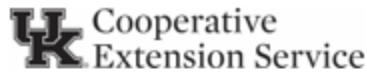


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Farm Update

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES
EDUCATION

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The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, signed into law on July 4, 2025, makes a landmark change to federal farm programs. For the first time since the 2014 Farm Bill, farmers will have the opportunity to expand their base acres under the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. Beginning with the 2026 crop year, USDA will allocate up to 30 million new base acres nationwide. Dr. Grant Gardner, Extension Specialist for Grain Marketing, and his team wrote the following article explaining the importance of increasing program base acres as it relates to USDA program support.

This change carries particular significance for Kentucky. Many farms across the state have consistently planted more acres in recent years than their existing base acreage reflects, as additional land has been developed for production or rotated from permanent forages of pasture and hay to grain crop production. By tying new base allocations to more recent planting history, the law ensures that additional acres in Kentucky will now be eligible for ARC and PLC benefits, strengthening the state's farm safety net.

Preliminary projections suggest Kentucky could see substantial gains. Depending on USDA's final implementation rules, the state could add between 470,000 and 565,000 corn base acres, 570,000 to 677,000 soybean base acres, and 145,000 to 153,000 wheat base acres. All counties in Kentucky gained base acres with the exception of a few in far eastern Kentucky,

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where grain crops are not grown. Daviess County is expected to increase 12,580 corn base acres, 15,565 soybean base acres, and 807 wheat base acres. Mclean will increase 5,000 corn base acres, 5,785 soybean base acres, and 797 wheat base acres. Farms with a long grain production history are not likely to increase. Farms that have had land cleared or converted from forages over the past several years will see the greatest increase in base acres.

Without a base acre adjustment, many of the proposed farm bill enhancements—including higher reference prices—would provide little or no added benefit in Kentucky. Counties with large planted acres but relatively low base acres would continue to miss out on payments, leaving much of the state's production unprotected. This problem has been especially acute where land has transitioned from pasture into cropland, leaving producers without base acres tied to their actual planting history. By aligning base acres with recent planting records, the OBBBA ensures that Kentucky farmers - including those on newly converted cropland - can capture the full value of future farm bill improvements.

Updating base acres will be a one-time, voluntary process, and USDA's Farm Service Agency is expected to publish the rules ahead of the 2026 crop year. The update will be based on the five-year average of planted, failed, and prevented acres from 2019 to 2023, along with adjustments for noncovered crops. Because enrollment will not happen automatically, producers will need to work with FSA to verify their records and document their acreage history. This makes the upcoming sign-up a unique opportunity to align base acres with recent planting patterns and strengthen farm program protection in Kentucky.

Yield Contest Winners Announced

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The University of Kentucky conducts an annual yield contest for corn, soybeans, and wheat. Each entry is physically measured and verified on commercial truck scales. The highest corn yield measured in the 2025 Daviess County corn contest was accomplished by Scott Zoglmann. The 1.522 acres of DeKalb DKC68-35RIB yielded 329.99 bushels per acre. Tanner Stroup harvested the highest wheat and soybean Daviess County contest yields in 2025. His 3.236 acres of Asgrow 33XF3 soybeans yielded 99.85 bushels per acre. Tanner's 1.74 acres of AgriMaxx 525 wheat yielded 114.73 bushels per acre. These and other farmers will be recognized for their accomplishments at the Kentucky Commodity Conference on January 15 at the Sloan Convention Center in Bowling Green. The 2026 Daviess County grain yield plot books are complete and available at the Extension office, area seed sales locations, or online at <https://daviess.mgcafe.uky.edu/daviess-grain-plots>.

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