

# Agriculture: many reasons to celebrate

Below are some interesting facts about agriculture today. These points just scratch the surface of the advancements being made in agriculture on a daily basis. All Americans are asked to enjoy and admire the wonders of American agriculture as National Agriculture Day is celebrated on March 20.

- General statistics:**
- Today's average farms 417 acres compared to 147 acres in 1900.
  - Today's farmer feeds more than 130 people in the United States and abroad. In 1960 that number was 25.8.
  - 42 percent of U.S. total land area is farmland.
  - U.S. Farmers account for 42.7 percent of the world's soybean production and 34.4 percent of the world's corn production.
  - Almost 90 percent of U.S. farms are operated by individuals or family corporations.
  - More than 15 percent of the U.S. population is employed in farm or farm-related jobs.
  - U.S. consumers spend roughly 9 percent of their income on food compared with 11 percent in the United Kingdom, 17 percent in Japan, 27 percent in South Africa and 53 percent in India.
  - Farmers and ranchers provide

food and habitat for 75 percent of the nation's wildlife.

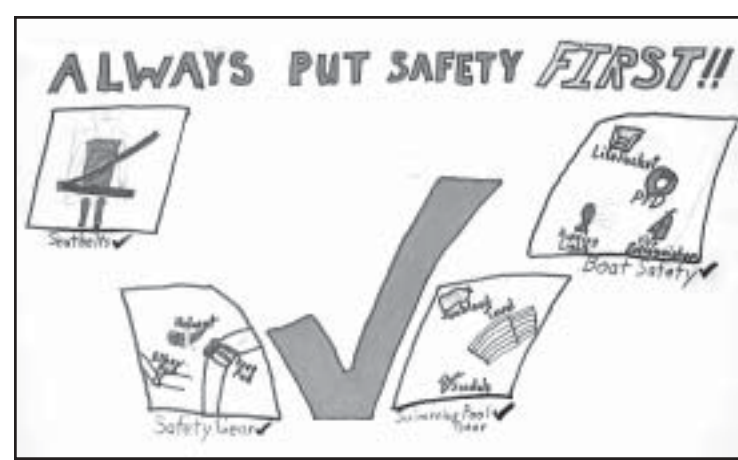
- Production Improvements:**
- U.S. Farmers and ranchers produce meat that is lower in fat and cholesterol. The result is beef cuts that have 27 percent less fat than in 1985.
  - Biotechnology has resulted in better tasting fruits and vegetables that stay fresh longer and are naturally resistant to insects.
  - Plant breeding has resulted in crops better able to handle the environmental affects of drought and disease and insect infestations resulting in higher yields at harvest and lower costs to the consumer.
- Technology/Equipment Advancements:**
- Today's combines can harvest 900 bushels of corn per hour. In the 1930s a farmer could harvest (by hand) about 100 bushels of corn in a nine-hour day.
  - Precision farming using satellite maps and computer models enables farmers to use less production inputs to produce a higher quality, higher yielding crop.
  - Farmers use computers and satellites daily to improve the efficiency of their production operations and track production processes on general and special crops.
- New Uses**
- Ethanol accounts for the larg-

est industrial use of any commodity crop.

- Resins from corn and soybeans are used in production of, for example, John Deere equipment panels.
- Soybeans are used in the five major markets currently dependent on petroleum products including: plastics, coatings and ink, adhesives, lubricants and solvents.
- Corn also is used in place of certain petroleum-based products in industrial applications.

# Safety is the key to happy living

"Always Put Safety First" was the theme of Christopher Maddy's safety poster in Norton County Farm Bureau's annual contest. Christopher won first place in Division III, for fifth and sixth graders. He is the son of David and Patsy Maddy, Norton.  
— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts



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March 14 thru 20**

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National Ag Week  
March 14-20, 2004

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March 14-20, 2004

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