

Word Count: 636

## **Nebraska Agriculture is Amazing! Celebrate National Ag Week March 16-22.**

*by Sherry Vinton, Director, Nebraska Department of Agriculture*

Agriculture is Nebraska's number one industry. It sustains our families, strengthens rural communities, and ensures a strong future for generations to come. National Ag Week, March 16-22, is a special time of year for Nebraska agriculture. It's the perfect time to highlight and celebrate an industry that people depend on every day, and one that's near and dear to my heart.

Whether it's the food we eat, the fuel we use for our vehicles, or the plentiful feed for livestock, everything about Nebraska agriculture is amazing! Our state has abundant resources like rich soil, ample water, and wide-open land for grazing and for growing crops. These resources, combined with the skill, resilience, and innovation of Nebraska producers, make our agriculture sector second to none.

### **Nebraska's Leadership in Livestock and Crop Production**

Last year, Nebraska beef and veal exports reached a milestone, surpassing the two-billion-dollar mark. At \$2,039,768,864, Nebraska is number one in the nation for beef and veal exports. High-quality beef from Nebraska is in demand all over the world, and our ranchers continue to set the standard for excellence in the beef industry.

Beyond beef, Nebraska also plays a major role in pork production. Ranking sixth nationally with 3.65 million head of hogs and pigs, our state continues to be a key contributor to the U.S. and world pork supply.

Our state's varied climate, elevation and rich soil help farmers grow a wide variety of crops that support our livestock industry, biofuels sector, and global food supply. Our top rankings in crop production showcase our agricultural strength:

In 2024, we ranked:

- #2 in the nation for proso millet production and alfalfa hay production;
- #3 for corn for grain production and all hay production;
- #4 in the nation for sorghum production, all dry edible bean production, and dry edible pea production; and
- #5 for soybean production and sugarbeet production.

These rankings demonstrate Nebraska's ability to not only produce high-quality food and feed but also contribute to the growing demand for biofuels and sustainable agricultural solutions.

We recognize the importance biofuels and the biotech industry play in the future of agricultural production, energy independence and our economy. Nebraska is uniquely positioned to lead in this industry as we already have the infrastructure in place and the resources we need to excel. For example, our state is home to 24 ethanol plants with a

production capacity exceeding 2.3 billion gallons annually, making us the second-largest ethanol producer in the nation.

Whether it's growing biomanufacturing or producing biofuels, Nebraska is ready to take the lead. Our products are premium quality, our production is sustainable, and our producers are tech savvy.

Nebraska farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses are true innovators, embracing precision agriculture, genetic advances, and modern equipment to produce more while using fewer resources. Their innovations impact all of us and emphasize the interconnectedness of agriculture with our daily lives.

### **Supporting Nebraska Agriculture**

The future of Nebraska agriculture depends on our continued support and investment in this vital industry. By advocating for policies that strengthen rural communities, supporting agricultural education programs, and promoting Nebraska-grown products, we can ensure that our agriculture sector remains strong for generations to come.

Thank you for allowing me to shine a spotlight on Nebraska agriculture during National Ag Week and always. Thank you to the farmers, ranchers, and all who work in the ag industry for providing us with the food, feed, and fuel we depend on daily. Your contributions make a difference not only in our state but across the nation and the world. And thank you to Nebraskans everywhere for supporting Nebraska farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses every day.

At the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, we are proud to serve and support you. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach out to us at 402-471-2341 or visit our website at [nda.nebraska.gov](http://nda.nebraska.gov).

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