

# War in Middle East causes further farm stress

## Prices continue rising on fertilizer and fuel as time for fieldwork gets closer

By Cami Koons  
Iowa Capital Dispatch

Corn farmers in the U.S. are bracing for even higher fertilizer prices as conflict in the Middle East impacts the globally traded commodity, according to leaders with the National Corn Growers Association.

Corn farmers are approaching a fourth year of negative yields, due to low corn prices and high input costs, including fertilizers. The growers association renewed its call on Congress to legalize year-round, nationwide E-15, a higher blend of ethanol fuel, and for the removal of duties on fertilizers from Morocco.

Lesly McNitt, vice president of public policy for National Corn Growers Association, said there is not enough domestically produced fertilizer to meet demand, which means imported fertilizer is vital to farmers.

McNitt, speaking during a press conference Wednesday, said duties on phosphates from Morocco and Russia that were put in place in 2020, have "kept phosphate prices high" and caused "availability issues and lack of competitive options for farmers."

A study from the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University found that the countervailing duties increased the cost of phosphorus by about \$6.9 billion for the 2021 to 2025 growing seasons.

"NOW THE CONFLICT in the Middle East has further complicated access to critical fertilizers," McNitt said, noting the U.S. McNitt imports about 40% of phosphate products from Saudi Arabia.

"When these fertilizers can't be transported through the Strait

of Hormuz, there are real implications for availability and price, and there is a global market impact," McNitt said.

Iran blocked the Strait of Hormuz, an approximately 30-mile-wide channel that connects major Middle Eastern oil, natural gas and fertilizer producers to the Arabian Sea, in response to joint attacks on the country from the U.S. and Israel.

The Fertilizer Institute said in a news release that closure of the strait could impact ammonia, urea, sulfur, phosphates and natural gas markets.

"Supply disruptions in one part of the world can ripple across the trade routes and affect availability and price in other regions," The Fertilizer Institute said. "While the United States is both a fertilizer producer and importer, those same global supply dynamics play a role in determining input costs for ammonia farmers."

McNitt said the duties imposed on countries like Morocco further restrict farmers' abilities to search for other options. National Corn Growers Association sent a letter, along with other national and state farm groups, including Iowa Corn Growers Association and Iowa Soybean Association, to domestic fertilizer producers Mosaic and J.R. Simplot, urging them to withdraw their support of countervailing duties on phosphate fertilizers from Morocco.

The duties were imposed by the U.S. Department of Commerce following a petition from Mosaic.

Other fertilizers like nitrogen — which corn farmers on the call said is the fertilizer that is most difficult to go without — have greater domestic pro-



Corn farmers call for year-round E-15 on foreign fertilizers as the war in Iran impacts fertilizer and fuel costs.

duction, but are still part of the global fertilizer market. McNitt said the nature of the market means that "a shock anywhere, impacts prices everywhere."

Matt Frostic, first vice president with NCGA and the Michigan farmer, said the cost of nitrogen fertilizer coming into U.S. ports currently would raise his production cost by about \$90 per acre.

U.S. DEPARTMENT of Agriculture estimated 2025 corn production had dropped production costs at around \$890 per acre, and the department projects the average cost of production for corn farmers in 2026 will be \$917 per acre.

Frostic said that while farmers have the option to lock in fertilizer rates earlier in the season and prepay for some of those inputs, those decisions are of- ten difficult to make, especially coming off several hard years.

"Many farmers didn't necessarily lock in some of those prices, or they didn't have the

finances to do so," Frostic said. "... There will tend to be a lot of producers out there that have not locked in that price, so we're going to be a victim to the high cost of fertilizer."

Blocked passage in the Strait of Hormuz is also responsible for the global jump in fuel prices.

"Wouldn't it be nice if we had year round, nationwide E-15 right now?" McNitt said during the call with reporters.

According to the association, the higher blend of ethanol fuel saves consumers between 10 cents and 30 cents per gallon at the pump.

National and state agricultural organizations have urged Congress to allow for the year-round sale of the fuel across the nation, but the measure has not

been passed, despite bipartisan support and calls for legislation from President Donald Trump.

McNitt said that while the association hopes that a "permanent fix" is coming from Congress, the association is also calling on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to issue summertime E-15 waivers that allow the fuel to be sold

throughout the summer in states that have not enacted their own year-round sales laws. Iowa and California have year-round E-15 laws.

Mark Mueller, the president of Iowa Corn Growers Association, said the state association will continue to be "extremely outspoken" about the need for the passage of year-round E-15 and legislation that looks at consolidation in the fertilizer industry.

"We have come close to achieving wins on both issues, but we call on Congress to act to officially get them across the finish line," Mueller said in a news release. "Iowa corn farmers need and deserve the stability that comes with these wins — we cannot afford to slip back into the 1980s."

— Iowa Capital Dispatch is part of *Iowa States Newsroom*, a non-profit news network supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501(c)(3) public charity. Iowa Capital Dispatch maintains editorial independence. Contact Editor Kathie Obradovich for questions at info@iowacapitaldispatch.com.

### Legal Notice

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
The Floyd County Board of Adjustment has received an application for a conditional use.

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**  
A request by Thomas Bjelica for a Conditional Use application for cabin/RV parking spot located at two separate locations.  
Location One: Parcel #11-32-200-005-00 at NE Quarter of the NE Quarter of Section 32, Township 95 North, Range 16 West of the 5th P.M., St Charles Township, Floyd County, Iowa.

You are further notified that the Floyd County Board of Adjustment will hold a Public Hearing on this request in the Supervisor's Board Room on the ground floor of the Floyd County Courthouse beginning at 9:00 A.M. on April 2, 2026.

Floyd County Zoning Commission  
By Jessy Willadsen, Zoning Administrator  
Published one time on March 20, 2026

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### Legal Notice - Legal Notice

**CITY OF CHARLES CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SESSION**  
March 11, 2026

Charles City Council met in a 5:00 p.m. session on March 11, 2026, at the Public Library. Mayor Dean Andrews presided and the following council members were present: Phillip Knighten (via zoom), Patrick Lument (via zoom), Krista Noah, and Jeff Otto. Also present was City Administrator Tyler Trout, City Attorney Brad Slotter (via zoom), Police Chief Hugh Anderson, and Code Enforcement/Reserve Officer Hunter Ortmayer.

Council reviewed a proposed vacant building ordinance intended to address the long-term vacancy of commercial buildings in the downtown area. The need for the ordinance was first brought forward by the Main Street Charles City (MSCC) Board as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen downtown vitality and encourage occupancy of vacant commercial properties. The draft ordinance was prepared by City Attorney Slotter, based on ordinances from other cities and direction previously provided by the MSCC Board, City Council, and city staff.

Council discussed potential boundaries for the ordinance, including the use of either the Riverside TIF District map or the Downtown District map to define the area where the ordinance would apply. Staff noted that other city codes, including the nuisance and dangerous building codes, already provide tools to address unsafe or deteriorated buildings citywide, while the proposed ordinance would focus on encouraging property owners within the defined district to lease, sell, or otherwise actively utilize vacant buildings.

Council also discussed provisions within the draft ordinance requiring registration of vacant buildings within the designated district and establishing a registration fee structure that may increase annually if a property remains vacant for multiple years. The intent of the fee structure would be to encourage property owners to pursue occupancy or redevelopment.

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### Legal Notice - Legal Notice

**Floyd County Board of Supervisors Meeting**  
March 9, 2026, 5:00 p.m.

The Floyd County Board of Supervisors met in the Floyd County Emergency Operations Room (EOC), Sheriff Jeff Crooks, City of Colwell Representative Lon Isakson, City of Charles City Representative Sam Deverell, and Emergency Management Coordinator Jason Webster. Communications Advisory Board: Supp Rottinghaus, Sheriff Crooks, Charles City Chief of Police Hugh Anderson, Charles City Fire Chief Sam Deverell, and Dispatch Supervisor John Gohr. Others present were County Attorney Todd Prichard, County Auditor Morgan Montagne, Marble Rock Fire Chief Brian Chambers, County employees Jessy Willadsen and Al Schwickerath, and media Bob Steensen and Van Mitchell.

Rottinghaus/Carr moved to approve the agenda. Motion carried 2-0. Emergency Management Commission: Engelhardt/Johnson moved to approve the agenda. Motion carried 7-0. 911 Service Board: Nagel/Engelhardt moved to approve the agenda. Motion carried 11-0. Communications Advisory Board: Hugh/Crooks moved to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

Supp Campbell arrived. The Boards discussed transferring duties from the Floyd County 911 Service Board to Floyd County Emergency Management. 911 Service Board: Crooks/Deverell moved to amend the board under Section 11 of the bylaws and vote at the May 7th 911 Service Board meeting. Motion carried 11-0. Emergency Management Commission: Engelhardt/

### Legal Notice

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
ON ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CHARLES CITY UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LIQUOR AND TOBACCO SALES AND TO EXTEND THE TIME PERIOD FOR DISCONTINUATION OF NONCONFORMING USES WITHIN THE CITY OF CHARLES CITY, IOWA

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Charles City, Iowa, will hold a public hearing concerning amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance, specifically Section 1 – General Provisions; Section 2.03 – General Definitions; Section 2 – Land Use Regulations; Subsection 2.1.6 – Land Use Categories/Matrix; Section 2.2.4 – Additional Regulations, including new Section 2.2.4.22 – Liquor Sales and Tobacco Sales; and Subsection 2.2.1.9 – Nonconforming Uses.

The public hearing will be held at Zastrow Room at the Charles City Public Library at 910 Clark Street, Charles City, Iowa. Charles City, Iowa, at 5:00 p.m. on the 1st day of April, 2026.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that at the hearing oral and written comments will be received and all interested parties will be given an opportunity to be heard.

Brittney Lentz, Secretary

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### Legal Notice - Legal Notice - Legal Notice - Legal Notice

**CITY NAME:** NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - CITY OF CHARLES CITY - PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX LEVY  
**CHARLES CITY** Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027 **CITY #:** 34-323

The City Council will conduct a public hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year City property tax levy as follows:  
Meeting Date: 4/6/2026 Meeting Time: 06:00 PM Meeting Location: 910 Clark Street, Charles City, IA

At the public hearing any resident or taxpayer may present objections to, or arguments in favor of the proposed tax levy, the City Council will publish notice and hold a hearing on the proposed city budget.

City Website (if available) City Telephone Number  
www.cityofcharlescity.org (641) 257-6300

Iowa Department of Management	Current Year Certified Property Tax 2025 - 2026	Budget Year Effective Property Tax 2026 - 2027	Budget Year Proposed Property Tax 2026 - 2027
Taxable Valuations for Non-Debt Service	266,052,530	272,510,927	272,510,927
Consolidated General Fund	2,209,646	2,209,646	2,263,285
Operation & Maintenance of Public Transit	97,240	97,240	145,622
Aviation Authority	71,834	71,834	73,578
Liability, Property & Self Insurance	226,919	226,919	267,194
Support of Local Emergency Mgmt. Comm.	3,884	3,884	3,878
Unified Law Enforcement	0	0	0
Police & Fire Retirement	300,389	300,389	282,978
FICA & IPERS (If at General Fund Limit)	266,100	266,100	236,946
Other Employee Benefits	611,008	611,008	538,340
Capital Projects (Capital Improv. Reserve)	0	0	0
Taxable Value for Debt Service	294,103,435	315,109,436	315,109,436
Debt Service	504,979	504,979	618,049
<b>CITY REGULAR TOTAL PROPERTY TAX</b>	<b>4,291,999</b>	<b>4,291,999</b>	<b>4,429,870</b>
<b>CITY REGULAR TAX RATE</b>	<b>15.95112</b>	<b>15.49931</b>	<b>15.94915</b>
Taxable Value for City Ag Land	938,500	1,164,819	1,164,819
Ag Land	2,820	2,820	3,499
<b>CITY AG LAND TAX RATE</b>	<b>3.00375</b>	<b>2.42098</b>	<b>3.00375</b>
<b>Tax Rate Comparison-Current VS. Proposed</b>			
Residential property with an Actual/Assessed Valuation of \$100,000/\$110,000	<b>Current Year Certified 2025/2026</b>	<b>Budget Year Proposed 2026/2027</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
City Regular Residential	757	781	3.17
Commercial property with an Actual/Assessed Valuation of \$300,000/\$330,000	<b>Current Year Certified 2025/2026</b>	<b>Budget Year Proposed 2026/2027</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
City Regular Commercial	3,288	3,649	10.98

Note: Actual/Assessed Valuation is multiplied by a Rollback Percentage to get to the Taxable Valuation to calculate Property Taxes. Residential and commercial properties have the same rollback percentage through \$150,000 of actual/assessed valuation.

**Reasons for tax increase if proposed exceeds the current:**  
Increase in operation and maintenance of Public Transit, as well as Liability, Property, and Self Insurance, and Debt Service.

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