



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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My Fellow South Dakotans:

Our state's agricultural producers witnessed historic events this past year. New records were set for planted acres and production. Among the all-time records set in 2007 were:

- Corn acreage: 4.5 million acres;
- Corn production: 544.5 million bushels;
- Wheat production: 147.5 million bushels;
- Soybean yield: 42 bushels per acre.

In addition to the production records set for the 2007 crop, the first third of 2008 saw record high prices paid to producers.

- December 2008, Chicago corn traded at \$6.31 per bushel;
- May 2008, Chicago soybeans traded at \$15.59 per bushel;
- July 2008, Chicago wheat traded at \$12.45 per bushel;
- July 2008, Chicago oats traded at \$4.56 per bushel.



Because high production and high prices rarely happen simultaneously, South Dakota farm income is now poised to break all previous records. We should take time to give thanks for these blessings and opportunities. But with any opportunity comes commensurate responsibility and risk. The responsible producer welcomes these challenges as the price of admission to free enterprise.

As we plan our agricultural future in South Dakota, it is also important to track our progress. There is an old saying, "If you do not measure it, you cannot manage it." On our farm, my father and grandfather would use a pencil to write down prices and yields on the wall of our wooden granary and on the side of our grain bins. These pencil marks marked the path of our farm's progress. Today, my brother and I use a computer, but the rationale for the records remains the same—measurement and management.

The statistics in this annual bulletin are also the way we track our state's agricultural progress. We must track where we have been and know what is working, in order to chart our future course successfully. As your Secretary of Agriculture, I refer to this bulletin every week. It gives me the tools to tell the story of our state's number one industry to business people, legislators and visitors.

I extend my thanks to Carter Anderson and the staff at the South Dakota office of the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service for another job well done.

Sincerely

Bill Even

Agriculture – South Dakota's #1 Industry