

Record Corn and Soybean Harvest Predicted

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) - The nation's corn and soybean farmers will harvest by far the largest crops ever this year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said Thursday in a new report.

Bigger crops have been expected this year as adequate rain and cool temperatures made for favorable growing conditions, but the new estimates far surpass previous records.

Corn farmers are expected to harvest nearly 14.4 billion bushels of corn, up from last year's 13.9 billion bushel record. The 171.7 bushels per acre yield is significantly higher than the previous record set in 2009 of 164.7 bushels per acre. Record yields will be set in 18 states, the USDA said.

Despite the strong forecast, concerns have grown in recent days that early cold weather is creeping into the upper Midwest and some crops are maturing later this year. Temperatures below freezing could slow or stop crops from reaching full maturity and affect the harvest. That possibility was not reflected in Thursday's report. Ten states including Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska have the highest number of ears per corn stalk ever, the USDA says.

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