



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
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# Fall Harvest

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JEFFERSON CITY – Fall is a busy time of year for folks like me who earn a living farming. The fall harvest is progressing nicely thanks to some good weather and a lot of farmers are reporting higher than average yields this year. Of course, yields vary across northeast Missouri: parts of Audrain County and some of the northern counties in the 18<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District haven't received as much rain as they would have liked this year and yields will reflect that fact.

As of last week, the corn harvest in Missouri was 83 percent complete, slightly ahead of the normal pace. The soybean harvest is about 47 percent complete, also a bit ahead of the five-year average. Overall, the Missouri office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service reports corn production in Missouri is forecast at 455 million bushels, about 25 percent above last year. Bean production is forecast at 168 million bushels, about 13 percent below last year.

Part of that drop in bean production is due to farmers planting more acres of corn this year to meet the demand for ethanol. Of course, last year the Legislature approved a measure requiring most gasoline sold in Missouri be a 10 percent ethanol blend by January 1, 2008. That has introduced a new player in the market that has upset the distribution system and put some new competition in the market, to the benefit of farmers. Farmers have not received a fair price for their products for too long. Anyone who now says the price of corn is too high needs to go out and price a combine or consider the high cost of fertilizer. Besides, even with the higher prices, only about six cents of what you pay for a box of cornflakes actually goes to the farmer for his corn.

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The higher prices we're receiving for corn are also driving up prices for other grains. I've seen more wheat planted in northeast Missouri this year than I can ever remember.

Overall, people I've talked to seem pleasantly surprised with their corn yields despite the general lack of rain, and some of these new varieties are pretty amazing. We've been getting 125 to 180 bushels per acre this year, which is right in line with the statewide forecast average of 140 bushels per acre.

I do want to remind everyone involved in the fall harvest to be thinking of safety. Agriculture remains the most dangerous industry in Missouri. Nationwide, the National Safety Council says 703 people were killed and 90,000 were disabled in farming accidents in 2005. Children, especially, need to be made aware of the potential dangers on the farm. One good resource for parents and teachers in farming communities is the Farm Safety 4 Just Kids organization, which helps children understand the importance of safety in farming. You can visit their website at <http://www.fs4jk.org/>.

If you have any questions or comments about this or any other issue, give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at [wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov), or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.