

# Corn Movement in Illinois

## Corn Production

Illinois farmers grow more than 2 billion bushels of corn per year valued at \$7.5 billion, making corn more valuable to the state than all other agricultural commodities combined. Nationally, Illinois ranks second amongst states in total production.

## Corn Transport

After production, most corn farmers haul their yields to local grain elevators using a tractor and wagon, tandem truck, or semi-truck. As a general rule, the larger the unit, the farther the transport—tandem trucks usually ship within a ten-mile radius, whereas semi-trucks can ship over 20 miles. The increased usage of semi-trucks has allowed farmers more latitude to choose between grain elevators or ship directly to local processors.

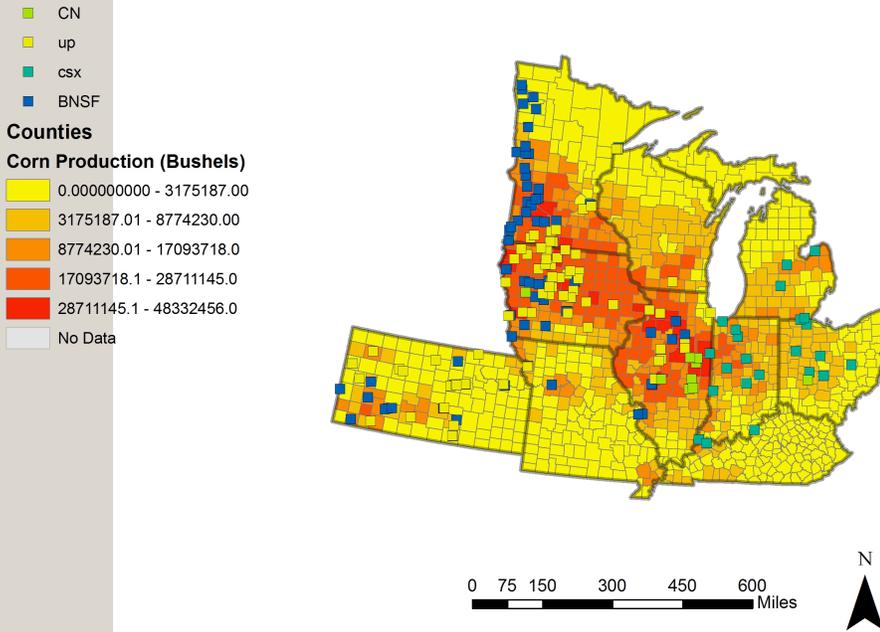
Local grain elevators ship corn by rail, barge, or truck, depending on the end destination. Corn processed locally is moved via large truck, about 20 percent of which goes to ethanol plants. Corn processed into feed for livestock (cattle in Texas or poultry in the southeastern United States) is shipped from elevators via rail. Distant US processors operated by companies such as ADM or Tate and Lyle as well as west coast exporters all generally use rail to receive Illinois corn. Finally, elevators use barges to export corn from Gulf of Mexico ports to Asia and Africa. Elevators may use truck to haul their shipments to terminals on the Mississippi River, which then route yields to ports in New Orleans and Houston.

## Corn Transport Issues

Each major mode of transport raises serious concerns from those involved in the corn industry in Illinois. The issues listed below contribute to longer shipping times, increased costs, and decreased reliability.

1. Truck: Country bridges and roads often cannot withstand the weight of corn shipments. Truckers must go a longer distance to avoid violating weight restrictions, adding time and cost on to delivery. Many in the industry feel rural infrastructure is not a priority to policy makers.
2. Rail: The principal problem with rail is reliability. Frequently grain elevators are told they are going to get 20 rail cars, only to have them not show up. This problem is compounded by the off hours grain elevators must staff to meet railroad times.
3. Barge: Riverways badly need lock and dam modernization. In many cases it has been over 85 years since comprehensive infrastructure construction or improvement.

## Corn Production and Grain Elevators



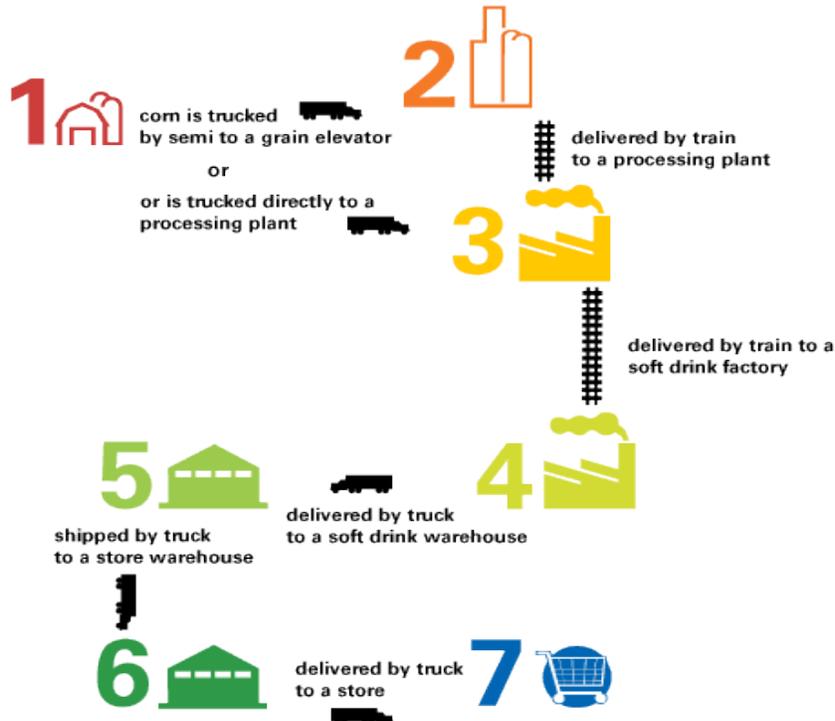
### Sources

Illinois Corn Growers Association; Illinois Grain and Feed; USDA NASS; USDA ERS, Iowa State University Institute for Transportation

Interview: Jeff Adkisson, Executive, Illinois Grain and Feed Association, [jeffa@gfai.org](mailto:jeffa@gfai.org)

## Examples of Corn Transportation Routes

# → Soft drinks



# → Bacon



Source: Institute for Transportation, Iowa State University