Kansas Farmers Invest in Planting

Kansas farmers are projected to plant 4.6 million acres of corn, two percent less than 2012 yet still the fourth largest acreage since 1936.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture released its Prospective Planting report today and estimates growers across America will plant 97.3 million acres of corn. If realized, this would be the highest planted acreage in the United States since approximately 102 million acres were planted 77 years ago.

Farmers play a significant role in the Kansas economy not only by what they produce but also the dollars they invest in locally for seed, machinery, fuel and fertilizer in order to grow their crops, according to Kansas Corn Commissioner Steve Rome, Hugoton.

"Most of the time, we simply look at how many bushels of grain are produced but we should be more aware of economic activity that is created by Kansas farmers," Rome said. "Depending on location and growing practices, you'll spend somewhere between $250 and $400 per acre to get a crop in the ground and growing. If we spent only $250 an acre to start our corn crops, the investment statewide is over a billion dollars and that's on the low side."

In addition to 4.6 million acres of corn being planted this spring, farmers will also plant 2.9 million acres of sorghum and 3.9 million acres of soybeans. This means Kansas growers will plant more than 11.4 million acres of land to fall-harvested crops this spring.

"Every year brings uncertainty," Rome said. "That uncertainly is a reason farmers purchase crop insurance. It is a program that offers the ability to come back to work after a poor year and invest in planting the next crop."

Following a drought year, Kansas farmers are showing their dedication to producing an abundant crop to meet the needs of their customers. Most Kansas corn is fed to livestock, or used as a feedstock for ethanol production, where a third of the grain used returns as distillers grains, a high nutrient livestock feed.