

Background

The Illinois Corn Marketing Board, which consists of 15 volunteer farmers elected by their peers, administers the Illinois corn checkoff. *Checkoff funds do NOT go to the State of Illinois and there is no threat of the General Assembly sweeping these dollars.* The Illinois Corn Marketing program passed by referendum in 1982 and checkoff investments began in 1983. The current assessment rate is 5/8 cent per bushel on corn grown and sold in Illinois. The current refund rate is less than 3.8%.

What are the current funds used for?

- Market development for ethanol, livestock, corn-based plastics, etc.
- Research at U of I (Urbana-Champaign & Chicago), Argonne National Lab, etc.
- New product development at National Corn Ethanol Research Center and U of I (Urbana-Champaign)
- Promotional and educational efforts like the Illinois Farm Families program and Ag in the Classroom in cooperation with IL Beef, IL Dairy, IL Farm Bureau, IL Pork, and IL Soybean Association.
- Economic analysis of conservation practices.
- Foreign market development for corn, ethanol, and DDGS.
- Foreign market development for red meat and poultry.

What will the additional funding be used for?

The Directors of the IL Corn Marketing Board believe significant opportunities exist in these four areas, which will require greater investment in the near future:

- 1) Educating the public and government officials on the need for improved waterways infrastructure to compete in a global marketplace.
 - We have successfully secured funding for modernization of Lock #25 on the Mississippi River. There are six additional locks on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers that must be modernized to achieve long term competitive benefits for Illinois farmers.
- 2) Positioning corn farmers to increase relevance among non-farmers and prevent regulations on agriculture by engaging with the public and officials.
- 3) Growing the domestic fuel ethanol market and combat the influence of electric vehicles, and research alternative markets for ethanol, like sustainable aviation fuel, and other new uses, such as corn-based plastics.
- 4) To build diverse export opportunities in established and emerging markets for corn, ethanol, DDGS, red meat, and poultry.

How much will this increase cost a corn grower?

- 1/4 cent per bushel
- The current 5/8 cent/bushel would change to 7/8 cent/bushel
- This amounts to an additional 50 cents/acre on 200 bu/ac corn

Will I still be able to get a refund? Yes

How does the proposed Illinois corn checkoff (7/8 cent/bushel) compare to other corn states?

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| Iowa – 1 cent/bu | Minnesota – 1 cent/bu |
| Missouri – 1 cent/bu | Kentucky – 1/2% of sales |
| Indiana – 1/2 cent/bu | Wisconsin – 1/2 cent/bu |
| Nebraska – 1/2 cent/bu (<i>no right for refund</i>) | |

Yield is increasing for corn, so shouldn't there be more revenue anyway?

- Yields are increasing about 1% per year, however corn acreage in Illinois has gone down by 1.6 million acres over the last 10 years due to crop rotation.
- Costs have been increasing 2 to 3% per year.

When was the corn checkoff program most recently changed?

The most recent change was in 2012. That referendum passed with 72% support raising the checkoff from 3/8 cent/bu to 5/8 cent/bu, while maintaining right for refund.

What are you doing to address high input prices?

The ICMB has invested in multiple fertilizer market analyses that we've used to help educate farmers and government officials. The ICGA has held meetings with fertilizer manufacturers, partnered with other corn states, and is working with the Illinois Attorney General to find solutions.

What is the process for voting in the corn checkoff referendum?

- Walk-in voting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29th, 2022.
- County Extension & some FSA offices are set to be polling places. Because of COVID precautions, these locations are subject to change.
- Absentee voting will be allowed.