# Crop Tour Opens on a Split Corn Belt as Hay Prices Outrun Published Data

Global Agricultural Developments

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The first field-based check after USDA's August crop forecast begins amid western dryness, eastern flooding and heat, while live hay trades point to a sharper feed market than official prints show. Brazil's Nelore auction and UK drought response add commercial and policy signals.

### Market Movers

#### United States — corn and soybean supply expectations face a field-level test

The Pro Farmer Crop Tour begins August 17 as the first broad field check after USDA's August 1 production report. Pro Farmer analysts describe a sharply split crop: severe dryness in Nebraska, South Dakota and northwestern Iowa; wet conditions and repeated planting in west-central Illinois and Missouri; and recurrent storms affecting Iowa, Illinois and Indiana. Southern Minnesota and northern Iowa are cited as stronger areas. [1]

USDA had forecast record corn yields for Kentucky and Indiana and record soybean yields for Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. The analysts expect recent flooding and persistent heat to reduce that top-end potential, describing the crop as more of a "crapshoot" than it appeared several weeks earlier. [1] The tour's repeat routes, physical measurements and soybean pod counts are designed to make a state-by-state comparison with USDA's farmer-survey estimates; its historical data also lets the tour adjust for under-representing irrigated Nebraska. [1] Nightly estimates will arrive during the week, with the tour's final production estimates due Friday. [1]

That makes the tour a near-term price catalyst, but not a single national verdict.

The useful distinction is between eastern flood-and-heat damage and western dryness, with state-level crop quality and pod counts more informative than the August headline average.

**Grain sentiment — weekend rain has not yet become a supply shock**

GrainStats reported that grain markets opened "disregarding" torrential weekend rains and followed with the quip "rain makes grain." The posts provide no price change, crop-loss estimate or quality data, so they are best treated as a sentiment signal: traders were not yet pricing the rain as a confirmed production shock. [2, 3]

## Innovation Spotlight

**Brazil — elite Nelore genetics are being monetized as reproductive cash flow**

At the JBJ Genetics and Família Nelorista auction, announcers reported 23% year-on-year growth and described total commercialization as nearly US$10 million. They also said the 6509 cow generated R$17 million over two days and that her family exceeded R$40 million; two of her daughters sold the previous day at an average valuation of R$2 million each. [4]

The event supplied unusually concrete—though promotional and unaudited—commercialization metrics. Auction announcers claimed that one aspiration package produced a 65% resale return within 24 hours and a 6509-related purchase produced 47%; the transcript itself framed Nelore genetics as a financial asset. Buyer commission was 8% of the hammer price, and bull syndication could be paid over 40 installments, so these figures should be read as gross auction activity rather than net producer ROI. [4]

The operating model is reproductive throughput, not simply pedigree ownership. One package carried a minimum guarantee of 30 pregnancies, while a prior package reportedly produced 41. A featured bull, Etano JMP, was described as number one for NCP fertility, covered by a 30,000-dose contract and responsible for 6,212 doses sold in one promotional week; a 50% interest sold at 40 installments of R$10,000. The transcript also says buyers must supply good recipients, perform genomic testing and participate in multiple programs to realize the value. [4]

For commercial herds, the transferable signal is demand for measurable reproductive output. Any purchase decision still needs conception, calving, recipient, genomic, dose-sales and net-cash-flow records rather than auction resale claims alone.

## Regional Developments

### United Kingdom — drought relief is being linked to water infrastructure

A linked report shared by Tarım Editörü says the UK approved an additional £65 million package—about $88 million—for farmers affected by what it describes as the driest July on record in England and Wales. The stated uses are strengthening sustainable-agriculture incentives, making reservoir construction easier and improving water access during drought. The same report cites an analysis that Britain's cereal harvest is heading toward its worst level since comparable records began in 1984. [5]

The policy direction matters more than the headline amount at this stage: the report gives no eligibility rules, application timetable or payout schedule. Producers should not build the support into cash-flow plans until those details are published.

### Indiana and the eastern Corn Belt — weather risk is moving into emergency policy

Indiana's governor requested a presidential emergency declaration after deadly storms, historic flooding and widespread power outages. That request follows the same Iowa–Illinois–Indiana storm corridor identified by Pro Farmer, but neither source provides a crop-loss estimate. [6, 1] The immediate planning implication is to separate infrastructure, river and field-access risk from any eventual yield revision.

## Best Practices

### Soil compaction — treat tillage radish as site-specific, not a proven cure

The current evidence is mixed. A commenter citing a Vermont field trial says tillage radish did little to relieve compaction but produced a large earthworm increase. In contrast, a zone-5a grower reports that it broke compaction in silty/loam soil, winter-killed well and suppressed rhizomatous weeds, while also making direct seeding difficult because decaying roots left the bed chunky and sticky; transplanting followed by broadforking and raking worked better. These are field reports, not a replicated yield or ROI result. [7, 8]

The implementation rule is to diagnose before amending: determine sand/silt/clay composition and use a soil test, since otherwise additions are guesswork. For a fall approach, one commenter suggests daikon with a compost topdress and avoiding deep tillage because loose soil can erode or recompact after rain. Where a bed is already hard-packed, other commenters recommend a one-time till-and-compost correction followed by same-day mulch to prevent exposed weed seeds from germinating. [9, 10, 11, 12, 13]

### Crop protection — check herbicide carryover before establishing cover crops

Ag PhD flagged herbicide carryover as a risk that could damage cover crops, but the post gives no product, rate, interval or species guidance. Treat it as a prompt to check rotational restrictions before seeding, not as a blanket recommendation to change products. [14]

For brassica aphids, a farm-management commenter reports that installing floating row covers or pest netting immediately after transplanting made the problem a non-issue. For active infestations, the same commenter proposes two tablespoons each of insecticidal soap and horticultural oil in water, sprayed every few days with coverage under leaves; this is an anecdotal organic-management suggestion, not a universal label recommendation. One commenter estimates lacewings consume about 1,000 aphids per day versus about 50 for ladybugs, while another warns that commercially ordered ladybugs may be wild-caught, non-native and prone to dispersal. [15, 16, 17]

## Input Markets

### Hay — channel and quality are driving a wide gap between reported and live prices

A Western Kansas grower reports feeder alfalfa moving from $250 per ton at auction to $270 per ton confirmed FOB within a few weeks, with third cutting potentially above $300, while the published regional price barely changed. The grower argues that USDA reporting captures mostly auction transactions even though much of the region's hay trades privately between growers, feedlots and neighbors. [18]

Community spot checks show why these numbers cannot be treated as one national index: one report puts hay in the Pacific Northwest at about $350 per ton, or roughly $300 for multiple truckloads, while an Iowa user reports good hay at $150 per ton. [19, 20] A separate commenter says premium hay usually stays in private contracts and that auction prices are normally the floor, although auctions can run hot in a short year; the Iowa report provides a counterexample in which auction sales set the local private market. [21, 22, 20]

The practical buying rule is to call local suppliers, compare forage tests, grade, freight and delivery terms, and avoid pricing a purchase solely from a lagging published series. The evidence here is grower and community reporting rather than an official market survey, but the data-quality risk is economically material for livestock operators.

## Forward Outlook

- **Use the Crop Tour state by state.** Track the nightly estimates and Friday conclusion, comparing physical corn measurements and soybean

pod counts with USDA's August 1 survey-based numbers. Keep eastern flooding and heat separate from western dryness, and account for the tour's known Nebraska irrigated-land adjustment. [1]

- **Plan feed purchases from live local bids.** For hay, request current quotes, forage tests and delivered prices; the current Western Kansas, Pacific Northwest and Iowa observations differ too much in grade and terms to support a single benchmark. [18, 19, 20]
- **Treat UK drought support as a developing policy input.** Watch for eligibility and implementation details around the £65 million package before assuming reservoir or water-access assistance in farm budgets. [5]
- **Stress-test genetics economics.** For Brazilian Nelore investments, convert auction claims into net returns after commission, recipient management, genomics, reproductive success and marketing costs; the current event demonstrates liquidity and demand, not a representative herd-level return. [4]
- **Make soil remediation conditional on diagnosis.** Sample texture and fertility first, then choose between a one-time correction for hardpan and a fall radish/compost approach; mulch immediately after soil disturbance where erosion and weed emergence are risks. [9, 10, 13]

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**Sources**


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