

BACKGROUND

Nebraska exported agricultural commodities worth \$6.802 billion in 2018 according to the USDA Economic Research Service. It was the sixth-largest agricultural exporting state following California, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Texas. Nebraska topped the nation in exports of beef, was the second-largest exporter of hides and skins, the third-largest exporter of corn, feed, and processed grain products, and the fifth-largest exporter of soybeans, soybean meal, and vegetable oil. Other Nebraska products exported included ethanol, popcorn, wheat, pork, dry edible beans, and a host of other commodities and processed products. Table 1 lists Nebraska export values of select commodities and processed products between 2015 and 2018. Figure 1 tracks Nebraska export values of several of the same commodities from 2000 through 2018. Exports are a growing part of Nebraska’s agricultural sales, increasing nearly three fold since 2000. The value of exports now consistently accounts for 30 percent of the state’s total agricultural receipts.

TABLE 1. NEBRASKA AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS, 2015-2018 (MILLIONS \$)

	Beef	Pork	Corn	Soybeans	Hides	Soy Meal	Wheat	Vegetable Oils	Total Ag Exports*
2018	\$1,318.5	\$246.8	\$1,476.6	\$1,218.7	\$188.6	\$364.6	\$134.7	\$186.8	\$6,802.3
2017	\$1,102.0	\$250.9	\$1,036.8	\$1,548.9	\$235.4	\$281.3	\$151.0	\$201.4	\$6,349.0
2016	\$1,096.0	\$228.1	\$1,142.9	\$1,717.8	\$271.7	\$307.2	\$122.0	\$206.9	\$6,671.1
2015	\$1,120.7	\$212.1	\$1,010.0	\$1,367.5	\$331.2	\$347.7	\$131.3	\$202.6	\$6,479.3

Source: USDA Economic Research Service

*Total Ag Exports include all ag exports, not just those listed in Table 1.

The value of Nebraska agricultural exports in 2018 grew more than \$450 million compared to 2017. The largest gains were seen in exports of beef, corn, and soybean meal, with year-over-year increases of 20 percent, 42 percent, and 30 percent respectively. The value of U.S. beef exports in 2018 shattered the previous record and led to an increase of more than \$200 million in Nebraska beef exports. The value of Nebraska corn exports last year surged by more than \$400 million. However, the year was not entirely rosy for Nebraska commodities. Soybean exports were down by more than \$300 million and hides and skins were off by more than \$40 million.

Remarkably, the value of Nebraska exports grew in 2018 despite trade disputes with many U.S. agricultural trading partners. Tariffs on steel and aluminum imposed by the U.S. prompted several trading partners to impose retaliatory tariffs on U.S. agricultural goods. Those tariffs were removed from some countries, including Canada and Mexico, in 2019. In addition, Chinese retaliatory tariffs on U.S. agricultural products in response to U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods also became effective mid-year.

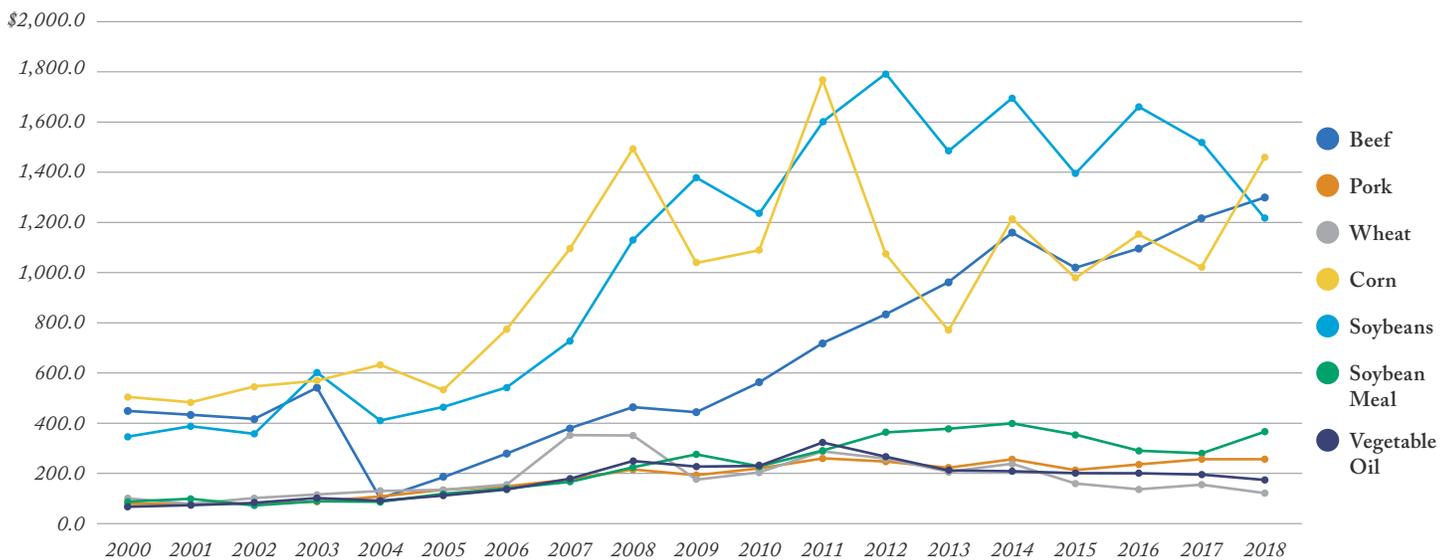
Fortunately for Nebraska producers, the U.S. maintained cordial trade relations with its two leading beef markets, Japan and South Korea. Growing purchases by these two countries helped boost the value of Nebraska’s beef exports to record-setting levels in 2018. Positive relations with Japan helped boost corn exports as well. Japanese purchases of U.S. corn imports grew 34 percent. Nebraska was also fortunate Mexico chose not to impose tariffs on U.S. corn in retaliation for U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum. The value of U.S. corn exports to Mexico expanded 16 percent compared to 2017. U.S. corn exports also benefitted from production issues elsewhere in the world. Nebraska corn producers were the beneficiary as Nebraska corn exports increased 42 percent last year to their second-highest level on record.

The U.S. trade dispute with China, though, did negatively effect Nebraska commodity exports. The value of Nebraska soybean exports slumped 21 percent in 2018 to \$1.2 billion, the lowest since 2008. This is the direct result of China’s

imposition of a retaliatory tariff on U.S. soybeans. Increasing Chinese soybean imports led to soybeans being Nebraska's top export commodity between 2012-2017. This changed in 2018. Soybeans exports fell to be the third-highest Nebraska commodity export behind corn and beef. Corn had not been the top export commodity for Nebraska since 2011. Nebraska exports of hides and skins also suffered at the hands of the Chinese trade dispute, falling 20 percent in 2018. China is the world's largest importer of hides and skins and tariffs put Nebraska products at a competitive disadvantage in this market.

The growth in Nebraska's agricultural exports since 2000 has been led by exports of corn, beef, and soybeans and can be traced to free trade agreements. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Korean Free Trade Agreement (KORUS), and other agreements in force with 17 countries have all opened markets for Nebraska products. The U.S. Department of Commerce reports 56 percent of Nebraska exports in 2017 were to countries in which the U.S. has a free trade agreement. Between 2007-2017, exports from Nebraska to free trade markets have grown 65 percent led by Canada, Mexico, and South Korea. The growth in Nebraska exports can also be attributed to population and economic growth in China. China is typically one of the top three markets for Nebraska agricultural commodities, particularly soybeans, hides and skins, corn, and wheat.

FIGURE 1. NEBRASKA COMMODITY EXPORTS, 2000-2018 (MILLION \$)



Source: USDA Economic Research Service

VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO NEBRASKA PRODUCERS

The dollars international trade contributes to producers' operations can be measured in many ways. One way is to reflect export value on a per-unit basis. A per-unit basis expresses the value of commodity exports in terms like prices received by farmers and ranchers. Table 2 shows the estimated per-unit values of Nebraska exports for select commodities. The per-unit values were calculated by dividing export values for each commodity by the respective crop production or livestock inventory. The per-unit value for soybeans includes the value of soybean meal and vegetable oil exports, the per-unit value of corn includes the value of ethanol and distillers dried grains exports, and the per-unit value of beef includes the value of exports of hide and skins. These processed goods are included to reflect the overall value of the exports attributable to that commodity.

TABLE 2. PER-UNIT VALUE OF NEBRASKA EXPORTS, 2016-2018*

	Soybeans**	Beef**	Corn**	Pork	Wheat
2018	\$5.58/bu.	\$221.63/hd.	\$1.22/bu.	\$69.33/hd.	\$2.78/bu.
2017	\$5.66/bu.	\$226.30/hd.	\$0.96/bu.	\$72.72/hd.	\$3.23/bu.
2016	\$6.27/bu.	\$169.22/hd.	\$1.03/bu.	\$68.00/hd.	\$2.04/bu.

*Estimates based on export data and USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service commodity production or animal inventory data.

**Includes value of soybean meal, vegetable oil, ethanol, distillers dried grains, and hides & skins in per-unit value estimates.

Other means to measure the value of exports to producers is to apportion export values across counties and on a per-farm basis. Each county is unique in the commodities produced, processed, and sold. Thus, the importance of export markets for counties and the sensitivity of a county's agriculture to these markets will vary.

Each county's total export value was calculated by allocating state commodity export values to counties based on each county's share of total state production. These values were then summed across commodities to estimate the total value of exports for a county. Commodities included in the analysis are corn, beef, pork, soybeans, soybean meal, vegetable oil, wheat, hides and skins, ethanol, and distillers' grains. The per-farm export value for each county was calculated by dividing the estimated total county export value by the number of farms in the county reported in the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture.

Both estimates should be "taken with a grain of salt" and are not meant to denote exact dollar figures for county exports or per-farm value. Tracing the value of commodity exports back to a county is fraught with difficulty. For example, a commodity could be produced in one county, sold to an elevator in another county, and processed in a third county, dispersing the value of the exports across all three counties. Rather, the estimates are meant to provide an approximation of the significance of exports by commodity to counties and producers. The appendix provides a further discussion of the approach used and difficulties of tracing export value for those readers interested. Finally, not all counties have estimates for each commodity because data was lacking for some counties.

Table 3 lists the estimated 2018 total value of exports in comparison to the 2017 total export value for each county. Table 4 lists the estimated per-farm export value for both years and the year-over-year changes. Comparisons between 2017 and 2018 could not be made for all counties because data was not available across all commodities in every county for both years. These counties are denoted with an "n/a" in the columns showing the differences between 2017 and 2018 in Tables 3 and 4. Figure 2 plots the county total export values for 2018 on a map and Figure 4 plots the per-farm values. Finally, Figures 3 and 5 map county gains/losses in total export value and per-farm values.

Last year saw Custer County surge to top the state in terms of value received from agricultural trade. Custer County received over \$175 million from agricultural trade in 2018, an increase of \$30 million compared to the previous year. Cuming and Platte Counties were not far behind, both with estimated values from export sales exceeding \$165 million. Holt, Dawson, and Antelope Counties each had estimated export values exceeding \$140 million. The top counties had one commonality. They each derived significant value from exports of either beef or pork. In total, 16 counties derived more than \$100 million in value from export sales.

For counties where comparisons between export values in 2017 and 2018 could be made, Custer County saw the largest year-over-year gain due to growth in beef and corn exports. Chase, Gage, Lincoln, Platte, Perkins, and Hall Counties all saw gains exceeding \$10 million. Again, corn and beef exports were the reasons for the gains in these counties. Slightly more than one-half of Nebraska counties, 50 in all, experienced an increase in the value derived from exports between 2017 and 2018. At the other end of the spectrum, Madison, Washington, Otoe, Dodge, and Holt Counties saw declines in export values exceeding \$5 million. The decline in soybean exports due to tensions with China is the likely culprit for the overall decline in export value for these counties. Fourteen counties saw declines in export values between the two years.

The importance of trade looks different when measured on a per-farm basis. On this scale, Phelps County scores as the most reliant on trade with an export value per-farm of \$339,000. Other counties heavily reliant on trade on a per-farm basis were Kearney, Boone, Chase, and Fillmore Counties, each with a per-farm value of trade exceeding \$215,000. The diversity of commodities produced along with the size and productivity of crop farms in these counties contributes to the high per-farm export values.

TABLE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL AGRICULTURAL EXPORT VALUE, 2017-2018

County	2018 Total Export Value	2017 Total Export Value	\$ +/-	County	2018 Total Export Value	2017 Total Export Value	\$ +/-
Custer	\$175,682,827	\$145,571,587	\$30,111,240	Dixon	\$66,013,515	\$62,371,266	\$3,642,249
Cuming	\$167,168,358	\$159,519,828	\$7,648,530	Merrick	\$65,710,953	\$63,404,203	\$2,306,750
Platte	\$166,151,079	\$153,983,443	\$12,167,636	Nuckolls	\$63,131,430	\$61,437,040	\$1,694,390
Holt	\$144,518,621	\$149,691,773	-\$5,173,153	Perkins	\$62,578,200	\$51,164,073	\$11,414,127
Dawson	\$142,217,782	\$134,029,304	\$8,188,479	Richardson	\$59,389,389	\$64,315,982	-\$4,926,593
Antelope	\$140,562,104	\$134,768,706	\$5,793,398	Thurston	\$58,738,799	\$28,751,363	n/a
Lincoln	\$126,865,081	\$114,226,793	\$12,638,288	Webster	\$58,662,599	\$54,090,103	\$4,572,496
Boone	\$126,804,420	\$121,990,770	\$4,813,651	Valley	\$55,868,116	\$47,111,152	n/a
Phelps	\$125,608,508	\$118,028,977	n/a	Howard	\$55,258,847	\$54,511,500	n/a
Cedar	\$116,744,512	\$112,442,252	\$4,302,260	Red Willow	\$54,465,512	\$50,233,732	\$4,231,779
Buffalo	\$111,864,502	\$103,748,498	n/a	Furnas	\$53,619,783	\$46,555,894	\$7,063,889
Gage	\$108,660,113	\$94,777,011	\$13,883,102	Harlan	\$52,363,944	\$50,137,758	n/a
York	\$108,091,253	\$105,921,689	\$2,169,564	Morrill	\$49,779,998	\$49,695,916	\$84,081
Saunders	\$106,811,146	\$111,174,419	-\$4,363,273	Washington	\$49,677,902	\$57,066,219	-\$7,388,317
Knox	\$101,688,761	\$80,468,986	n/a	Franklin	\$47,711,630	\$41,470,277	\$6,241,353
Adams	\$100,001,073	\$90,490,757	n/a	Greeley	\$47,708,026	\$42,176,558	\$5,531,468
Kearney	\$96,654,438	\$92,067,622	\$4,586,816	Brown	\$47,144,866	\$42,190,605	\$4,954,261
Fillmore	\$95,801,174	\$97,545,089	-\$1,743,915	Dundy	\$46,873,247	\$34,945,212	n/a
Hamilton	\$95,004,698	\$91,099,406	n/a	Nance	\$46,587,539	\$49,538,466	-\$2,950,927
Clay	\$91,866,256	\$93,843,348	n/a	Nemaha	\$46,568,368	\$47,913,038	-\$1,344,669
Polk	\$89,135,798	\$72,434,965	n/a	Sherman	\$45,175,429	\$33,848,392	n/a
Butler	\$88,858,844	\$81,960,301	\$6,898,544	Gosper	\$45,017,377	\$38,997,992	\$6,019,385
Pierce	\$86,560,258	\$71,160,607	n/a	Frontier	\$44,116,632	\$41,597,210	\$2,519,422
Dodge	\$83,163,320	\$88,689,486	-\$5,526,167	Keith	\$43,599,810	\$40,741,640	\$2,858,170
Colfax	\$82,598,023	\$82,108,658	\$489,365	Scotts Bluff	\$43,203,345	\$38,725,978	\$4,477,367
Saline	\$81,874,336	\$68,268,128	n/a	Box Butte	\$41,664,523	\$39,084,238	\$2,580,285
Madison	\$81,422,663	\$90,880,635	-\$9,457,971	Sheridan	\$38,185,603	\$33,239,822	\$4,945,780
Hall	\$81,348,800	\$70,399,392	\$10,949,408	Pawnee	\$36,353,546	\$33,937,645	\$2,415,901
Seward	\$81,229,226	\$88,462,926	n/a	Hayes	\$33,639,618	\$27,189,670	\$6,449,948
Thayer	\$78,732,086	\$75,111,478	n/a	Dakota	\$32,821,282	\$31,502,379	\$1,318,904
Burt	\$78,288,166	\$71,133,385	\$7,154,781	Johnson	\$31,179,583	\$31,393,356	n/a
Chase	\$76,768,026	\$62,493,033	\$14,274,993	Wheeler	\$29,919,966	\$26,024,193	\$3,895,773
Wayne	\$75,352,381	\$69,998,656	n/a	Boyd	\$29,631,099	\$24,831,411	n/a
Lancaster	\$74,430,436	\$69,511,738	\$4,918,698	Rock	\$27,342,365	\$29,815,156	-\$2,472,791
Cass	\$73,282,822	\$70,453,723	n/a	Sioux	\$25,495,747	\$24,009,936	n/a
Jefferson	\$71,447,555	\$65,614,529	\$5,833,026	Hitchcock	\$25,376,498	\$21,639,317	\$3,737,181
Cherry	\$68,487,970	\$64,673,342	\$3,814,629	Cheyenne	\$25,056,963	\$29,678,363	-\$4,621,400
Otoe	\$68,099,259	\$73,734,989	-\$5,635,730	Garden	\$21,945,038	\$17,782,874	n/a
Stanton	\$66,384,798	\$60,337,280	\$6,047,517	Keya Paha	\$18,182,396	\$19,008,349	-\$825,953

TABLE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL AGRICULTURAL EXPORT VALUE, 2017-2018

County	2018 Total Export Value	2017 Total Export Value	\$ +/-	County	2018 Total Export Value	2017 Total Export Value	\$ +/-
McPherson	\$17,873,541	\$14,735,447	\$3,138,094	Douglas	\$14,520,282	\$12,684,540	n/a
Sarpy	\$17,805,949	\$16,803,803	\$1,002,146	Blaine	\$9,640,878	\$10,442,752	n/a
Deuel	\$16,828,864	\$9,308,024	\$7,520,840	Arthur	\$7,978,658	\$5,883,731	\$2,094,927
Kimball	\$16,519,014	\$15,650,199	\$868,814	Grant	\$7,978,658	\$7,015,217	\$963,440
Dawes	\$15,925,185	\$16,144,147	n/a	Loup	\$6,430,601	\$7,640,509	-\$1,209,908
Logan	\$15,611,374	\$14,058,484	\$1,552,890	Thomas	\$6,205,623	\$5,996,879	\$208,743
Banner	\$15,353,086	\$17,832,562	n/a	Hooker	\$5,208,290	\$4,869,927	n/a
Garfield	\$15,304,087	\$11,951,878	n/a	Total	\$5,851,175,048	\$5,455,963,886	

Source: Nebraska Farm Bureau estimates.

FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED TOTAL AGRICULTURAL EXPORT VALUE PER-COUNTY, 2018

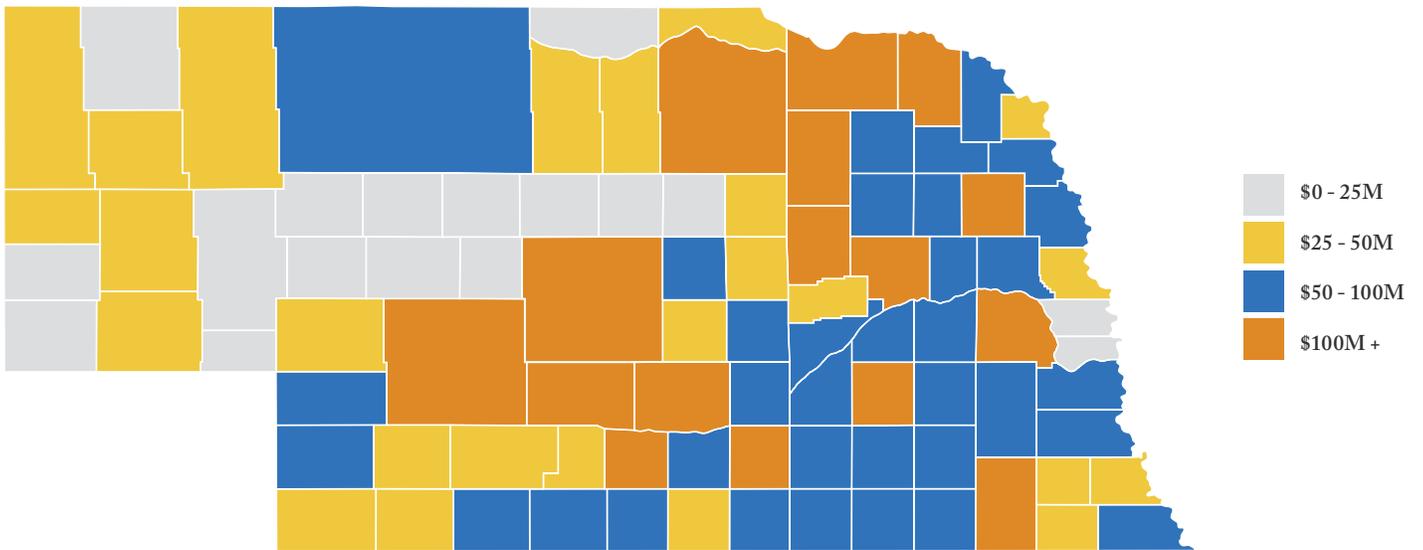


FIGURE 3. GAIN/LOSS TOTAL EXPORT VALUE PER-COUNTY, 2017-2018

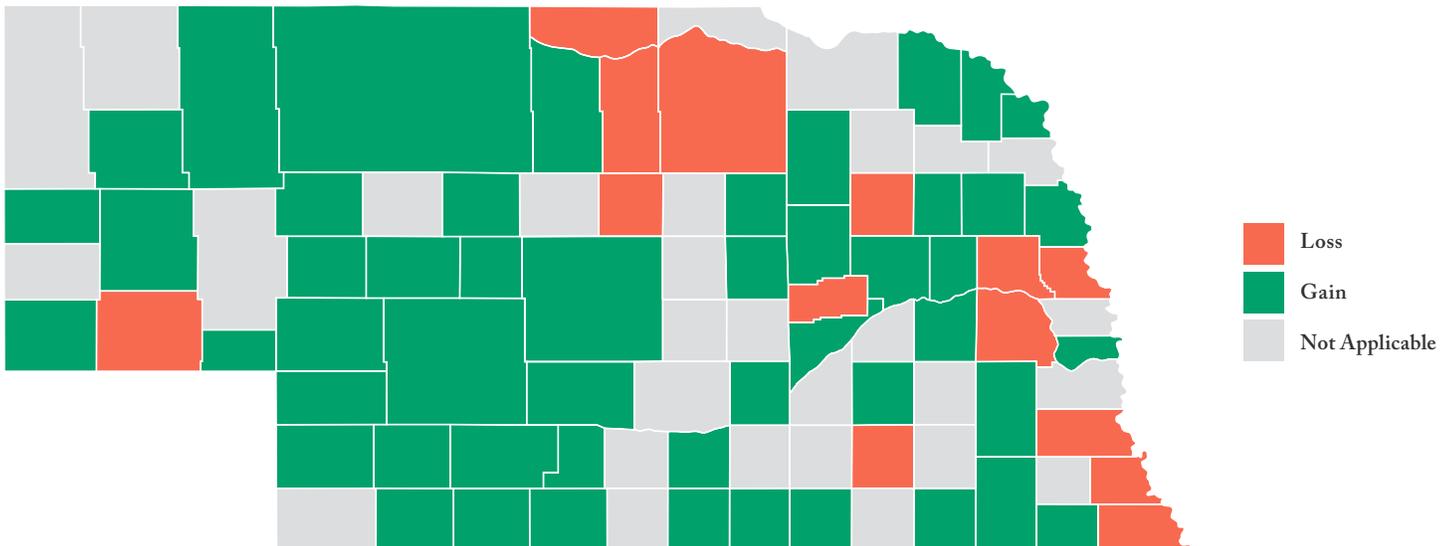


TABLE 4. ESTIMATED AGRICULTURAL EXPORT VALUE PER-FARM, 2017-2018

County	2018 Per-Farm Export Value	2017 Per-Farm Export Value	\$ +/-	Top Export Commodity	County	2018 Per-Farm Export Value	2017 Per-Farm Export Value	\$ +/-	Top Export Commodity
Phelps	\$338,567	\$291,430	n/a	Beef	Greeley	\$129,290	\$108,423	\$20,867	Corn
Kearney	\$282,615	\$267,638	\$14,977	Beef	Holt	\$126,549	\$117,038	\$9,511	Corn
Boone	\$241,993	\$188,840	\$53,153	Pork	Grant	\$124,667	\$87,690	\$36,976	Corn
Chase	\$236,209	\$182,728	\$53,481	Beef	Rock	\$124,283	\$120,709	\$3,574	Soybeans
Fillmore	\$218,226	\$206,663	\$11,563	Corn	Nance	\$124,233	\$139,545	-\$15,312	Soybeans
Clay	\$208,314	\$205,346	n/a	Corn	Madison	\$123,555	\$120,691	\$2,863	Corn
Cuming	\$207,921	\$173,769	\$34,152	Beef	Dodge	\$123,023	\$115,632	\$7,391	Beef
York	\$207,469	\$195,789	\$11,680	Soybeans	Dakota	\$122,926	\$129,639	-\$6,713	Corn
Dawson	\$207,315	\$166,289	\$41,025	Corn	Butler	\$122,903	\$97,572	\$25,331	Corn
Polk	\$206,333	\$155,440	n/a	Soybeans	Lincoln	\$121,986	\$97,797	\$24,189	Corn
Antelope	\$199,662	\$175,709	\$23,953	Corn	Jefferson	\$121,098	\$104,648	\$16,449	Corn
Platte	\$198,745	\$163,464	\$35,281	Soybeans	Cherry	\$120,790	\$114,264	\$6,526	Beef
Thayer	\$190,174	\$173,869	n/a	Corn	Frontier	\$118,913	\$131,221	-\$12,309	Soybeans
Thurston	\$190,093	\$78,342	n/a	Soybeans	Sherman	\$117,644	\$81,759	n/a	Corn
Harlan	\$186,349	\$139,272	n/a	Soybeans	Buffalo	\$117,381	\$99,186	n/a	Corn
Adams	\$183,488	\$159,596	n/a	Corn	Morrill	\$116,854	\$97,062	\$19,792	Beef
Brown	\$175,914	\$128,630	\$47,284	Corn	Dixon	\$116,426	\$109,423	\$7,003	Beef
Dundy	\$174,900	\$139,224	n/a	Corn	Stanton	\$116,261	\$97,475	\$18,785	Corn
McPherson	\$163,977	\$124,877	\$39,101	Corn	Saline	\$114,190	\$90,302	n/a	Soybeans
Red Willow	\$163,560	\$124,034	\$39,526	Corn	Nemaha	\$113,581	\$106,237	\$7,344	Corn
Hamilton	\$162,124	\$159,265	n/a	Soybeans	Knox	\$106,369	\$74,508	n/a	Corn
Colfax	\$160,074	\$148,211	\$11,863	Soybeans	Boyd	\$103,605	\$93,351	n/a	Corn
Custer	\$158,559	\$107,671	\$50,887	Soybeans	Garden	\$99,299	\$68,134	n/a	Corn
Gosper	\$156,855	\$149,992	\$6,863	Soybeans	Box Butte	\$96,669	\$83,872	\$12,798	Beef
Wayne	\$155,366	\$135,133	n/a	Corn	Cass	\$95,669	\$96,380	n/a	Corn
Valley	\$154,332	\$117,192	n/a	Soybeans	Saunders	\$95,538	\$92,338	\$3,200	Beef
Hayes	\$152,907	\$115,701	\$37,207	Soybeans	Blaine	\$95,454	\$89,254	n/a	Soybeans
Franklin	\$150,510	\$122,693	\$27,817	Corn	Gage	\$91,465	\$75,041	\$16,424	Corn
Burt	\$150,265	\$127,024	\$23,241	Soybeans	Howard	\$89,561	\$79,929	n/a	Soybeans
Perkins	\$149,709	\$129,858	\$19,851	Soybeans	Hitchcock	\$88,113	\$72,372	\$15,741	Soybeans
Cedar	\$148,909	\$119,747	\$29,162	Soybeans	Seward	\$86,048	\$89,176	n/a	Beef
Nuckolls	\$146,477	\$141,235	\$5,242	Corn	Arthur	\$83,986	\$69,220	\$14,766	Beef
Webster	\$144,489	\$127,873	\$16,617	Soybeans	Richardson	\$83,883	\$87,386	-\$3,503	Beef
Furnas	\$142,228	\$119,681	\$22,547	Soybeans	Otoe	\$83,557	\$82,202	\$1,356	Beef
Hall	\$139,775	\$118,717	\$21,057	Soybeans	Sioux	\$83,048	\$67,825	n/a	Corn
Wheeler	\$139,163	\$131,435	\$7,727	Soybeans	Pawnee	\$79,029	\$62,847	\$16,182	Wheat
Pierce	\$138,496	\$105,112	n/a	Beef	Keya Paha	\$76,719	\$77,903	-\$1,184	Beef
Keith	\$137,106	\$105,004	\$32,102	Soybeans	Garfield	\$75,763	\$52,884	n/a	Beef
Merrick	\$136,048	\$128,870	\$7,177	Soybeans	Deuel	\$74,795	\$39,274	\$35,521	Beef
Logan	\$133,431	\$94,352	\$39,078	Soybeans	Sheridan	\$72,734	\$62,015	\$10,720	Soybeans

TABLE 4. ESTIMATED AGRICULTURAL EXPORT VALUE PER-FARM, 2017-2018

County	2018 Per-Farm Export Value	2017 Per-Farm Export Value	\$ +/-	Top Export Commodity	County	2018 Per-Farm Export Value	2017 Per-Farm Export Value	\$ +/-	Top Export Commodity
Thomas	\$68,951	\$68,930	\$22	Beef	Cheyenne	\$43,806	\$53,475	-\$9,669	Beef
Washington	\$66,503	\$69,508	-\$3,005	Wheat	Sarpy	\$42,700	\$42,434	\$266	Beef
Banner	\$64,239	\$92,397	n/a	Beef	Lancaster	\$41,674	\$37,860	\$3,814	Beef
Johnson	\$62,111	\$53,481	n/a	Beef	Douglas	\$39,565	\$32,032	n/a	Beef
Scotts Bluff	\$56,847	\$40,089	\$16,758	Beef	Kimball	\$37,289	\$38,931	-\$1,642	Beef
Hooker	\$53,694	\$59,389	n/a	Beef	Dawes	\$32,434	\$32,747	n/a	Beef
Loup	\$49,466	\$55,366	-\$5,900	Soybeans					

Source: Nebraska Farm Bureau estimates.

FIGURE 4. ESTIMATED AGRICULTURAL EXPORT VALUE PER-FARM, 2018

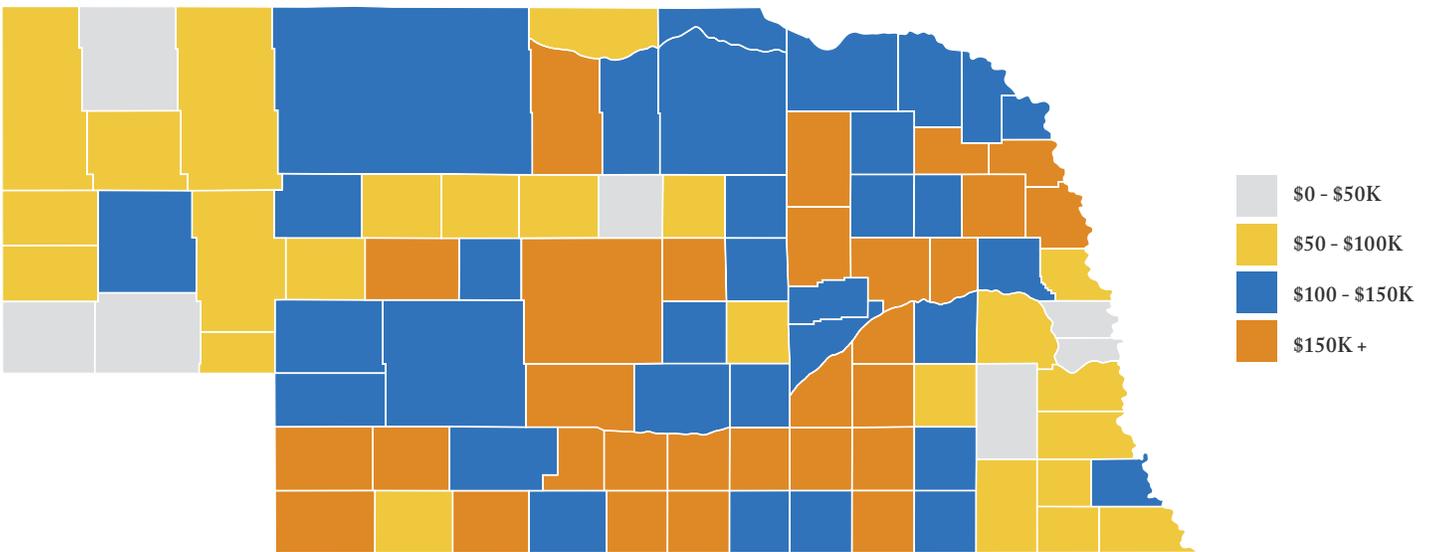
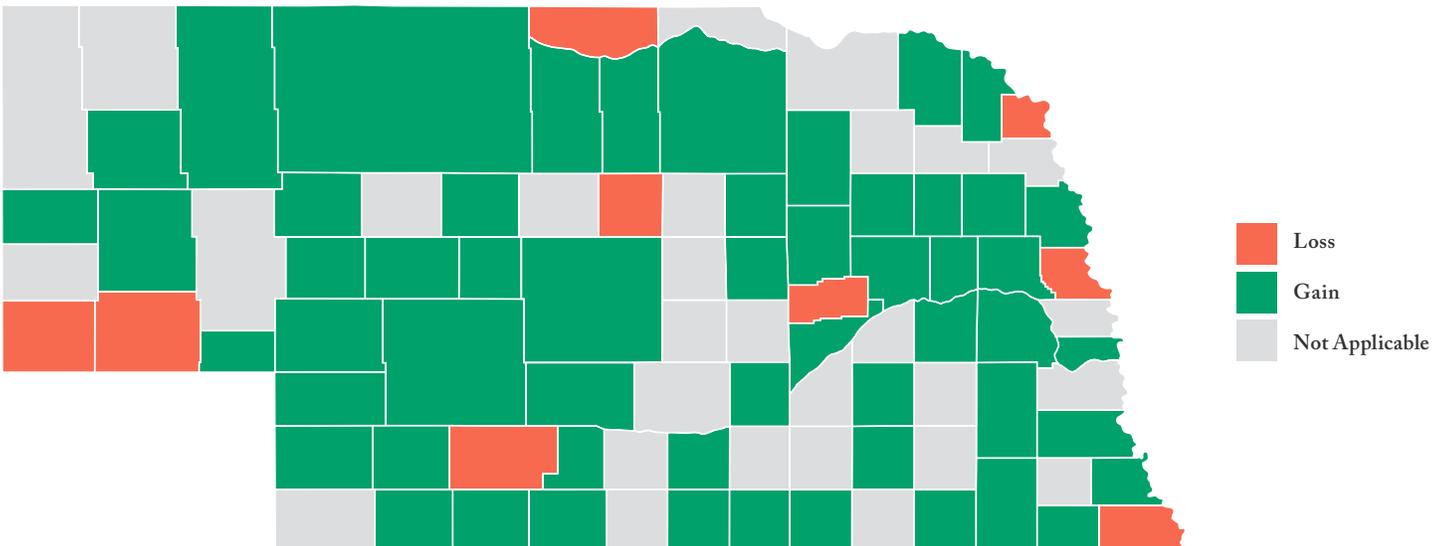


FIGURE 5. GAIN/LOSS TOTAL EXPORT VALUE PER-FARM, 2017-2018



COUNTIES' TOP EXPORT COMMODITIES

As noted above, commodities are not produced uniformly across the state. Thus, the importance of exports of a commodity will differ across counties and the sensitivity of a county's agriculture to commodity markets will vary. The estimated commodity export values can be used to look at the geographic differences between commodities important to a county in terms of export value. Table 5 lists the number of counties a commodity is the top export product in terms of export value. Figure 6 plots the top export commodity for each county.

TABLE 5. NUMBER OF COUNTIES & TOP EXPORT COMMODITY, 2018

Corn	31 counties
Soybeans	30 counties
Beef	29 counties
Wheat	2 counties
Pork	1 county

***Includes value of soybean meal, vegetable oil, ethanol, distillers dried grains, and hides and skins.*

Last year saw a dramatic change regarding the top export commodity for Nebraska counties. In the previous two years, soybeans were the top export commodity in almost one-half of Nebraska's counties. That was not the case in 2018. Corn was the top export commodity for 31 counties in 2018, far exceeding the 12 counties in which it was the top export product in 2017. Beef was the top export commodity for 29 counties, wheat in 2 counties, and pork was the top export good for Platte County.

The geographical distribution of the top export commodities across the state shown in Figure 6 also looks markedly different compared to 2017 as shown in Figure 7. Corn dominates in southwest, south central, and central regions of the state and displaces several counties which had either beef or soybeans as the top commodity in previous years. Soybeans continue to dominate in the eastern one-third of the state but lost several counties in the central region due to corn's surge. Beef continues to dominate in the Sandhills and northern Panhandle counties, with two outliers, Cuming County and Dundy County.

FIGURE 6. ESTIMATED TOP EXPORT COMMODITY BY COUNTY, 2018

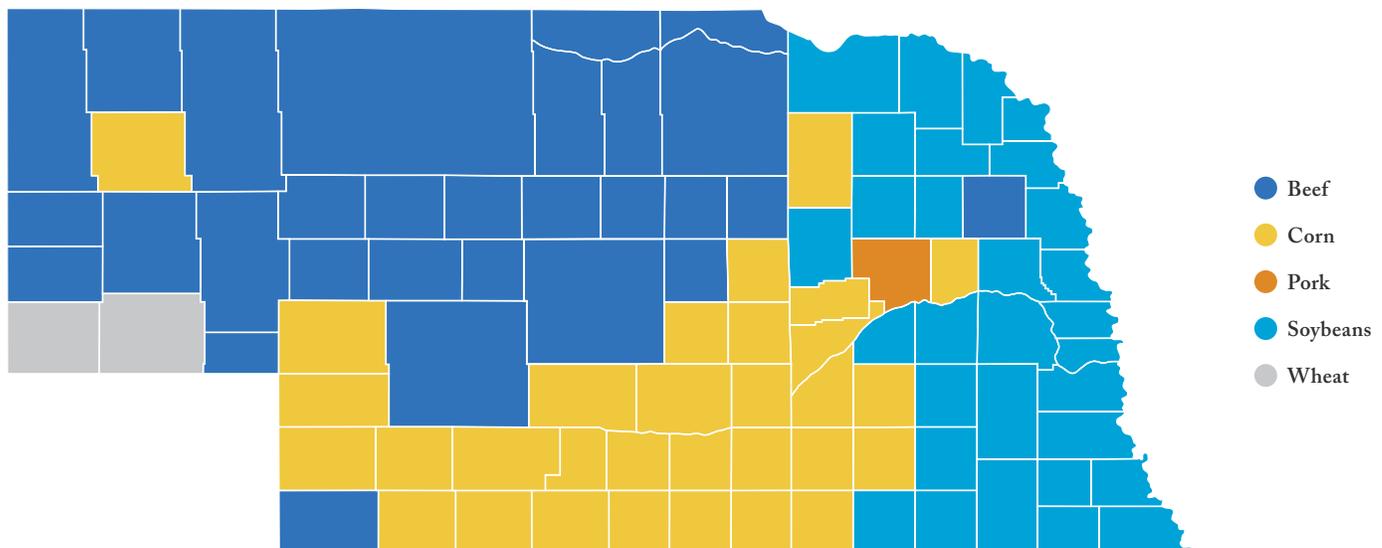
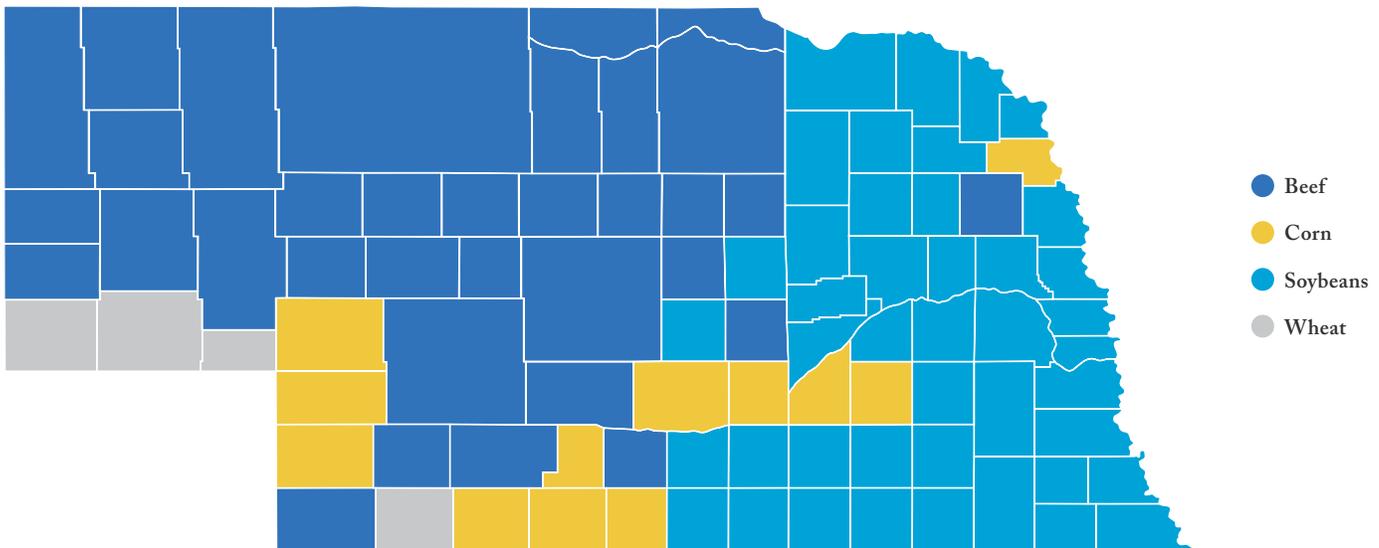


FIGURE 7. ESTIMATED TOP EXPORT COMMODITY BY COUNTY, 2017



CONCLUSION

Nebraska was the sixth-largest agricultural exporting state in 2018 exporting \$6.8 billion of agricultural goods. Nebraska topped the nation in 2018 in exports of beef, was the second-largest exporter of hides and skins, the third-largest exporter of corn, feed, and processed grain products, the fifth-largest exporter of soybeans, soybean meal, and vegetable oil. Other Nebraska products exported include ethanol, popcorn, wheat, pork, dry edible beans, and a host of other commodities and processed products.

This report uses various means to measure the relative value of agricultural exports to Nebraska farmers and ranchers. Estimates of per-unit values, the total dollar export values by county, and per-farm values of exports were calculated to describe the reliance of different areas of the state to trade. The report also examines the top commodity exports by value to counties. It's no surprise given the prevalence of soybean, beef, and corn production in Nebraska, these three commodities are important at the county level in terms of export value. Exports of other commodities, though, like wheat and pork, also play important roles in several counties across the state.

The analysis identifies which Nebraska counties potentially have the most at risk if international trade were disrupted. It is hoped this analysis will help Farm Bureau members, industry stakeholders, and policymakers better understand how much Nebraska agriculture relies on export markets.

APPENDIX: COMMENTARY ON THE ANALYSIS

The production-based approach used in the analysis is patterned after the approach formerly used by the USDA Economic Research Service (USDA-ERS) to allocate export value to states. Each county's share of total state production for a commodity was calculated and multiplied by the commodity's total export value for the state. In this way, each county's export value for a commodity can be estimated. USDA-ERS now uses a cash receipts-based methodology for allocating export value. This analysis uses the production-based methodology instead to take advantage of the most recent data available. Commodity cash receipts are only reported at the county level in the Census of Agriculture conducted every five years.

The approach can provide reasonable estimates of the relative importance of exports to the counties, but it does have shortcomings. For example, the value of beef and pork exports includes other costs like processing, transportation, margins, etc. These costs are reflected in the export value attributable to a state and will consequently be reflected in the

county value estimates. In addition, the value of beef and pork exports adds value for producers of corn and soybeans, and this value is not reflected in county level values of these commodities. A commodity produced in one county can be sold in another county, and processed in a third county, further dispersing the value of the exports sold. However, even with these shortcomings, the figures can provide a reasonable approximation of the magnitude or importance of various commodity exports.

Nebraska 2018 export data comes from the USDA Economic Research Service. County and state-level production data for 2018 for corn, soybeans, and wheat come from USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Cattle numbers for 2018, including both cows and calves, also comes from USDA-NASS. County level data for hog numbers was not available, so a receipts-based approach was used using data from 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture. Previous reports used sales data from the 2012 Census of Agriculture. However, there were four counties in which the USDA reported significant hog sales in 2012, but did not report sales for 2017—Custer, Holt, Merrick, and Nance Counties. Nance County, however, did show a hog inventory in the 2017 census. This figure then was used to provide an estimate of the value of pork exports for Nance County. For the other three counties, the 2012 percentage of sales attributable to the county was used and the remaining counties percentages adjusted to assure cumulative sales equaled 100 percent.

Production data is not available for all counties across multiple years due to the insufficiency of the data or to protect the privacy of individual producers. Thus, some counties may not have production estimates for a specific commodity. To provide for a more complete data set, estimates of a counties proportion of total state production in previous years was used to fill in holes in the 2018 data. The catchall “other counties” category in the USDA data was reduced to adjust county production numbers to fit within the state total.

The analysis also sought to account for the export of products and byproducts which could be traced to a specific commodity, such as ethanol and distillers dried grains. The export value for these processed goods was apportioned to counties based on counties’ production share. To estimate the value of exports of beef and veal for each county, the share of each county’s cattle inventory of the state’s total inventory was calculated. The estimated share serves as a reasonable proxy of the importance of beef cattle in the county. Each county’s share was then multiplied by the beef and veal export value for the state to estimate the value of beef exports to the county. Using total cattle inventory blends both the cow/calf and feeding sectors of the industry in the figures, however, given the goal of the analysis is to estimate the relative importance exports to Nebraska counties, the approach taken seemed reasonable.



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