

Nebraska farmers have the potential to harvest a record 1.52 billion bushel corn crop this year, topping the previous record of 1.47 billion set in 2007, the Nebraska Corn Board said in response to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's crop production report released last week.

Average anticipated yields in the state, as reported by USDA, are 166 bushels per acre, which would tie a Nebraska record set in 2004.

"Farmers got off to an early good start and have, for the most part, seen good weather throughout much of the growing season. As we move into harvest, hopefully the early estimates laid out by USDA will hold true," said the Nebraska Corn Board's Kelly Brunkhorst.

Brunkhorst said trends to higher yields and larger crops are a testament to farmers' efforts to produce more corn per acre and to do so with as few inputs as possible.

"It's why we say farmers are sustaining innovation through responsible stewardship, better genetics and improved management practices," he said.

"Farmers today are growing more corn, potentially record crops, with less fertilizer, chemicals and water. That's good for them and the environment."

He explained that the technology used by farmers today allows them to better control the inputs they do need, which, in turn, allows them to use fewer overall inputs per bushel. "Farmers are smart innovators and every year they get more efficient," Brunkhorst said.

Nationally, farmers are expected to produce a 12.76 billion bushel crop, the second-largest on record, with an average yield of 159.5 bushels per acre, which is near the record set in 2004.

Based on the higher production and lower prices, USDA increased its anticipated use of corn for feed, ethanol and exports. Despite those increases, USDA also increased ending stocks—the amount of corn left over at the end of the year—to 1.62 billion bushels.