



## North Dakota Corn Utilization Council Legislative Update 2023-2024 Biennium Report

### 2023 and 2024 Corn Production Overview

North Dakota produced a record corn crop in 2023 with 543 million bushels harvested, up 58% from 2022, on 3.8 million acres, a 43% increase from 2022. The state average yield in 2023 was 143 bushels/acre with an average price of \$4.88/bushel. Corn yields in North Dakota were highly variable in 2023 due to different weather conditions across the state. The southwest had higher than normal rainfall, while the north-central and northeast experienced severe to extreme drought. According to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, North Dakota's 2024 corn production is estimated to be 524 million bushels, which is a 4% decrease from the previous year. The area to be harvested for grain is also expected to be down 4% at 3.64 million acres. However, the yield is projected to be 144 bushels per acre, which is a 1 bushel increase from the previous year. North Dakota ranks 10th in the nation in corn production for grain.

### North Dakota Corn Usage

#### Ethanol and Corn Processing: 46%

550 million gallons of ethanol produced, 1.5 million tons of dried distillers grains produced, 5% of corn utilized for corn sweetener

#### Whole Corn Exports: 43%

1/2 of corn and corn products exported through the Pacific Northwest

#### Animal Feed: 11%

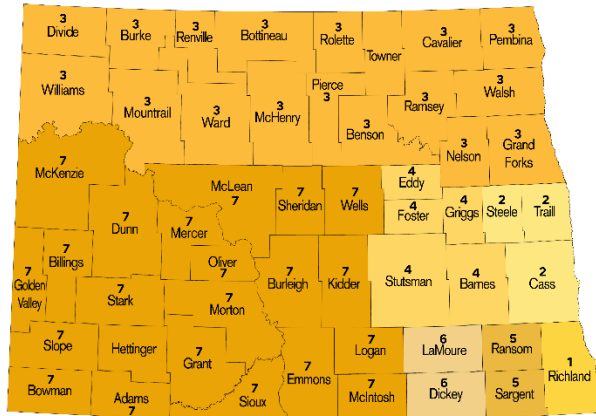
45 million bushels were used to feed approximately 1.9 million head of beef cattle and calves, 15,000 head of milk cows, 142,000 hogs, and 75,000 sheep and lambs

### Creation of Checkoff

The corn checkoff and the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council (NDCUC) were established in 1991 by the North Dakota State Legislature. The assessment of 1/4 of 1% of the value of corn sold was established to fund research, education programs, and market development efforts. These efforts include participation in programs under the auspices of other state, regional, national and international promotion groups. The NDCUC also develops and disseminates information regarding the purpose of the corn assessment and ways in which the assessment benefits corn producers.



*EACH YEAR, CORN PLANTED IN NORTH DAKOTA CONTRIBUTES AN ESTIMATED \$6.1 BILLION TO THE STATE'S ECONOMY.*



### Organization

The NDCUC consists of one producer elected from each of the seven districts established by the legislature. Producers meet at the county level and elect representatives, who in turn elect the seven district council members. These seven council members establish market development and educational programs along with determining research investments and budget expenditures. Council members may serve no more than two four-year terms. Two full-time, permanent employees administer corn checkoff programs and activities.

### Purpose

The mission of the NDCUC is to grow a healthy, profitable business climate for the northern corn industry. The organization specifically works to:

- Increase corn acreage in North Dakota
- Improve corn yields through technology
- Improve efficiency in ethanol and corn sweetener industries in North Dakota
- Collaborate with livestock, ethanol, and research providers
- Educate on grain storage and handling infrastructure and work to improve efficiencies
- Partner with state and national organizations to improve market demand in state, nationally, and internationally

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

### Trade

The NDCUC partners with the U.S. Grains Council to open international markets to North Dakota corn. NDCUC actively participates in U.S. Grains Council's Advisory Teams to discuss the latest issues and guide Grains Council strategy.

The trade teams and overseas missions the Grains Council organizes each year demonstrate the importance of the entire value chain working together to build markets. Teams from across the globe have traveled to North Dakota to investigate crop production and quality as well as gain a better understanding of our feed grains and co-products. By visiting local farmers, elevators, ethanol plants, universities, and transportation hubs, the teams observe firsthand the diverse dynamics of the U.S. grain value chain and take that knowledge back home, often resulting in sales after the trip. The NDCUC has also



A TRADE TEAM FROM EAST AND WEST AFRICA TOURED NORTH DAKOTA CORN FARMS, ETHANOL PLANTS, LIVESTOCK OPERATIONS IN MAY 2024.

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helped fund a U.S. Grains Council ethanol expert in Mexico City to educate petroleum distributors on ethanol blends.

In May of 2024, feed buyers from feed industrial buyers from West Africa (Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Nigeria) and East Africa (Kenya) involved in the feed and poultry sector were in North Dakota to get a closer look at the production process of high-quality US DDGs on a US Grains Council (USGC) trade mission. As a part of the tour, the participants looked at the high protein DDGS being produced at Tharaldson Ethanol and were impressed with the products and coproducts being produced by US corn farmers. Recently, USGC staff met with Kenya's National Biosafety Authority to discuss the process of importing U.S. corn and distiller's dried grains with soluble (DDGS) following the decision by Kenya's High Court to allow biotechnology imports. What a wonderful example of the importance of these relationship-building opportunities and the direct impact that can be made through our participation.

### **National Corn Industry**

The NDCUC partners with the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) in their work to sustainably feed and fuel a growing world through a partnership with the North Dakota Corn Growers Association. NCGA works to create and increase opportunities for corn growers by increasing demand, strengthening customer and consumer trust, enhancing productivity and environmental sustainability, and striving for organization excellence.



*NORTH DAKOTA FUEL STATIONS UTILIZING UNLEADED88 LABELING AT THE PUMPS HAVE REPORTED INCREASED SALES OF ETHANOL AS LABELING CONFUSION AT THE PUMPS IS ELIMINATED.*

### **Ethanol Promotion**

The NDCUC has continued market support and promotion of ethanol throughout the state. The five North Dakota ethanol plants use approximately 160 million bushels of corn annually with more than eighty percent of the corn purchased from North Dakota farmers. Forty to sixty percent of North Dakota's total corn production annually is purchased by North Dakota ethanol plants. NDCUC has a valued relationship with the North Dakota Ethanol Council to educate the public on the value of corn ethanol to the state of North Dakota as well as the environmental and economic benefits of using ethanol.

The North Dakota Corn Utilization Council, in coordination with the North Dakota Ethanol Council, implemented the North Dakota Unleaded88 Expansion Program in 2019. The program's continued goal is to partner with fuel retailers to provide drivers with Unleaded88, a higher-octane fuel containing 15 percent ethanol and 85 percent gasoline. Matching grant dollars from the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council will be available through June 30, 2025, to fuel retailers for the infrastructure necessary to offer Unleaded88. The program guidelines provide that funds be awarded to fuel retailers on a first-come-first-serve basis and can be used for dispensers, piping, hardware, and signage for the distribution of ethanol blends of Unleaded88 or higher.

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### **The North Dakota Livestock Alliance**

The NDCUC has partnered with the North Dakota Soybean Council, Midwest Dairy Association, North Dakota Farmers Union, North Dakota Pork Council, and the North Dakota Ethanol Council to establish the North Dakota Livestock Alliance (NDLA).

The NDLA is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that assists farmers, ranchers, and communities with the development or expansion of the livestock industry in North Dakota. The NDLA also works to strengthen the connection with consumers in order to instill confidence in the practices used by livestock owners, which will help to create awareness about the food and products that are produced by the livestock industry.



### **Research**

In the 2023-2024 biennium, NDCUC has approved research funding of over \$3.3 million dollars. The goal of NDCUC is to target approximately 1/3 of the checkoff towards research annually. New use and agronomy projects made up over 77% of the research funding in the last biennium, with the remaining funds split evenly on livestock and agriculture economics projects.

### **Bolley and Swine Facilities**

In the 2023-2024 biennium, NDCUC approved funding of \$1M to the Bolley Agricultural Field Laboratory Facility and \$1M to the Swine Research Facility at North Dakota State University. The Bolley Agricultural Laboratory, named after pioneer Henry L. Bolley, will be one of the largest capital projects in NDSU history, supporting research in plant pathology, agronomy, soil science, and more. The Council shares the vision of the Bolley Agricultural Laboratory to drive innovation in several key areas related to the state's agricultural industry and biggest economic sector.



*DR. JANET KNODEL, NDSU EXTENSION ENTOMOLOGIST, CHEKCS TRAPS FOR NORTHERN CORN BORER MOTHS AS A PART OF A NORTH DAKOTA CORN UTILIZATION COUNCIL FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECT.*



### **Northern Corn and Soybean Expo**

The NDCUC has partnered with the North Dakota Soybean Council for the last seven years to bring the Northern Corn and Soybean Expo to farmers statewide. This joint event features speakers and topics designed to develop better crop producers. Sessions have touched on various topics of relevance to producers, including corn diseases and pests, water management, soil health, consumer education, and more. The 2025 event will be held on February 4<sup>th</sup> at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in West Fargo.

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### Consumer Outreach

NDCUC has partnered with CommonGround to conduct consumer outreach. CommonGround comprises farmer volunteers who educate consumers about agriculture and the safety of the food supply. A grassroots group of volunteer women farmers from across the country, CommonGround helps urban and suburban moms sort through the myths and misinformation surrounding food and farming — one conversation at a time. Now in its third season, the CommonGround ND podcast featuring conversations with real North Dakota crop producers can be found anywhere you listen to podcasts. Visit [www.CommonGroundNorthDakota.com](http://www.CommonGroundNorthDakota.com) for more.

### Youth Ag Education

NDCUC participates in four Living Ag in the Classroom events each year to educate more than 4,000 elementary school-aged children about the agriculture industry in North Dakota. The “Farm to Fork” walk-through seminar events teach students about many commodities, soil, careers, and farm safety. Students rotate through hands-on activities while learning about North Dakota agriculture and the process that puts food on their plates. NDCUC staff present the information to students in a fun and engaging way. Among other resources provided to students and teachers at the end of the event, the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council provides each student with a “North Dakota Ag Mag” – an eight-page activity booklet focused on corn grown in North Dakota and its many uses.



STUDENTS LISTEN INTENTLY TO THE NDCUC LESSON AT THE 2023 AG IN THE CLASSROOM EVENT IN LISBON, ND.

### Teacher Education

Science and agriculture teachers from across the region participated in the Feeding and Fueling the



18 TEACHERS ATTENDED THE FEEDING AND FUELING THE WORLD WORKSHOP IN FARGO, ND IN 2024 AND HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE BIODIESEL FROM VEGETABLE OIL DURING A LAB AT NDSU.

World Workshop in June 2024 sponsored in part by the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council and held at North Dakota State University. This professional development event taught hands-on lessons that teachers could use to connect their students to the expansive world of agriculture. 18 teachers attended the workshop with the goal of better understanding biotechnology and its role in agriculture and gaining insight on better connecting their students to the agricultural field. In addition to learning more about corn production in North Dakota, the teachers learned how to make biofuel from vegetable oil. They later tested the homemade fuel in toy boats.

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Additionally, participants visited the National Agricultural Genotyping Center to learn more about DNA testing. They also traveled to an ethanol plant to see how fermentation helps produce fuel. Attendees were also exposed to DNA extraction protocols. Sponsorships from the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council, among others, made this workshop free and accessible to participating educators and provided materials for them to bring back to their classrooms so students can participate in labs and lessons.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **Revenue Collection**

NDCUC collects the assessment from first purchasers on a quarterly basis. Corn producers who may not agree with the assessment or programs directed by the NDCUC may request a refund within 60 days after they have sold corn. In 2023 and 2024 refunds were approximately 4% of overall corn assessment collections.

### **Financial Overview**

In the 2023-2024 biennium, NDCUC had net revenue after refunds of \$10.3 million. Revenue has increased due to an increased value and strong demand for North Dakota's corn crop. We have seen an increase in average price in 2023 and 2024 due to strong export markets and production issues internationally. Total expenditure was \$10.7 million, and the cash reserve balance was \$5.7 million at the end of the biennium.

### **Projections for 2025-2026 Biennium**

The outlook for ND corn producers remains positive based on improved yields, total output, and strong demand in exports, ethanol, and livestock feed.

- The NDCUC will continue its partnership with NCGA to educate consumers on the value of higher blends of ethanol.
- Work will continue with our trading partners - the U.S. Grains Council and the U.S. Meat Export Federation - to expand markets for North Dakota corn, ethanol, dried distiller's grains, and U.S. meats.
- NDCUC will continue to look for ways to partner with other commodity groups and the North Dakota Livestock Alliance to grow animal agriculture in the state.
- NDCUC encourages research projects at NDSU and the University of North Dakota (UND) on new uses of corn including bio-composites, bio-plastics, and coatings.
- NDCUC will continue educating consumers and youth on the values of farming, as well as conservation and sustainable practices being used in farming today.

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**Annual Report and Research Summary**

Please find digital copies of the 2023 and 2024 North Dakota Corn Utilization Council Annual Report and Research Summary online at [www.ndcorn.com](http://www.ndcorn.com) or by using the direct link below.

[North Dakota Corn Utilization Council Annual Report and Research Summary Archive](#)

*If you have questions or would like to learn more about the North Dakota corn checkoff, please contact:*

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