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Rural Economy Expected to Struggle

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) - A monthly survey of bankers suggests the economy will remain weak in rural parts of 10 Midwestern and Western states because of low grain and oil prices.

The region's overall economic index improved slightly to 50.9 in January from December's neutral score of 50. The index ranges from 0 to 100. Any score above 50 suggests growth while a score below 50 suggests decline.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss in Omaha says growth is being restrained in rural areas because of low corn and fuel prices. But bankers say ethanol plants haven't slowed production much.

Associated Press