

Nebraska farmers concerned about 2023

(KLZA)-- The drought, crop inputs, and other farm costs expected in 2023 are top of mind concerns for farmers and ranchers across Nebraska according to a non-scientific poll conducted by Nebraska Farm Bureau. According to the survey, producers' top concerns over the next year continue to be input prices (35%), followed by drought (32%), supply chain disruptions (20%), and crop and livestock prices (11%).

According to Nebraska Farm Bureau's Senior Economist Jay Rempe, input costs for farmers and ranchers have risen significantly since January 2021.

Diesel and fertilizer prices are well above levels seen over the past decade. The fertilizer price index earlier this year was 94% higher than the January 2021 index, nearly doubling. The diesel index was up 118%. The chemical price index has risen 55% over an 18-month period. Hay prices have also seen increases, with the index increasing 28% compared to January 2021.

The extraordinary cost increases to absorb in a short period of time has created tremendous management challenges for farmers and ranchers.

Those who raise cattle and other livestock have also felt the impacts of drought. Much of Nebraska's pasture and rangeland is rated in poor or very poor condition. Alfalfa production is projected to be down 22 percent this year compared to last year. Other hay production is expected to be off 18 percent compared to 2021.

The Livestock Market Information Center reports heifers are entering feedlots at a higher rate this year. So, selling cows and marketing calves earlier can mean increased revenues this year, but the sales that shrink herd size will impact the operations in the years to come.

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