

Josh Sullivan

Morrisonville, Christian County:



Corn and beans are starting to look like they are finally starting to dry down. I hand-tested my

earliest number of corn today and it came in at 29%. I have seen more cornfields opened up and some whole fields shelled. Local elevators are getting most corn in the high 20% moisture range. Have yet to see a bean field ready to be cut but the leaves are starting to drop on the early numbers. Just trying to check on roadsides and finish getting equipment ready since the beginning of harvest is getting closer.

Kevin Raber

Mount Carmel, Wabash County:



We had rain again last week. Hopefully this moisture and warm weather will keep adding

bushels to the soybean crop. There are a few farmers harvesting corn. I haven't heard any reports of yield or moisture on the early corn. There will probably be some beans cut by the time I file my next report if the warm, dry weather continues.

Paul Munie

Smithon, St. Clair County:



We are just in the beginning of harvest in our area. There are some guys who have started into

some early corn. Not many yield reports to speak of yet. Most are still getting the last few things ready to go before the busy rush of harvest. The weather here is good for drying and we currently don't have much rain predicted. Beans are turning fast but still a few weeks out.

Ken Taake

Ullin, Pulaski County:



It felt more like fall last week with overnight lows in the 50s. We received .5 inches of rain. Harvest

is starting slowly and later than usual. We started corn harvest by shelling the 50 acres that we managed to plant in April. Yields were disappointing but not unexpected. I heard a lot of the early corn has not yielded very well. Hopefully the later planting will be better. We will probably start soybean harvest next week. Please take time to be safe.

Randy Anderson

Galatia, Saline County:



Harvest is starting to pick up a little. Some corn, but not much as it's still running on the wet side.

Beans are picking up with them turning quickly. Yields on corn are OK, beans are just a little under average. I feel the rains we missed in mid- to late-August knocked the top end off the beans. So, USDA might be close on the bean yield. On another note, the vehicles you meet on the road have no consideration of farmers or farm equipment!

Farmers need to remember drone license requirements

BY KAY SHIPMAN

FarmWeek

As agricultural technology continues to advance, drones have become ubiquitous with new uses for farmers and others in the industry.

FarmWeek reached out to Garrett Thalgott, Illinois Farm Bureau assistant general counsel, for answers to questions about drone license requirements for farmers with drones.



Garrett Thalgott

FW: Who has to get a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) license to operate a drone?

Thalgott: Anyone who operates a drone should be licensed unless flown exclusively under the "Exception for Recreational Flyers." Recreational flying is defined narrowly. It must truly be recreational, in other words, for fun or personal enjoyment. Flying to scout crops would not be recreational nor would flying to apply chemicals.

FW: What about farmers who are using the drones to spray pesticides only for their personal use?

Thalgott: Spraying crops would not be a hobby or something done for fun or personal enjoyment. Therefore, the operator would need to obtain a license. Furthermore, applying chemicals with a drone requires exceptions from various FAA regulations that apply to aerial pesticide application. Each operator must submit his/her own application to the FAA. Some aerial application drone manufacturers offer assistance with the exception application process.

FW: Any other points farmer drone operators should know?

Thalgott: Remember that not only do drone operators need a license — unless strictly for hobby use — but the individual drones themselves must be registered with the FAA unless:

- Drone weight is less than 0.55 pounds and
- Drone is flown under the exception for recreational flyers.

Illinoisan semi-finalist in AFBF Ag Innovation Challenge

An Illinois firm was named one of 10 semi-finalists in the 2023 Ag Innovation Challenge by the American Farm Bureau Federation and Farm Credit.

Based in Oak Park, TrackerSled began as a response to a challenge posed by an international energy company struggling to gain public acceptance of its utility-scale solar farms in the Midwest. Lawrence Kearns, the team lead, began to develop a turnkey solution for farmers so they could own the energy-producing assets and increase their profitability. Visit trackersled.com.

As a semi-finalist, TrackerSled will be awarded \$10,000.

"The future of agriculture depends on innovative solutions to the challenges that we're facing today," AFBF President Zippy Duvall said in a statement. "The entrepreneurs behind the start-up companies we're recognizing are committed to helping rural communities and supporting farmers and ranchers in their mission to provide the food, fuel and fiber we all rely on."

The competition provides an opportunity for individuals to showcase ideas and business innovations in agriculture.

In addition to TrackerSled, the other semi-finalists are: Atlantic Aquaculture Technologies, Massachusetts; Emgenisys Inc., Texas; Hennen Pig Chute, Minnesota; MycoLogic LLC, Georgia; NORDEF, Kansas; ReEnvision Ag, Iowa; Symbrosia, Hawaii; TreadSure, Nebraska; and Vence, California.

The 10 semi-finalists will compete at the AFBF Convention in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Jan. 6, to advance to the final round where four finalists will receive an additional \$5,000. The final competition will be live Jan. 8 before Farm Bureau members, investors and industry. They will compete to win three top prizes and titles:

- \$50,000 as Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge Winner,
- \$20,000 as Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge Runner-up, and
- \$5,000 as People's Choice Team selected by public vote of the 10 semi-finalists.

For more about the Ag Innovation Challenge, visit fb.org/challenge.

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