

# Fertilizer and diesel spikes reshape spring budgets as Brazil's safrinha window tightens

Global Agricultural Developments

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## Fertilizer and diesel spikes reshape spring budgets as Brazil's safrinha window tightens

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Input markets dominated the week: nitrogen fertilizer and diesel both surged on Middle East logistics risk, raising near-term uncertainty for spring budgets and 2026 acreage decisions. This brief also highlights actionable agronomy and livestock practices, plus Brazil's safrinha pace and production outlook as weather compresses planting windows.

### 1) Market Movers

#### Fertilizer and fuel: the biggest near-term shock to spring input budgets (U.S. + global)

- **Fertilizer prices have surged since early December 2025.** In one market discussion, urea was described as **70% higher than December 4**, while corn prices were noted as up only **\$0.08** in the same span <sup>1</sup>. Gulf urea was cited moving from **\$350/ton (Dec 4) to \$600/ton** over ~90 days <sup>2</sup>.
- **Retail tightness is showing up in availability, not just price.** One update described U.S. retail nitrogen offers at **\$700/ton or more (if available at all)**, with some retailers saying they're **not selling** due to tight supply <sup>3</sup>.
- **Diesel also spiked on the same conflict channel.** Nationwide diesel was cited at **\$3.89/gal** (up **\$0.12** from Monday) <sup>4</sup> and **\$3.88/gal** Tuesday per EIA (up **\$0.26 YoY**) <sup>5</sup>. The Strait of Hormuz disruption was described

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<sup>1</sup>Unscripted: Fertilizer Frenzy, Global Tensions & the Fight for Farmer Survival

<sup>2</sup>"1 MILLION Acres of Corn Being Lost Per Week" Amid Fertilizer Price Spike???

<sup>3</sup>"1 MILLION Acres of Corn Being Lost Per Week" Amid Fertilizer Price Spike???

<sup>4</sup>Diesel Prices Spike; Supply Cutoff Near Iran

<sup>5</sup>Diesel Prices Spike; Supply Cutoff Near Iran

as halting refined product movement, including diesel <sup>67</sup>.



*Unscripted: Fertilizer Frenzy, Global Tensions & the Fight for Farmer Survival (12:39)*

**Grains: prices mixed, with timing risk and export demand still in focus (U.S.)**

- **Market open levels (U.S. futures, one recap):** May corn **\$4.45<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>** (down <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢), May soybeans **\$11.72<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>** (up 2¢), May Chicago wheat **\$5.70** (down 4¢), May KC wheat **\$5.75** (down <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢), May spring wheat **\$6.12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>** (down <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢) <sup>89101112</sup>.
- **Wheat pressure from near-term weather forecasts:** wheat futures were reported lower overnight on forecasts for rain in the **southern Plains**, while **Kansas wheat conditions** were said to have declined month-over-month <sup>13</sup>.
- **New-crop corn seasonality watch:** a market note flagged that new-

<sup>6</sup>Diesel Prices Spike; Supply Cutoff Near Iran

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<sup>8</sup>"1 MILLION Acres of Corn Being Lost Per Week" Amid Fertilizer Price Spike???

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<sup>13</sup> post by @SuccessfulFarm

crop corn posted a new high “yesterday,” and also stated that **since 2004, new-crop corn has never posted its highest price of the year in March** <sup>14</sup>.

#### Livestock: boxed beef strength and hog recovery (U.S.)

- One report cited **Choice boxed beef up \$6.71 to \$388.05**, with Select up to **\$378.58** <sup>15</sup>.
- In the same update, live cattle were cited **\$0.40 to \$1.00 higher** and feeders ranged **\$0.12 lower to \$0.62 higher** <sup>16</sup>.

## 2) Innovation Spotlight

#### Low-CI corn and 45Z: turning practices into documentation (U.S.)

- **Practices named as trackable low-CI criteria:** nitrogen stabilizers, **no-till/rotations in and out of soybeans**, and **cover crops** <sup>17</sup>.
- **The bottleneck is recordkeeping.** Tracking/recording low-CI practices was described as time-consuming—**up to 10 hours for one field**—with BASF pointing to its Xarvio Field Manager “Bioenergy” application as a way to package information for retailers and ethanol plants to digest and align with 45Z guidance <sup>18</sup>.
- A related BASF segment framed 45Z as a potential income add, while noting the payout rate was not yet known; it also cited survey results implying participation rises from **~18–19% without retail help** to **~80% with retailer help** <sup>19</sup>.

#### Fungicide performance claims under stress conditions (U.S.)

- BASF described 2025 demo participation of **1,800+ growers** and **300 retailers** and said growers saw **20–60 bushel** differences in corn in areas hit hard by **tar spot** and **southern rust** using Veltyma/Revytech/Revilock fungicides, with “similar percentage” soybean gains when it turned dry later in the season <sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> post by @MarketMinuteLLC

<sup>15</sup>“1 MILLION Acres of Corn Being Lost Per Week” Amid Fertilizer Price Spike???

<sup>16</sup>“1 MILLION Acres of Corn Being Lost Per Week” Amid Fertilizer Price Spike???

<sup>17</sup>Brownfield’s Cyndi Young interviews Brady Spangenberg in the BASF booth at Commodity Classic 2026

<sup>18</sup>Brownfield’s Cyndi Young interviews Brady Spangenberg in the BASF booth at Commodity Classic 2026

<sup>19</sup>Brownfield’s Cyndi Young interviews Scott Kay in the BASF booth at Commodity Classic 2026

<sup>20</sup>Brownfield’s Cyndi Young interviews Brady Spangenberg in the BASF booth at Commodity Classic 2026

### Crop protection/regulatory updates tied to 2026 access (U.S.)

- **Dicamba (over-the-top):** Bayer said its dicamba product for over-the-top use on XtendFlex cotton/soybeans was approved the first week of February, describing positive farmer response and 2026 season access <sup>21</sup>. A separate BASF interview also described dicamba over-the-top label progress after a two-year effort with EPA and noted state registrations filtering through <sup>22</sup>.
- **Waterhemp/pigweed tool pipeline:** Bayer highlighted **diffufenican** as an active ingredient it believes can be a strong technical solution for waterhemp and pigweed, while emphasizing the need for timely EPA approval (with timing a challenge for spring 2026 access) <sup>2324</sup>.

### New equipment (U.S.)

- Fendt unveiled **800 Vario Gen5** tractors (models **826, 829, 832**) with a new **AGCO Power Core80 8-liter engine** described as maintaining high torque at low RPMs for low fuel consumption <sup>25</sup>.

## 3) Regional Developments

### Brazil: safrinha corn window, soybean harvest pace, and demand growth

- **Production outlook:** Beyond Agro projected total corn production at **137.5M metric tons**, down from **141M** last season <sup>26</sup>, with the second crop potentially down **up to 3.5M tons** while demand was said to rise **8M tons** <sup>27</sup>. Demand growth was linked to **corn ethanol** and the **animal protein** sector <sup>28</sup>.
- **Planting window risk:** Canal Rural noted that in key producing states the ideal window ends in the **second half of February**, and delays raise the risk of hitting dry periods during **grain filling** <sup>2930</sup>.

<sup>21</sup>Brownfield's Cyndi Young interviews Brian Naber from Bayer at Commodity Classic 2026

<sup>22</sup>Brownfield's Cyndi Young interviews Brady Spangenberg in the BASF booth at Commodity Classic 2026

<sup>23</sup>Brownfield's Cyndi Young interviews Brian Naber from Bayer at Commodity Classic 2026

<sup>24</sup>Brownfield's Cyndi Young interviews Brian Naber from Bayer at Commodity Classic 2026

<sup>25</sup> post by @SuccessfulFarm

<sup>26</sup>Milho 2<sup>a</sup> safra: recuo da produção e aumento da demanda aumentam volatilidade dos preços

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<sup>29</sup>Milho 2<sup>a</sup> safra: recuo da produção e aumento da demanda aumentam volatilidade dos preços

<sup>30</sup>Milho 2<sup>a</sup> safra: recuo da produção e aumento da demanda aumentam volatilidade dos preços

- **Progress and delays:** one national update said Brazil had planted nearly **65%** of intended safrinha area <sup>31</sup>, with soybean harvest around **42%** complete (behind the prior year's pace) <sup>32</sup>. State-level snapshots included **Mato Grosso ~85% planted** for safrinha, while Paraná was cited as about **20% behind** last year; São Paulo was described as not yet started in that segment due to waiting for more rain <sup>33</sup>.

#### Middle East conflict: fertilizer supply risk framing (global)

- StoneX analysis emphasized the region accounts for **41% of global urea exports** (with relevant ammonia and DAP share as well), and said shortage risk depends heavily on whether the conflict is short-lived vs. prolonged—with the **Strait of Hormuz** a key logistics factor <sup>34353637</sup>.
- Current market behavior described included **urea sellers withholding offers** due to price uncertainty <sup>38</sup> and producers cutting output due to export bottlenecks and storage issues <sup>39</sup>.

#### U.S.: wildfire losses (Southwest Kansas)

- A report highlighted recovery efforts for a rancher in Southwest Kansas after a wildfire burned **35,000 acres** and killed around **200 cattle** <sup>40</sup>.

## 4) Best Practices

### Corn: early planting success in cold soils (U.S.)

Ag PhD's guidance for early corn planting in **40°F soils** centered on:

- Start only when **soil is dry** and **no earlier than the first crop insurance date** <sup>41</sup>.
- Run a **cold germination test** (commonly at **50°F**) because the warm germ score on the seed tag is done at **77°F** and may be less informative for early planting conditions <sup>42</sup>.

<sup>31</sup>Comissão no Senado debate maus-tratos de gado apreendido pelo Ibama | Rural Notícias - 04/03/2026

<sup>32</sup>Comissão no Senado debate maus-tratos de gado apreendido pelo Ibama | Rural Notícias - 04/03/2026

<sup>33</sup>AO VIVO: Frente do Agro pede cautela na redução da jornada em ano eleitoral | M&C - 04/03/2026

<sup>34</sup>Conflito no Oriente Médio coloca em risco 41% da ureia exportada no mundo

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<sup>40</sup> post by @SuccessfulFarm

<sup>41</sup> post by @AgPhDMedia

<sup>42</sup> post by @AgPhDMedia

- Consider strong **seed treatments** (or biological packages) and added protection such as **Xyway fungicide**, in-furrow insecticide, and pop-up fertility for cold stress <sup>43</sup>.

**Input procurement and risk management: increase conversations, avoid “all at once” decisions (U.S.)**

“You need to talk to [your supplier]... have those conversations... quit letting emotion dictate it... Do a layer... on the grain side... on the fertilizer... on the chem.” <sup>44</sup>

A separate segment emphasized not facing stress alone:

“Make sure you’ve got a friend, a family member, somebody you can talk to... This is a very tough time.” <sup>45</sup>

**Livestock management under extreme seasonal conditions (Brazil – Pantanal)**

- A Pantanal cattle segment described using **timed AI (IATF)** to target calving in **Aug–Oct**, followed by **early weaning (Jan–Feb)** and moving calves to higher-ground farms because calves tolerate flood conditions poorly compared with cows <sup>46</sup>.
- The same operation emphasized selection for **rusticity**, using semen from improved Nelore bulls (and Angus crossing for weaker cows) <sup>47</sup>.

**Soil amendment at small scale: biochar methods shared by practitioners (homestead)**

- One approach recommended a **trench method** described as low-cost and suitable for limbs/brush <sup>48</sup>. Another described using a **cauldron + lid** approach to create coals for compost while functioning as a fire pit <sup>49</sup>.

## 5) Input Markets

**Nitrogen fertilizer: import dependence + logistics timing (U.S.)**

- A fertilizer discussion described the U.S. as a net-importer market with pricing tied to global replacement values; it cited urea imports around **5.1–5.2 million tons** this year <sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> post by @AgPhDMedia

<sup>44</sup>Unscripted: Fertilizer Frenzy, Global Tensions & the Fight for Farmer Survival

<sup>45</sup>Unscripted: Fertilizer Frenzy, Global Tensions & the Fight for Farmer Survival

<sup>46</sup>Pecuária no Pantanal: produtividade, genética e sustentabilidade em equilíbrio com o ciclo das águas

<sup>47</sup>Pecuária no Pantanal: produtividade, genética e sustentabilidade em equilíbrio com o ciclo das águas

<sup>48</sup>r/Permaculture comment by u/farmer\_amber

<sup>49</sup>r/Permaculture comment by u/SmApp

<sup>50</sup>Unscripted: Fertilizer Frenzy, Global Tensions & the Fight for Farmer Survival

- Another segment framed spring timing risk: even if a vessel is loaded quickly, the product may not reach the farmer until **early May** due to ocean transit plus inland movement <sup>51</sup>.

#### Diesel: spring demand timing problem (U.S.)

- The diesel spike was described as arriving “at one of the worst times” given higher diesel demand during spring planting <sup>5253</sup>. One source also noted it was a tough time to lock in fuel costs in early March and said many farmers missed seasonal lows in December/early January <sup>54</sup>.

#### On-farm operational risk: grid reliability for poultry (Brazil – Paraná)

- A producer in Paraná reported losing **over 20,000 birds** during repeated power failures, estimating losses around **R\$150,000** <sup>555657</sup>. She also described equipment damage from voltage swings—including **five solar inverters**—despite having generator and solar backup <sup>58</sup>. Another segment cited infrastructure concerns such as **~50-year-old cables** <sup>59</sup>.

## 6) Forward Outlook

#### 2026 acreage and pricing: inputs vs. margins (U.S.)

- One market breakdown estimated nitrogen as **10–20%** of a corn grower’s total production costs; a **40% nitrogen price spike** was described as potentially raising total production costs **4–8%** <sup>60</sup>.
- A fertilizer-focused discussion suggested elevated input costs could shift acreage expectations: while some market talk referenced higher corn acreage, one analyst said they continued using **93M corn acres** as a conservative approach and expressed uncertainty it would be that high <sup>61</sup>.
- Another market show framed **acreage** as the “big swing” variable into the end of March (ahead of planting intentions), with fertilizer more of a yield

<sup>51</sup>Unscripted: Fertilizer Frenzy, Global Tensions & the Fight for Farmer Survival

<sup>52</sup>Diesel Prices Spike; Supply Cutoff Near Iran

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<sup>55</sup>Produtora tem prejuízo milionário após morte de 20 mil galinhas por falhas nos sistema de energia

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<sup>60</sup>“1 MILLION Acres of Corn Being Lost Per Week” Amid Fertilizer Price Spike???

<sup>61</sup>Unscripted: Fertilizer Frenzy, Global Tensions & the Fight for Farmer Survival

variable among many others <sup>62</sup>.

### Key calendar items to monitor

- A market note flagged a **USDA report on Tuesday** <sup>63</sup>.
- Trade expectations remain a swing factor: one markets segment referenced upcoming U.S.–China meetings, including a mid-month USTR/Vice Premier meeting and a planned trip to Beijing later in the month <sup>64</sup>.

### Brazil seasonal planning: rainfall timing and harvest/planting execution

- Canal Rural’s weather discussion warned that safrinha corn needs ~**60 rainy days** and that broad “rain cut” typically begins late April/early May; it also emphasized that the most problematic scenario would be both delayed planting *and* an earlier-than-normal rain cutoff (which was said not to be expected in that segment) <sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup>Markets Now Closes - 3/4 Grains Ease with Energies: Still Deciding What Iran War Means for Demand an

<sup>63</sup>HIGH FERTILIZER, WAR & USDA NEXT WEEK

<sup>64</sup>Markets Now Early - 3/4 Grains Ease with Energy Markets on Safe Passage Through Strait: Livestock So

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