Fertilizer Export Halt, Brazil Harvest Delays, and U.S. Acreage Signals Reset the Ag Outlook

Global Agricultural Developments

2026-03-25

Fertilizer Export Halt, Brazil Harvest Delays, and U.S. Acreage Signals Reset the Ag Outlook

By Global Agricultural Developments • March 25, 2026

Russia's ammonium nitrate export halt, rising diesel and fertilizer costs, and conflicting U.S. acreage signals are reshaping grain and livestock planning. This brief also highlights proven corn, poultry, forage, and circular-production practices with quantified yield and cost outcomes.

Market Movers

- **Global grain board:** March 24 trade opened with May corn at **$4.61 3/4**, May soybeans at **$11.60 1/4**, and May Chicago wheat at **$5.90 1/4**. Later market commentary still described the day as **corn and wheat higher, soybeans lower**, with crude oil and broader energy-market risk feeding into corn and especially wheat. [1, 2]
- **New-crop corn:** December corn at **$4.89** was flagged as above every price seen in 2025 and close to the 2024 high, effectively near **two-year highs**. [3]
- **Corn positioning:** Market talk continues to center on lower corn acreage and fund buying. One analyst put major resistance near **$5.00**, with **$5.12-$5.17** as an upside objective, while another said funds have added length and are waiting for fresh demand news such as EPA biofuel quotas. [4, 2]
- **Soybeans - U.S. vs. Brazil/China:** U.S. soybeans were described as **$35-$45/ton** more expensive than Brazil, with old-crop demand pressured by limited China business and China accepting lower-quality Brazilian beans. One analyst said U.S. carryover could rise another **100-120 million bushels** if that business does not return. Key support levels cited were **$11.40**, **$10.40**, and **$9.40**. [2, 4, 5]

- **Wheat - U.S. Plains:** Kansas winter wheat was rated **46% good/excellent** and falling, while forecasts keep much of HRW country dry for another **10 days** before later rains. Separate market commentary said it may be difficult to get above a **50 bu/acre** U.S. winter wheat national average, helping preserve weather premium. [6, 1, 2]
- **Trade flow:** U.S. export inspections for the week ending March 19 were **67 million bushels of corn**, **40 million bushels of soybeans**, and **17 million bushels of wheat**. Soybean inspections were up **12% week over week** and **32% year over year**, with China taking **60%** of the weekly soybean total. Exporters also reported flash sales to Mexico of **4 million bushels of corn** and **6 million bushels of soybeans** for the current marketing year. [1]
- **Livestock - U.S.:** Live and feeder cattle moved higher on steady-to-better cash trade and stronger feeder demand, with Nebraska drought and wildfires cited as support. Feeder cattle traders were watching **$381** as a resistance level. Hogs remain softer in deferred months, though strong pork-sector earnings and the coming hogs-and-pigs report remain key near-term variables. [2]

Innovation Spotlight

Brazil: corn management with measurable yield protection

At the second **Rally de Produtividade** in Uberlândia, about **400 producers** reviewed high-performance corn hybrids and management systems capable of exceeding **300 sacks/ha**. One producer said storm and hail damage initially implied **30-50%** losses across four pivots, yet the farm still finished around **205-206 sacks/ha**, with **231 sacks/ha** in a less-affected area and **331 sacks/ha** on a **0.2-hectare** test plot. Speakers emphasized that fertilizer accounts for about **40%** of production cost, making field-specific analysis, genetics, and crop protection central to ROI. [7]

The same event highlighted pest pressure as a direct margin issue: **cigarrinhas**, molicute viroses, and aphids were said to cost **40-50 sacks/ha**, while also increasing lodging and poor ear formation risk. [7]

China: circular shiitake production with cost and profit gains

A shiitake system using **pruned tea branches** instead of purchased wood chips cut substrate cost by about **20,000 yuan per mu**. The tea material was also described as reducing disease pressure, while mushrooms were reported to be larger at **2-3 liang each**. Because the substrate stayed healthier longer, growers were able to take an extra flush. [8]

The spent substrate was then fermented into **organic fertilizer** and returned to tea gardens, creating a closed nutrient loop. The source said this model lifted profit by roughly **30,000 yuan per mu**. [8]

Brazil: digital management and land-use tools

Embrapa's **Custo Fácil 4.0** was presented as a decision-support tool for small and medium integrated poultry and swine producers, estimating **production costs, profitability, and cash flow**. [9]

Separately, Embrapa said an AI-based monitoring tool identified **abandoned agricultural land** in the Cerrado with **95% accuracy**. In Buritizeiro, Minas Gerais, it mapped more than **13,000 hectares**, or about **5%** of the monitored area, for possible restoration, carbon sequestration, or reintegration into production. [10]

Regional Developments

- **Brazil - soy and safrinha progress:** By March 19, Brazil's winter corn planting had reached **94.6%** of expected area and soybean harvest was at **68.8%**. Separate Conab-based commentary still put the soybean harvest about **10% behind** the same period last year and the five-year average. Mato Grosso had only **2%** left to harvest and strong productivity in final areas, while Mato Grosso do Sul was **87%** harvested and ahead of last year. The biggest delays were in **São Paulo, Maranhão, Minas Gerais, and Bahia**. [9, 11, 12]
- **Brazil - rain risk and harvest quality:** Frequent rains in **Tocantins** are delaying harvest and hurting grain quality. Producers in **Gurupi/west Tocantins** were urged to use the late-March window for soybean harvest and second-crop corn planting before early-April rainfall could total about **150 mm**. Parts of the center-south, including **Goiás**, should have workable short windows, while southern areas still face storm risks including **hail** and **strong wind**. [12, 9]
- **United States - acreage signals remain split:** Allendale's March survey across about **25 states** covering roughly **85%** of U.S. corn and soybean production found **98.8 million corn acres**, **81.2 million soybean acres**, and **45.3 million wheat acres**. That would put corn production roughly **60-80 million bushels** below USDA's February implication. The same survey warned that acreage can still shift because more than **80%** of rice and cotton ground is in drought, and even a **10%** change in those smaller crops could move **1-2 million acres**. [13]
- **Brazil-China beef trade:** Official Chinese quota data showed Brazil had already used **33.6%** of its annual beef quota in **January-February**, versus **35%** for Australia and **20%** for Argentina. ABIEC said the pace merits closer monitoring. Separate Canal Rural commentary said the fill rate could approach **50% by end-March** and, if the quota is exhausted within **3-4 months**, later shipments would face a **50% tariff**, raising the risk of more domestic beef supply in Brazil. [9, 14]

Best Practices

- **Wheat nutrient timing - United States:** Growers are using **timing, field variability, and crop stage** to guide in-season nitrogen and nutrient decisions aimed at improving **yield, protein, and ROI**. [15]
- **Soy harvest and safrinha timing - Brazil:** In delayed soybean areas, producers were advised to use the next **5-day** windows where rainfall totals about **20-25 mm** to keep harvest moving without materially disrupting fieldwork. In **Uberaba**, one forecast showed rain on Wednesday followed by a dry stretch through **April 1**; in **Gurupi**, the useful window runs only through late March before heavier April rain. [11, 10]
- **Corn pest monitoring - Brazil:** Early monitoring for **cigarrinhas**, molicute viroses, and aphids is critical. Reported losses were **40-50 sacks/ha**, with added risk of lodging and malformed ears when intervention comes too late. [7]
- **Forage fertilization - United Kingdom dairy:** When using **urea with sulfur** on grass, the application should be timed with rain expected within a few days. One producer is targeting **80 units of nitrogen per acre**, about **100 kg/acre**, using **20-meter** overlap to improve spread uniformity. Because bridging and dust buildup were a problem, nightly washouts were recommended; soft or newly seeded ground was being avoided to prevent damage. [16]
- **Poultry and swine biosecurity - Brazil:** Maintain at least **12 days** of sanitary void after cleaning and treatment, within a typical **20-21 day** inter-flock interval. Litter treatment was described as most effective when temperatures exceed **60°C** under cover. Cleaning must include both the inside and outside of the house, plus active control of **rats** and **cascudinho**, because these pests can reintroduce contamination. Some export markets require **zero Salmonella**. [17]
- **Soil and circular fertility - China:** Fermenting spent mushroom substrate into organic fertilizer and returning it to tea gardens was presented as a practical residue-reuse model rather than discarding the material after harvest. [8]

Input Markets

- **Fertilizers - Russia to Brazil:** Russia has **temporarily suspended ammonium nitrate exports until April 21**. Canal Rural said Russia accounted for nearly **26%** of Brazil's chemical fertilizer acquisitions in 2025, while Brazil still depends on imports for about **85%** of its fertilizer needs. Fertilizer prices were already cited as up **30-35%**. [18, 9, 14]
- **Brazil fertilizer import economics:** In the current January-March flow, Brazil was near **7 million tons** of imports versus almost **7.9 million tons** a year earlier, but producer outlays were already **$2.4 billion** versus **$2.0 billion** on the larger prior-year volume. Average cost was put at **$350/ton** so far, versus **$309/ton** in 2024 and **$343/ton** last year.

March itself was running at **$382/ton** versus **$311/ton** a year earlier, while average daily imports were **118** versus **137** a year earlier. [19, 10]

- **U.S. diesel and fertilizer:** Farm Journal linked the Iran/Hormuz disruption to on-farm diesel prices near the records set in **March 2022**, with diesel more than **$1** above last year. The same coverage put **urea up 25-30%**, other nitrogen and phosphorus products up **5-10%**, and potash still firming. Most fertilizer for the **2026** crop was described as already applied or pre-booked, limiting immediate acreage cuts but leaving **2027** more exposed if the disruption persists. Successful Farming separately said U.S. diesel prices are up **42% year over year**. [20, 21]
- **Brazil diesel:** Brazilian field reports put diesel at more than **R$8/liter** and up to **R$9/liter** in some regions, versus about **R$5.75/liter** before the conflict, with shortages reported in **140 municipalities in Rio Grande do Sul** and in parts of **Santa Catarina, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, Goiás, and São Paulo**. This directly affects soybean harvest, grain haulage, and second-crop planting. One report said the federal response included a **R$0.32/liter** incentive for diesel producers and importers capped at **R$10 billion**, plus PIS/COFINS relief; another discussion mentioned a possible **R$14 billion** support package with unclear agro inclusion. [22, 23, 24]

Forward Outlook

- **Biofuel policy - United States:** EPA is expected to release new **2026/27 biofuel quotas** this week or by month-end, and Congress is still considering year-round **E15** sales. That keeps renewable fuel policy on the immediate demand watchlist for corn and soybeans. [25, 1]
- **USDA acreage uncertainty:** Allendale's survey points to a more soybean-heavy acreage mix than USDA's February outlook, but the same discussion stressed that intended, planted, and harvested acres can diverge sharply. Last year, official corn acreage eventually surprised by about **8 million acres**, and drought on rice and cotton ground could still move **1-2 million acres** across crops. [13]
- **Brazil weather calendar:** Soy harvest is still running roughly **10% behind** last year and the five-year average in many areas, but short field-work windows remain open in parts of center-south Brazil through the end of March. **West Tocantins/Gurupi** has the narrowest window before heavier April rain, while **Rio Grande do Sul** has about **8-10 days** of firmer weather before rain returns in early April. [11, 10]
- **Input pressure into the next crop:** Canal Rural commentary said Brazil's fertilizer imports could show **zero growth or even decline** if current geopolitical tension and cost pressure persist. Producers are simultaneously dealing with **high interest rates, selective credit, and indebtedness** ahead of the next **Plano Safra** cycle. [19, 10, 24]
- **China-linked demand watch:** Old-crop U.S. soybean business with China is still viewed as unlikely, while China's hog sector is facing **15-**

year-low pig prices and **four-year-low margins**. Brazil's beef quota usage in China also needs close tracking because a faster fill would increase the risk of domestic price pressure later in the year. [5, 1, 9, 14]

Sources

1. One Trump Post = Trillions Moved...War or Peace??
2. Markets Now Closes - 3/24 Corn, Wheat Bounce with Oil, Wx: Beans Fall as China Accepts Brazil Beans
3. X post by @MarketMinuteLLC
4. Markets Now Early - 3/24 Corn Tries to Recover with Oil, Beans Fall
5. USDA, CRUDE & VOLATILITY
6. X post by @GrainStats
7. Em Uberlândia, produtores aprendem diferentes formas de manejo e híbridos de milho
8. 20260324 | Agriculture And Farming
9. Rússia interrompe exportações de fertilizante por um mês | Rural Notícias - 24/03/2026
10. AO VIVO: Alta do diesel, riscos nos fertilizantes e juros preocupam produtores. | M&C – 24/03/2026
11. Colheita da soja atrasa cerca de 10% no país, aponta Conab
12. Chuvas frequentes podem seguir atrapalhando a colheita de soja
13. Watching changes to U.S. acreage mix in 2026
14. Restrição chinesa à carne bovina e decisão da Rússia sobre fertilizante preocupam agro
15. X post by @SuccessfulFarm
16. THIS SHOULD WORK!... WE TRIED SOMETHING NEW!!
17. Especialista traz orientações estratégicas para o período de vazio sanitário na avicultura
18. X post by @irfandonat
19. Guerra no Oriente Médio impacta a cadeia de fertilizantes | Agroexport
20. Farm Inputs Surge with Iran Conflict
21. X post by @SuccessfulFarm
22. Fluxo Brasil-Irã: grãos na exportação e ureia na importação
23. Pressão econômica por conta da guerra preocupa o agro brasileiro
24. Conflitos geopolíticos, eleições e clima imprevisível, como essas incertezas estão afetando o agro?
25. X post by @GoddessofGrain