

Agriculture and Water

NEBRASKA FACTS

Nebraska has 45.4 million acres in farmland¹

Total cropland is 21.4 million acres¹

8.5 million acres are irrigated²

There are approximately 90,000 wells in Nebraska³

These crops made up the majority of Nebraska's irrigated acres in 2008²:

Corn: 5.3 million (8.8 million total corn acres)

Soybeans: 2.2 million (4.9 million)

Precipitation:

Nebraska's precipitation varies from more than 34 inches per year in the southeastern part of the state to less than 16 inches per year in the northwest part. In fact, that difference adds up to a greater change in annual precipitation than from the eastern border of the state all the way to the Atlantic ocean.

Corn Water Use⁴:

In south central Nebraska, 113-day corn uses approximately 26 inches of water.

In Nebraska, approximately 70 percent of irrigation systems are center pivot and 30 percent are furrow.

The most important time for corn to have water is during just prior to tasseling and through the silking stage.

Soybean Water Use⁵:

The total water used (evaporation plus transpiration) by a fully irrigated soybean crop may vary from 20-26 inches during the growing season.

About 65 percent of total water use occurs during the flowering stage and the end of pod fill.

Most important time for soybeans to have water is during pod development and seed fill.

¹2007 Census of Agriculture, USDA, www.agcensus.usda.gov

²National Agricultural Statistics Service: www.nass.usda.gov

³University of Nebraska-Lincoln Water Center: <http://water.unl.edu/cropwater/wellsgraph>

⁴"Irrigation Management for Corn." Kranz, WL, Irmak, S, van Donk, SJ, Yonts, CD, Martin, DL. University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources May 2008.

⁵"Irrigating Soybean." Kranz, WL, Elmore, RW and Specht, JE. University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, January 2005

U.S. AGRICULTURE FACTS

The United States has 922 million total acres of land in farms.¹

The total cropland is 406 million acres.¹

Of this, more than 56.5 million acres are irrigated, or 14 percent of total cropland.¹

1 acre - inch = 27,154 gallons (applying 1 inch of irrigation across one whole acre).

Crops that used irrigation (2007)¹:

Corn:

13 million acres (out of 86 million acres total)

Alfalfa Hay:

6.5 million acres (out of 20 million total)

Soybeans:

5.2 million (out of 63.9 million acres total)