

IL Corn Growers Association  
Political Action Committee Newsletter

# MAIZE MATTERS



[www.ilcorn.org](http://www.ilcorn.org)

APRIL 2026

**PLANTING PRIORITIES, GROWING DEMAND**  
A glimpse into how IL Corn is driving policy, protecting trade, and building long-term demand



*TL: Brad Stotler, Tim Thompson, Rep. Tony McCombie, Don Guinnip, Evan Marr, and Rod Weinzierl BL: Michael Lash and Rep. Nikki Budzinski M: Madison Schultz, Ashley Deal, Chad Dillenberger, Dan Parker, Rep. Bill Foster, Michael Lash, Sen. Tammy Duckworth, Shane Gray, Adam Johnson, and Chris Gould TR: Rod Weinzierl, Dan Parker, Chad Dillenberger, and Rep. Mary Miller BR: Brad Stotler, Tim Thompson, Evan Marr, Don Guinnip, Rep. Sonya Harper, Dan Parker, and Marty Marr*



## IL CORN'S 2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

As ongoing economic pressures are facing Illinois farmers, IL Corn Growers Association (ICGA) is advocating for demand growth and family farm profitability. ICGA's state and federal priorities focus on areas in expanding ethanol markets, protecting future generation farmers, lock and dam funding, enforceable trade deals, the Farm Bill, and conservation programs. ICGA represents more than 50,000 Illinois farmers who grow more than 11 million acres of corn in Illinois and works to create a future for Illinois farmers to operate freely, responsibly, and successfully through grassroots advocacy.

# ILLINOIS CORN FARMERS REPRESENT YOU IN D.C.

The Illinois congressional delegation understands Illinois corn farmers' priorities and challenges better after meeting with IL Corn Growers Association (ICGA) leaders in Washington, D.C. During the time in D.C., farmer leaders met with 19 congressmen and over 60 partners, agencies, embassies, and non-government organizations. ICGA farmer leaders shared their story of on-farm struggles and successes, while providing facts and data to support policy changes to benefit Illinois agriculture.

Staff members and farmers from Wisconsin Corn, Michigan Corn, Kentucky Corn, Kansas Corn, and Tennessee Corn joined the lobbying effort. In addition, eight Grassroots Orientation to Washington D.C. (GROW) applicants applied and were chosen by IL Corn to learn more about how ICGA leads in D.C. The GROW program builds leadership skills among general farmer members by joining ICGA leaders at tables throughout Washington, D.C., to advocate for Illinois farmers.



*T: GROW: Andrew Jolly, Madison Schultz, Mike Hannah, Audrey Hannah, Michael Lash, Makenna Frantz, Garrett Williams, and Adam Johnson B: Collin Watters, Justin Moore, Adam Johnson, Keith Sanders, Brad Stotler, Ashley Deal, Rep. Darin LaHood, Shane Gray, Andrew Jolly, and Matt Watchinski*

## NAVIGATING TOWARD NEW & EXPANDED WATERWAYS

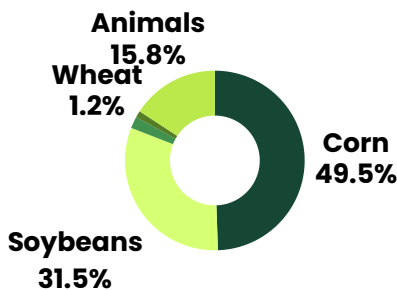
America's inland waterways are critical to the success of agriculture—especially in Illinois, where more than 50 percent of corn grown is shipped out of the state. In the recently published **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) report, *Importance of Inland Waterways to U.S. Agriculture***, the IL Corn Growers Association (ICGA) is recognized for its leadership and long-standing advocacy of an improved and upgraded inland waterway system.

The report highlights the role agricultural organizations play in supporting and advancing inland waterway infrastructure. ICGA is recognized for policies and investments that strengthen locks, dams, and the broader river system farmers rely on every day. IL Corn has consistently championed waterways throughout Illinois and Washington, D.C., knowing that a reliable waterway system is essential for moving Illinois corn to market.

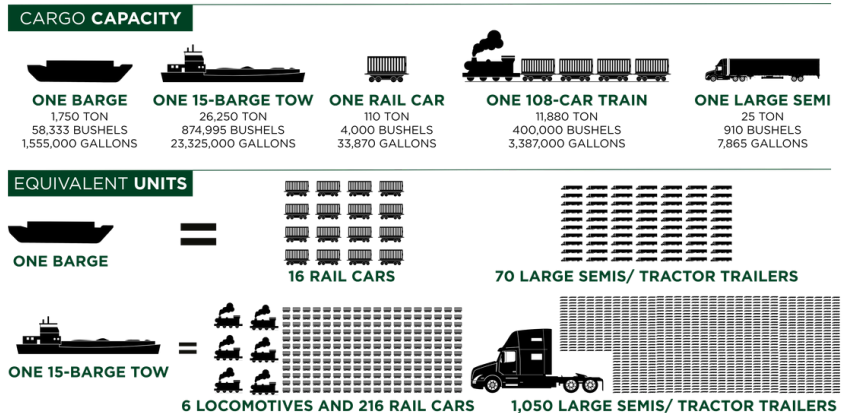
### CORN EXPORT IMPACTS

**1 billion**  
in labor income  
**4.3 billion**  
in output  
**14,900**  
Jobs  
**1.9 billion**  
in Gross Domestic Product  
**11.7 million**  
tons of corn exported  
via inland waterways

### COMPOSITION OF ILLINOIS'S AG INDUSTRY BY SALES



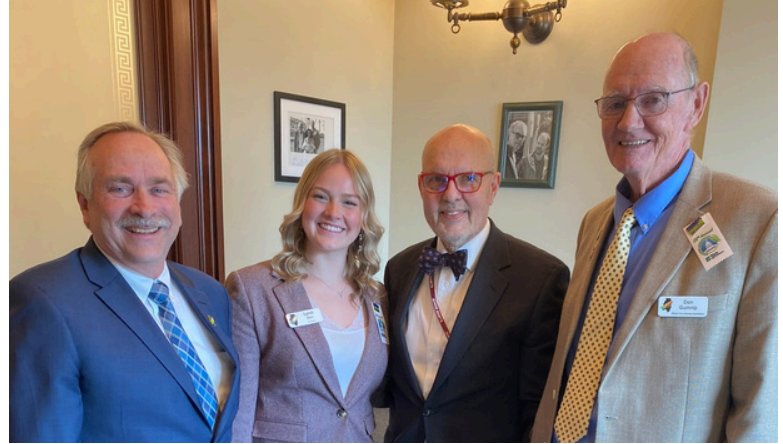
### COMPARE...



# CORN FARMERS ATTEND ILLINOIS AG LEGISLATIVE DAY

The 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Illinois Agriculture Legislative Day (IALD) was held on Tuesday, March 24. IL Corn Growers Association (ICGA) leaders attended the event, along with numerous ag groups. Leaders then met with eight key legislators to discuss IL Corn's priorities.

IL Corn has your seat at the table for state policies affecting corn farmers. We will continue to advocate for corn farmers as well as emphasize the importance of expanding and strengthening market opportunities during the alarming downturn of the farm economy.



TR: Rod Weinzierl, Brad Stotler, Sen. Erica Harriss, Dan Parker, Jon Hurst, and Lyndi Allen L: Marty Marr, Tim Thompson, Dan Parker, Rep. Joyce Mason, Don Guinnip, Evan Marr, Jon Hurst, and Brad Stotler BR: Rod Weinzierl, Lyndi Allen, Sen. Dave Koehler, and Don Guinnip

## USMCA = PROTECTING CORN'S TOP EXPORT MARKETS

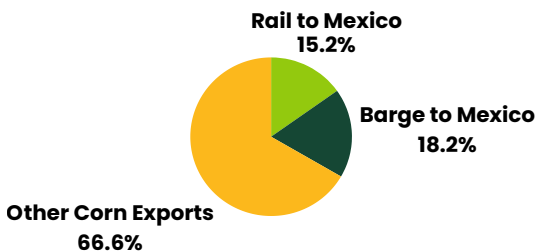
The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is a free trade agreement to mutually benefit North American workers, farmers, ranchers, and businesses.

USMCA has provided market stability and access for U.S. corn farmers. Recognizing this in part because of IL Corn's continual support of the agreement, Illinois Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth joined other Senators in a bipartisan letter to the U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Jamieson Greer, supporting renewal of the agreement in March.

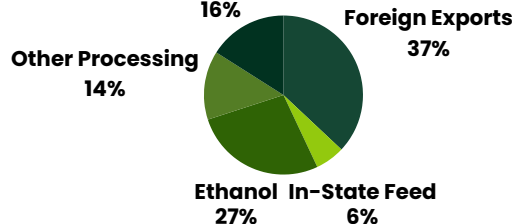
Mexico is the top importer of U.S. corn. Illinois shipped between 244 million and 344 million bushels of corn to Mexico over the past three marketing years—representing between 22% and 35% of all out-of-state shipments. Canada is the largest importer of U.S. ethanol, buying 33% to 48% of total US ethanol exports.

### IL CORN UTILIZATION (MY 2024/2025)

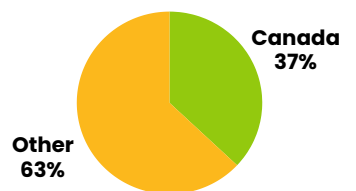
#### ILLINOIS CORN EXPORTS



#### Shipments to Other States



#### U.S. ETHANOL EXPORTS





**IL CORN**  
GROWERS ASSOCIATION

**IL Corn Growers Association**

**P.O. Box 1623 Bloomington, IL 61702-1623**

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## **NCERC: DRIVING THE FUTURE OF ETHANOL**

The National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center (NCERC) is a nationally recognized research center dedicated to the development and commercialization of biotechnologies, including biofuels, bio-based chemicals, and products. NCERC's business model is similar to a Contract Research Organization and allows for a range of technology testing and product development.

Representative Katie Stuart, representing constituents near Collinsville and Edwardsville, and Illinois farmers visited NCERC for a tour, to learn about its expansion plans, and interview Illinois farmers. The visit followed IL Corn's previous meeting with Rep. Stuart on Illinois Agriculture Legislative Day, where NCERC and its future were discussed.

During the interviews at NCERC, Rep. Stuart remarked, "This isn't your usual backdrop for an interview or place to interact with farmers. That in itself



*Steve Koeller, Justin Moore, Shane Gray, Rep. Katie Stuart, Chad Dillenberger, and Dale Haudrich*

shows the importance of the work done here and how much NCERC means to our Illinois corn farmers."

What started as an idea from the IL Corn Growers Association and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in 2003 has grown into a center that leads national renewable fuel research and has become a cornerstone for corn demand. NCERC continues to push boundaries with new advancements in ethanol production.