

Iowa to get \$623 million in set-aside

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Iowa farmers will idle 895,410 corn acres this year in return for an estimated \$623 million in government payments, state Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service officials said Tuesday.

The estimate includes nearly \$250 million in advance payments already made to federal farm program participants shortly after they enrolled in the annual cropland set-aside.

Payment totals are down this year because fewer acres were required to be idled to qual-

Map showing set-asides by county: Page 85

ify for farm program payments and price-support benefits. Farmers had to idle 7.5 percent of their corn base, compared to as much as 20 percent a few years ago.

As a result, the total cropland set-aside for Iowa is the smallest in years. Last year Iowans idled 1.2 million acres; in 1989 it was 1.3 million acres. The record set-aside was 6 million acres in 1983 when entire farms could be enrolled.

Statewide, 82 percent of the Iowa corn base is represented on the 100,957 enrolled farms. That represents 68 percent of all eligible farm units in the state.

Emmet County had the highest percentage of enrolled corn base of any Iowa county, with 94 percent of the eligible corn acres signed up, preliminary data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture show.

Three counties — Franklin, Osceola and Worth — had 93 percent of the corn base signed up. Cerro Gordo, Hamilton and Mills counties had 92 percent each.

In all, 18 Iowa counties have 90 percent or more of the corn base in the set-aside program.

Of the major Corn Belt states, Nebraska is the corn program leader with 87 percent of its eligible farmland and 563,385 acres enrolled. Sign-up in Illinois stood at 74 percent and 660,152 acres; Indiana, 70 percent and 327,217 acres; Minnesota, 81 percent and 436,264 acres; Missouri, 75 percent and 150,351 acres; and Wisconsin, 66 percent and 191,712 acres.

This year's program includes a new flexible planting feature in which corn growers could substitute other crops on permitted acres up to a limit of 25 percent of a farm's corn base.

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More farmland set aside for conservation

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — Farmers are taking about 8.5 percent more land from production in 1991 than they did last year under government acreage programs, according to preliminary figures released Monday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Under this year's commodity programs, farmers will idle more than 28.2 million acres, compared with 26 million acres taken from production under the 1990 programs, the USDA report showed.

Most of the land idled is feed grains and wheat acreage. Wheat farmers more than doubled their set-aside from last year, while corn producers reduced theirs.

To be eligible for federal price support and related benefits, farmers are required to take a percentage of their base acres from crop production and put the land in conservation uses.

The idled acres signed up for 1991 included: corn, 7.2 million acres, down from 10.1 million in 1990; sorghum, 2.3 million, down from 3.1 million; barley, 1.9 million, up from 0.8 million; oats, 0.5 million, up from 0.3 million; wheat, 14.9 million, up from 7 million; upland cotton, 0.9 million, down from 1.9 million; and rice, 0.6 million, down from 1.1 million.

Farmers were reported to have enrolled 167.5 million acres of cropland in the 1991 programs, which represented 78.4 percent of the national base 213.7 million acres of feed grains, wheat, cotton and rice. The idled acres are part of the 167.5 million acres enrolled.

Last year's gross enrollment was 168.8 million acres, or 78 percent of the 1990 acreage base of 216.6 million acres.