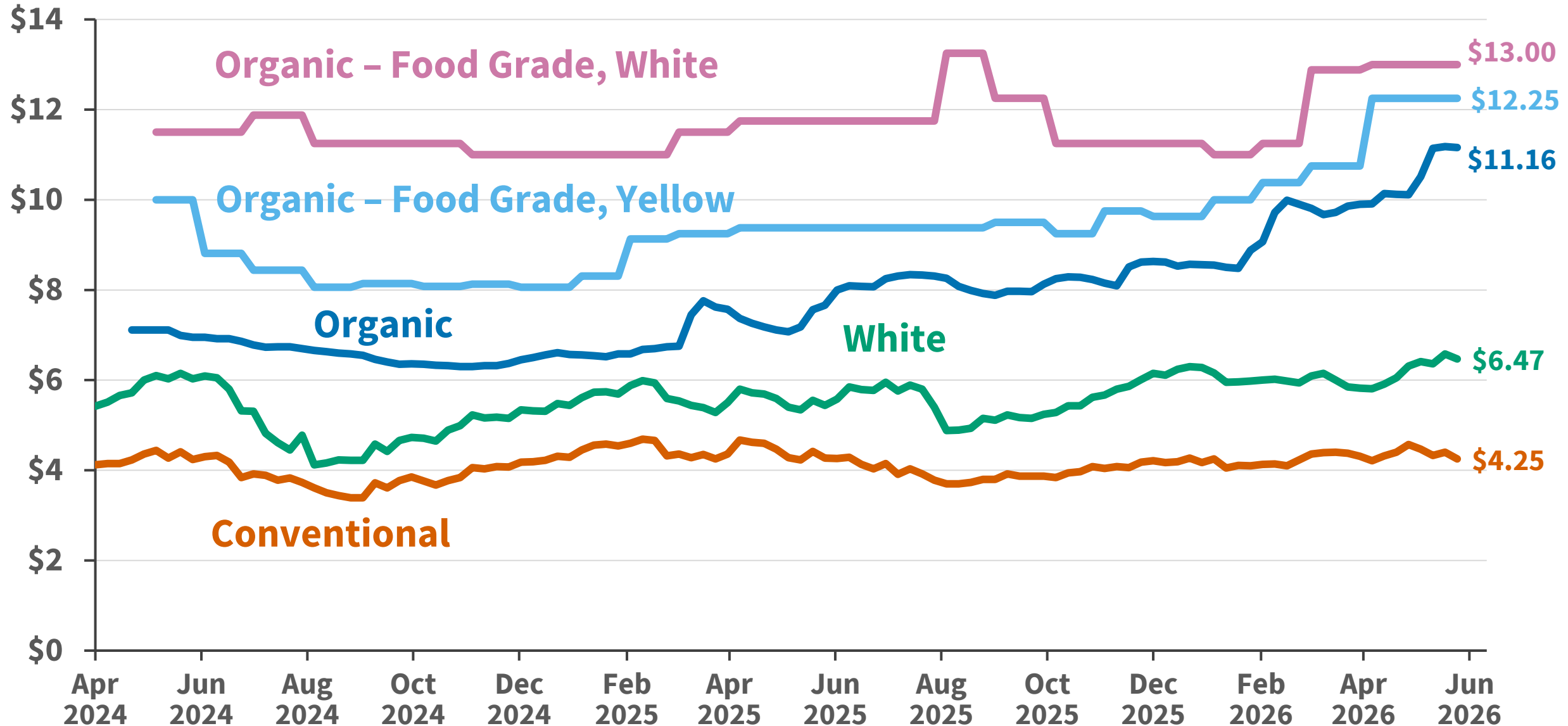
Specialty vs Conventional Corn Spot Prices in \$ per bushel

Note: Conventional prices are averages for Illinois; Organic prices are averages for the Corn Belt region

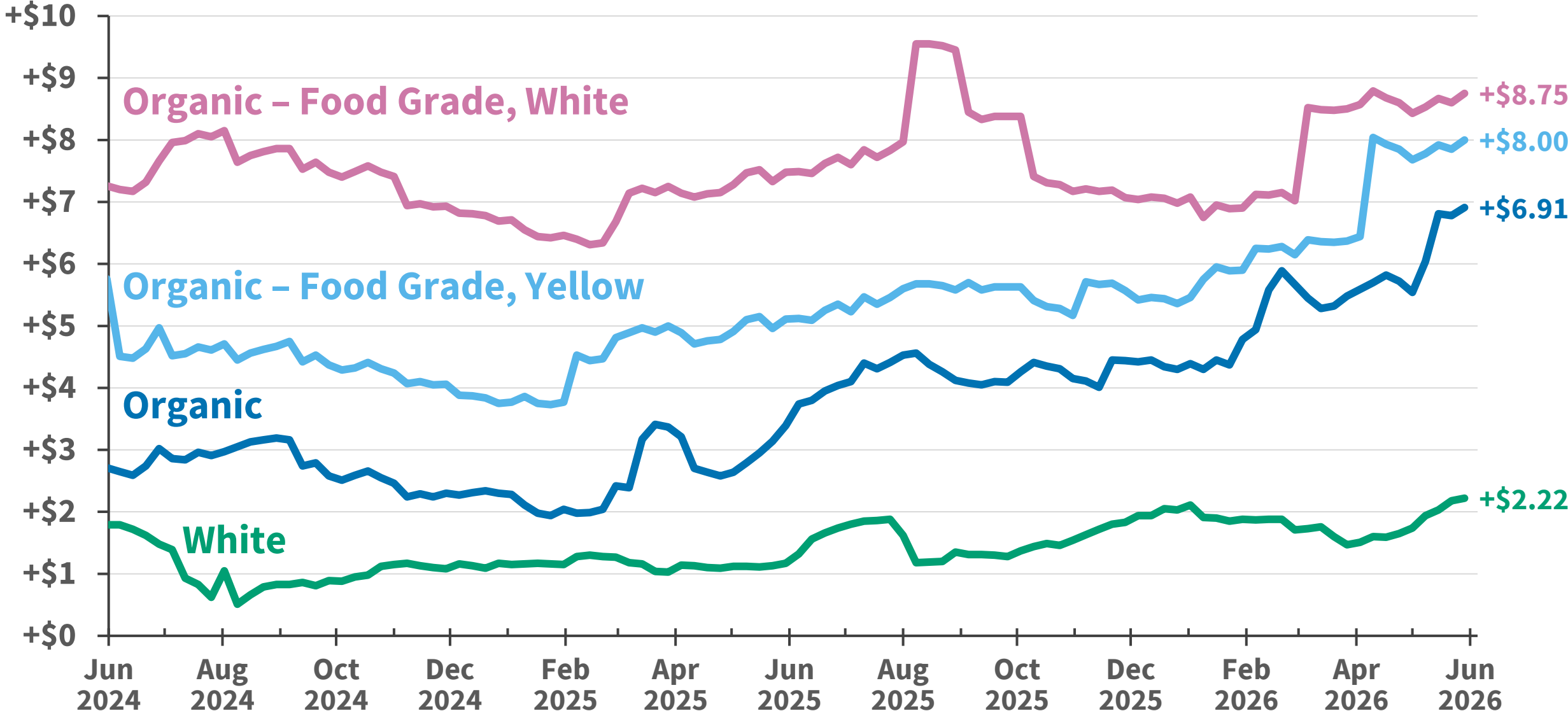


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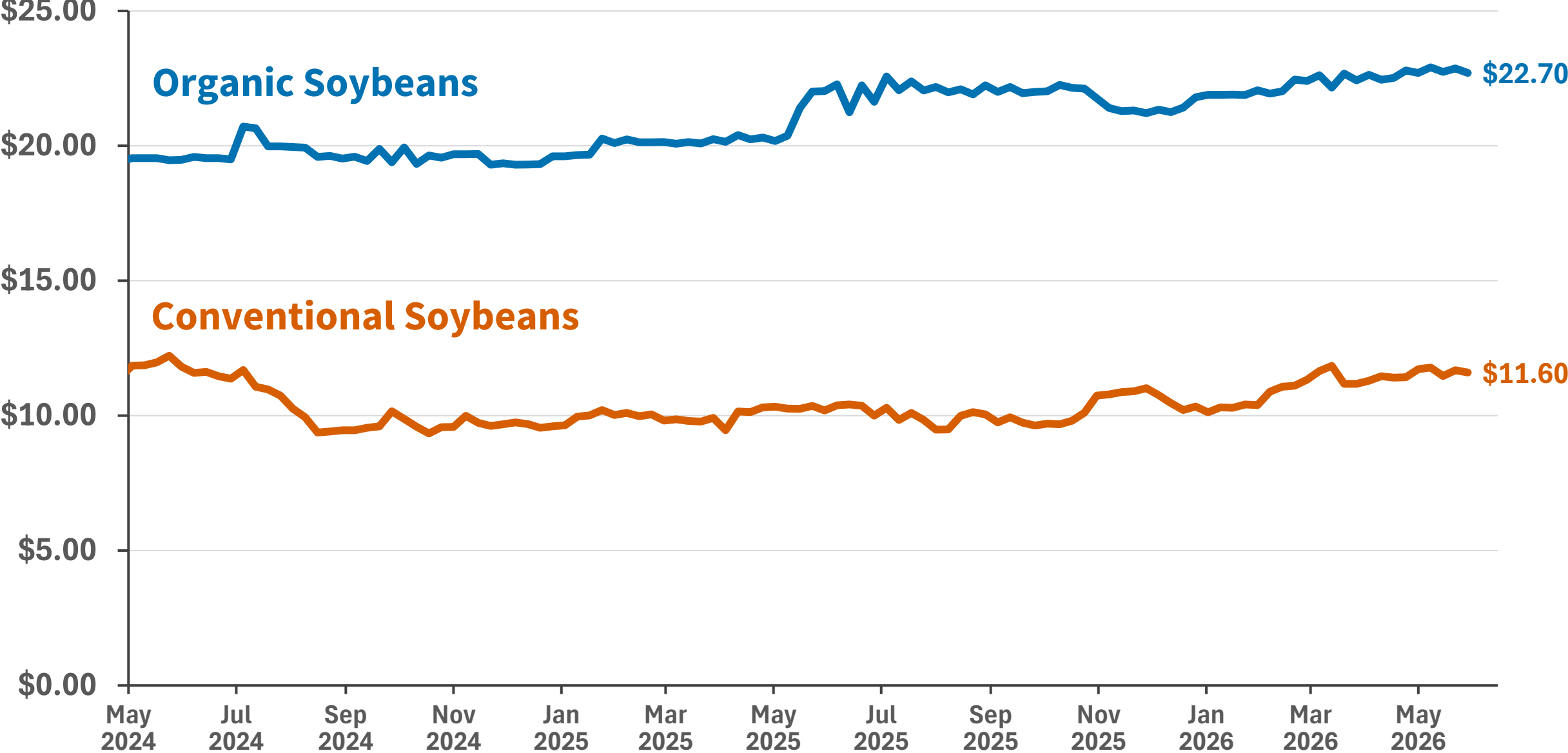
Price Differences Between Specialty and Conventional Corn in Dollars per bushel - Spot Prices, IL/Corn Belt



Source: GeoGrain and Argus; accessed via Bloomberg

Organic vs Conventional Soybean Spot Prices in \$ per Bushel

Note: Averages for Illinois



Price Difference for Organic Soybeans vs Conventional Soybeans in Dollars per bushel - Spot Prices, IL



CLARKSON GRAIN COMPANY

Premium Markets for Specialty Grain

Opportunities for Illinois Producers

Kelsey Graber | Senior Merchandiser | Clarkson Grain Company | Cerro Gordo, IL

PREMIUM
GRAIN
MARKETS

Options for Premium Markets

EASY TO GET STARTED

Good Premium Advantage

**Non-GMO
Corn & Soybeans**

White Corn

- Conventional
- Non-GMO

Waxy Corn

MORE REQUIREMENTS

Better Premium Advantage

Identity Preserved Corn

- Hybrid specific

**Identity Preserved
Soybeans**

- Variety specific
- Hilum color
- Protein levels


HIGHEST STANDARDS

Best Premium Advantage



Organic Corn & Soybeans

- Feed & Food Grade

Premium Levels & Yield Drag

 CORN	Avg Premium / Bushel	Yield Drag (Central IL)
Conventional White Corn	\$0.50–\$0.90 + CBOT	Minimal to none
Non-GMO White Corn	\$0.75–\$1.25 + CBOT	5–10 bu/acre
Non-GMO Yellow Corn	\$0.25–\$0.50 + CBOT	5–10 bu/acre
Waxy Yellow Corn	\$0.40–\$0.75 + CBOT	5–10 bu/acre
Organic Yellow Corn (Feed Grade)	\$6.00–\$8.00	30–50 bu/acre
Organic Yellow Corn (Food Grade)	\$8.00–\$10.00	30–50 bu/acre
Organic White Corn	\$9.00–\$11.00	30–50 bu/acre
Organic Blue Corn	\$13.50–\$16.00	30–50 bu/acre

Premium Levels & Yield Drag

 SOYBEANS	Avg Premium / Bushel	Yield Drag (Central IL)
Non-GMO Soybeans (Non-Variety Specific)	\$1.00–\$2.00 + CBOT	2–5 bu/acre
Non-GMO Soybeans (IP)	\$1.50–\$2.53 + CBOT	5–10 bu/acre
Organic Soybeans (Feed Grade)	\$10.00–\$14.00	10–15 bu/acre
Organic Soybeans (Food Grade)	\$14.00–\$18.00	10–15 bu/acre
 WHEAT		
Organic Wheat	\$4.00–\$6.00	5–10 bu/acre

What do you think are the biggest challenges/concerns with growing specialty crops?

- Segregation, storage, equipment cleaning
- Agronomics (yield drag, weed/pest control)
- Finding a market/buyer
- Recordkeeping (documentation, verification, etc.)
- Other



Barriers for Entry

Specialty Program Requirements

Bin Space

3-to-12-month buyer's call contracts

Segregation

Stagger planting to prevent cross-pollination

Thorough Cleanout

Planter, combine, bins, augers, trucks

Recordkeeping

Seed receipts, chemical logs,
planting/harvest dates

Weed Control Issues on Non-GMO

USDA Certified Organic Requirements

Specialty requirements in addition to:

3-Year Transition

3 years to first certified crop

Annual Audit

Required to maintain certification

Certification Costs

Annual fees required for auditing body

Detailed Recordkeeping

Cover crops, buffer rows, input logs

Labor Intensive

Cover crops, cultivation, weed/pest
management

Where to Start?

1 Local Elevator

Contact your grain merchandiser and ask about specialty programs offered.

Don't forget river elevators!

2 Local Processor

ADM-Decatur &
Cargill-Bloomington

3 Seed Dealer

Contact your seed rep and ask if they have companies looking for growers that are willing to plant specific hybrids/varieties.

4 Food-Grade Companies

Clarkson Grain

Rovey Seed

The Andersons

Scoular

CGB

5 Other Resources

Illinois Extension

The Land Connection

Rodale Institute

The Organic & Non-GMO Report Sourcebook

Organic Certifying Body (OnMark, OCIA)

Start Planning Now...

Most programs are first come, first served contracted grower's programs. Start early!

✓ Lock in premium ✓ Know your costs ✓ Take advantage of seed discounts

Non-GMO Programs

Program details released
September 2026
for 2027 crop

Contact us today to get on the list!

Organic Programs

Program details released
December 2026
for 2027 crop

Contact us today to get on the list!



Leader in Identity-Preserved Non-GMO and Organic Corn and Soy Food Ingredients.

LEARN MORE

GET IN TOUCH

ClarksonGrain.com

After viewing this webinar, how likely are you to consider specialty crops?

- Highly likely
- Likely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely



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