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Oil Crops Outlook: March 2026

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The 2025/26 U.S. Soybean Ending Stocks Are Unchanged

U.S. soybean ending stocks for marketing year (MY) 2025/26 are unchanged at 350 million bushels. The U.S. soybean supply and demand forecasts for MY 2025/26 are both raised 5 million bushels this month. The U.S. soybean supply is raised on higher soybean imports, while the U.S. soybean demand is higher on record crush and unchanged exports. The soybean season-average price received by farmers forecast is unchanged at $10.20 per bushel.

The U.S. soybean export forecast remains unchanged and stands at 1.58 billion bushels. The U.S. soybean crush forecast for MY 2025/26 is increased this month to a record high level of 2.58 billion bushels, on strong demand for soybean products. U.S. soybean meal domestic demand is forecast up to 42.4 million short tons, on strong first quarter use, with competitive prices compared with other feed ingredients. In addition, total soybean oil domestic use is forecast nearly unchanged, with the decline in biofuel use—nearly offset by an increase for food, feed, and other industrial use.

Global sunflowerseed production is raised this month by 2.1 million metric tons to 54.1 million metric tons—on higher production in Argentina, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. Global sunflowerseed crush forecast for MY 2025/26 is raised by 1.6 million metric tons to 49.1 million metric tons, on higher crush for Argentina and Ukraine. Argentina's sunflowerseed crush forecast is raised 0.7 million metric tons, to a record of 5.5 million metric tons, on strong demand for sunflowerseed products.

Approved by USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board

Domestic Outlook

The 2025/26 U.S. Soybean Crush Forecast Is Higher

The U.S. soybean crush forecast is raised this month by 5 million bushels to a record 2.58 billion bushels, driven by strong domestic and foreign demand for soybean products. In January, U.S. soybean crushers processed nearly 228 million bushels, 2 million bushels less than in December but 15 million bushels higher than last January. This monthly crush implied a new January record-high daily crushing rate of 7.35 million bushels, down 1 percent from the previous month's daily crushing rate but up more than 7 percent from the daily crushing rate of the previous year. For the October-January period, U.S. soybean crush totaled 914.6 million bushels, up 58.5 million bushels from the same period last year.

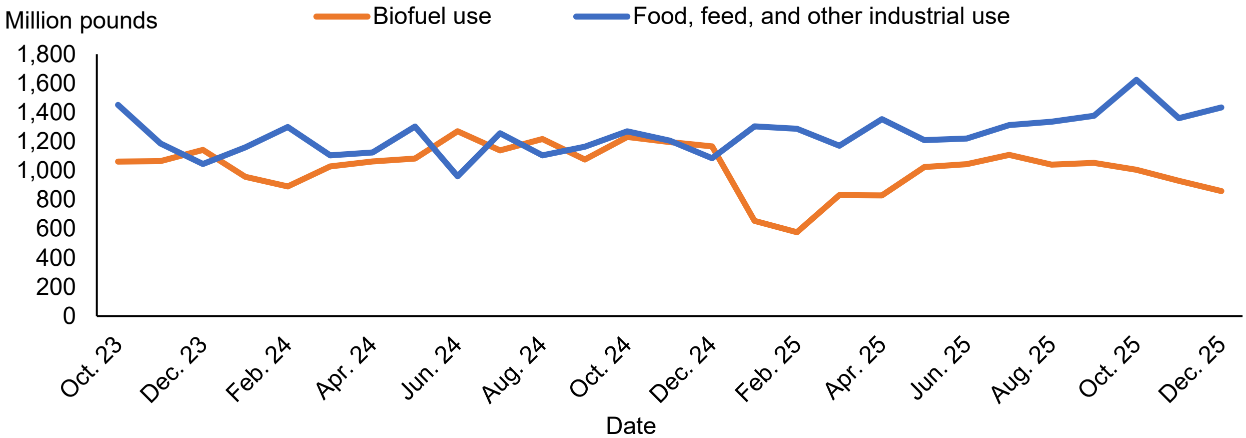
Soybean meal production forecast for MY 2025/26 is raised this month, not only due to higher crush but also due to a higher extraction rate. The soybean meal extraction rate is revised up to 47.4 pounds per bushel, the same as last year. According to the monthly report: *Fats and Oils: Oilseed Crushings, Production, Consumption and Stocks*, published by USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the crushers were able to extract, on average from October through January, about 47.4 pounds of soybean meal from 1 bushel of soybeans.

In addition to larger production, the U.S. domestic soybean meal demand forecast is raised this month by 0.4 million short tons to 42.4 million short tons, on higher domestic use driven by higher year-over-year forecasts for broiler and pork production, as well as the competitive prices against other feed ingredients. The U.S. soybean meal export forecast for MY 2025/26 remains unchanged at 19.4 million short tons. According to the USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service *Export Sales* report, as of February 26, 2026, the United States exported nearly 8 million short tons, 18 percent higher than the same period last year.

In tandem with the February rally in soybean prices, February soybean meal prices in Central Illinois averaged $312.38 per short ton, up 4 percent from the previous month and up 2 percent from the previous year. The MY 2025/26 average soybean meal price is raised this month and is forecast at $300.00 per short ton.

In addition to the increase in soybean meal extraction rate, the soybean oil extraction rate is revised lower to 11.62 pounds per bushel, reducing the total soybean oil production marginally despite a higher crush volume. Furthermore, U.S. soybean oil total demand is forecast marginally lower this month. The lower use of soybean oil for biofuel production is mainly offset by higher use of soybean oil for food, feed, residual and other industrial usage (figure 1). While soybean oil use in biofuels has declined, food, feed, and other industrial use from October-December is up 25 percent compared to last year. This increase is likely partially driven by higher stocks at end users, especially biofuels producers, waiting for more clarification on the finalized Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs).

Figure 1
Soybean oil domestic use by category



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration (EIA) and USDA, World Agricultural Outlook Board, *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates* report.

The use of soybean oil for biomass-based diesel production is reduced to 14.0 billion pounds due to lower-than-expected use to date. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, U.S. biomass-based diesel producers used 0.9 billion pounds of soybean oil in December 2025, compared with 1.17 billion pounds in the previous year. For the October-December period, the soybean oil used for biomass-based diesel production totaled 2.8 billion pounds, 22 percent lower than the same period last year. Furthermore, tallow continues to take a larger share of total feedstocks used for biomass-diesel production. Total tallow saw a 19-percent increase in use for October-December, reaching nearly 2.4 billion pounds. Additionally, the released Renewable Identification Numbers data for January also indicate a continued decline in total biomass-based diesel production and overall lower feedstock use. However, biomass-based diesel production is forecast to pick up in the remaining months of the marketing year to meet the proposed RVOs.

The U.S. soybean oil export forecast remains unchanged at 1.2 billion pounds. The soybean oil ending stocks for MY 2025/26 are forecast to be marginally higher than last month but similar to those in MY 2024/25. Despite higher stocks, domestic soybean oil prices in Illinois increased by

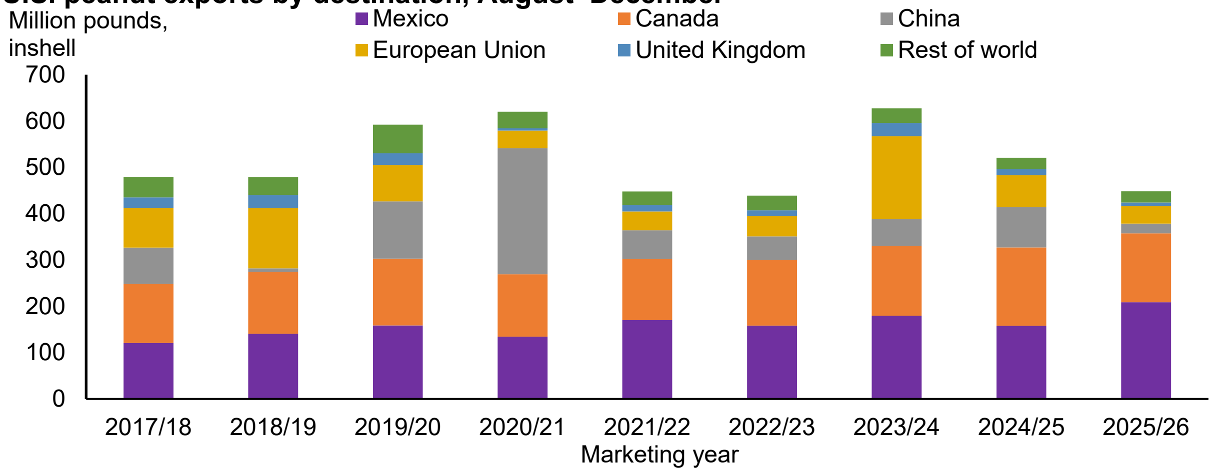
6 cents to $0.58 per pound in February. Consequently, the 2025/26 soybean oil price forecast is raised from $0.53 per pound to $0.55 per pound.

U.S. Peanut Stocks Increase on Lower Exports

Despite record peanut production in MY 2025/26, U.S. peanut exports are forecast to be nearly unchanged from last year at 1.2 billion pounds. August through December peanut exports totaled 448 million pounds, down 14 percent from last year with lower shipments largely to Canada, China, the European Union, and the United Kingdom (figure 2). Despite lower production in Argentina in MY 2025/26, Argentina has been able to increase shipments to China, the European Union, and the United Kingdom due to ample carry-in stocks. China has also received additional peanuts from India, which had another large peanut crop in MY 2025/26. Alternatively, U.S. peanut shipments to Mexico are up 32 percent from last year, on the expectation of higher food consumption.

Figure 2

U.S. peanut exports by destination, August–December



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service Global Agricultural Trade Systems.

U.S. peanut food use is forecast unchanged at 3.1 billion pounds but remains below last year's level. Peanut crush is forecast to be elevated at 0.9 billion pounds. In addition, seed and other peanut use is forecast down to 1.0 billion pounds. With lower domestic use and exports, peanut ending stocks in MY 2025/26 are forecast to increase to 2.6 billion pounds, more than 1 billion pounds higher than last year. With ample stocks, the peanut season-average farm price is forecast down to 23.5 cents per pound.

International Outlook

Global Sunflowerseed Supply Is on the Rise

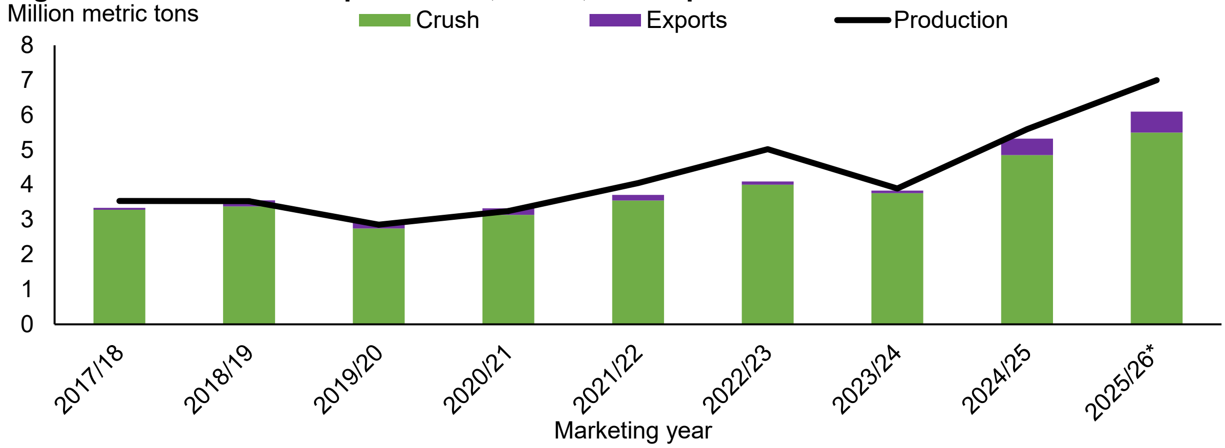
The global sunflowerseed output for MY 2025/26 is raised this month by 2.1 million metric tons to 54.1 million due to higher production forecasts for Argentina, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. With the higher global sunflowerseed production forecast, the MY 2025/26 global sunflowerseed crush and export forecasts are raised this month by 1.6 million metric tons and 0.3 million metric tons, respectively. The global sunflowerseed crush is forecasted to reach 49.1 million metric tons, 0.9 million metric tons higher than crush in MY 2024/25. As a result of higher sunflowerseed crush, the global sunflowerseed oil production increased this month to 20.7 million metric tons. With additional supply of sunflowerseed oil, the EU imports and domestic consumption of sunflowerseed oil are raised this month. Despite the higher global supply of sunflowerseed oil, global sunflowerseed oil stocks are projected to be relatively low at 2.6 million metric tons. Furthermore, the global sunflowerseed meal trade forecast is raised this month by 0.3 million metric tons to 8.5 million metric tons on higher exports from Argentina, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, more than offsetting lower exports from Russia and the European Union.

Argentina’s sunflowerseed production is increased by 1.5 million metric tons to a record high of 7.0 million metric tons, on higher harvested acreage and yield. The harvested sunflowerseed acreage is estimated at 3.0 million hectares, up 13 percent from last month’s forecast and 25 percent from the harvested acreage in MY 2024/25, as farmers shifted acreage from soybeans and other crops due to higher relative profitability compared with other commodities. The yield is also forecast to be higher at 2.33 metric tons per hectare, up 12 percent from the previous forecast and marginally higher than last year’s yield. The timely and adequate rainfall supported early crop development. The harvest is in progress and ahead of last year. According to Argentina’s Ministry of Agriculture weekly report as of March 5, nationally 39 percent of the area is harvested compared to 21 percent last year during the same period. The harvest is nearly complete in Santa Fe and Entre Ríos, while it just began in the Buenos Aires province.

With a higher sunflowerseed supply in Argentina, Argentina’s sunflowerseed crush forecast is raised this month to a record 5.5 million metric tons (figure 3). In addition, sunflowerseed exports are forecast to increase to 0.6 million metric tons.

Figure 3

Argentina sunflowerseed production, crush, and exports



Note: Asterisk (*) denotes forecast.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service, Production, Supply and Distribution database.

To meet the growing demand for sunflowerseed products, in particular rising global demand for vegetable oil, Argentina has increased its active processing capacity for sunflowerseed. In-country sources report a significant expansion in sunflowerseed processing volume, driven by private investment and diversification away from reliance on soybean processing. New investment by major players like Molinos Agro and Louis Dreyfus Company (LDC) is integrating sunflowerseed into large-scale export hubs that are typically dominated by soybeans. Molinos Agro invested to expand sunflowerseed crush capacity at its San Lorenzo complex in Santa Fe. Louis Dreyfus Corporation added a high-oil seed processing line at its Timbúes complex in Santa Fe. According to the LDC announcement on January 29, 2026, the new line allows the plant to process a wider variety of oilseed crops—such as camelina, carinata, canola, and sunflower—complementing the complex's existing soybean crushing capacity and contributing to a more efficient use of the facilities throughout the year, depending on the seasonal availability of the different crops.

Ukraine's sunflowerseed production forecast is up 0.5 million metric tons this month to 11.0 million metric tons, reflecting higher yields. The yield is forecast at 1.96 metric tons per hectare, up 4.7 percent from last month's forecast, based on finalized harvest reports from the States Statistics Service of Ukraine. With higher sunflowerseed production, Ukraine's sunflowerseed crush is raised, providing more sunflowerseed oil and meal production. Consequently, the sunflowerseed oil and sunflowerseed meal export forecasts are raised this month.

Kazakhstan's sunflowerseed production forecast for MY 2025/26 is increased this month by 0.1 million metric tons to a record high of 2.5 million metric tons, on higher acreage and yields. The harvested area is projected at 1.8 million hectares, marginally up from last month's forecast but

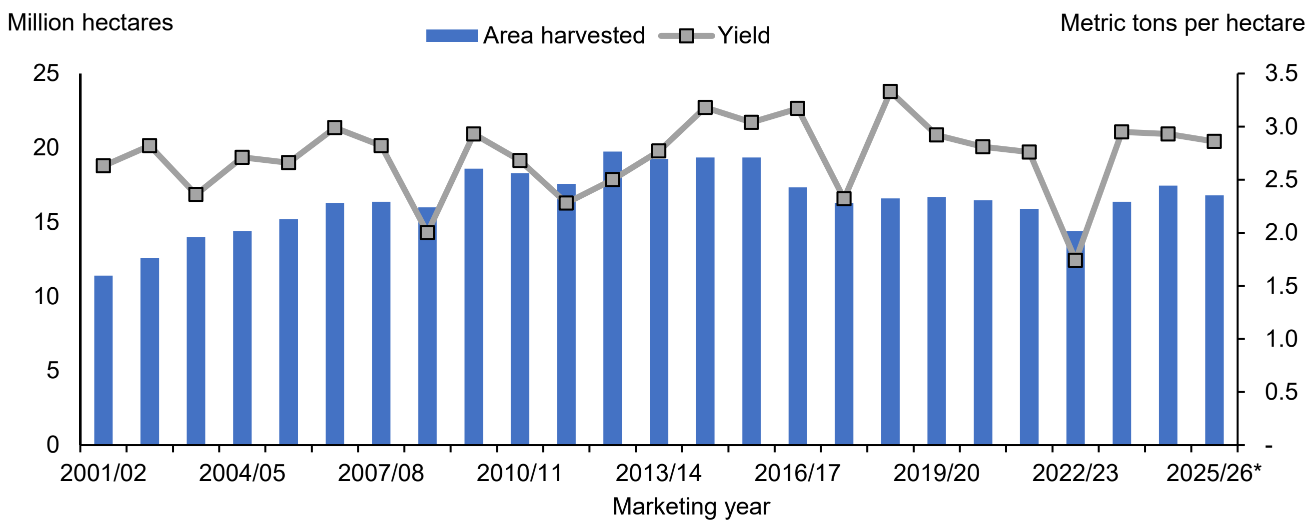
34 percent higher than the acreage in MY 2024/25. Yield is raised to 1.4 metric tons per hectare, on favorable growing conditions during the growing season. With higher sunflowerseed production, Kazakhstan's sunflowerseed crush forecast is raised this month to meet growing foreign demand for sunflowerseed products.

Soybean Production Forecast for Argentina Is Lower in MY 2025/26

Argentina's soybean production forecast for MY 2025/26 is lowered this month by 0.5 million metric tons to 48.0 million metric tons, due to lower yields, partially offset by higher harvested acreage (figure 4). Guided by official Ministry of Agriculture statistics, area harvested is revised up 0.3 million hectares to 16.8 million hectares but remains below MY 2024/25 levels. Argentina's soybean yields are reduced to 2.86 metric tons per hectare, 2-percent below last year's average. While key rains in February helped stabilize Argentina's soybean crop after a dry and hot January, the second-crop soybeans are in flowering stage, which needs continued critical rains to sustain yield potential. First-crop soybean yields had been supported by a wet November and December through its critical growing period and had mostly entered pod-filling stage prior to the dryness. According to Bolsa de Cereales, the total soybean crop area is rated 74 percent in normal to excellent condition, which is still above the 5-year average of 69 percent.

Figure 4

Argentina soybean area harvested and yield



Note: Asterisk (*) denotes forecast.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service, Production, Supply and Distribution database.

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