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## Corn price down on big supply figure

By Sandy Shore  
AP Business Writer

The price of corn plunged Thursday after the government said corn supplies were higher than traders expected. Investors had bid the price up, expecting tighter supplies because of weather damage.

Corn for March delivery fell 40 cents, or 6.1 percent, to \$6.115 per bushel. The price has fallen 24 percent from June, when concerns about a potential shortage sent the price to a record \$7.99. And prices continued to decline today, with corn off at \$5.99 at noon.

The Agriculture Department said farmers produced 12.358 billion bushels of corn last year, slightly higher than its estimate a month ago. It predicted supplies will drop 2 million bushels to 846 million bushels by the end of this year's harvest. Traders had expected that number to be closer to 750 million bushels.

The U.S. Agriculture Department forecast would still leave both domestic and global supplies at fairly tight levels by summer's end.

The global corn supply forecast was little changed at 128.14 million metric tons. The agency said losses in Argentina

due to dry weather should be offset by increased production in the United States, parts of Europe and Russia compared with a year ago.

"Everything in this report was bearish — yes, short-term maybe, but long-term, I'm still very bullish," said John Sanow, an analyst with Telvent DTN. "Demand remains very strong."

Wheat and soybean prices also fell, partly because of the drop in the price of corn. March wheat fell 36 cents, or 5.6 percent, to finish at \$6.05 per bushel, while soybeans ended down 20.5 cents, or 1.7 percent, at \$11.825 per bushel.

In other trading, metals prices were mostly higher after strong bond auctions in Spain and Italy. Investors were more optimistic about improving demand, particularly if Europe can gain control over its financial crisis.

Gold for February delivery rose \$8.10 to finish at \$1,647.70 an ounce. In March contracts, silver increased 23.4 cents to end at \$30.124 per ounce, copper rose 10.3 cents to \$3.649 per pound, and palladium fell \$4.40 to \$641.25 per ounce. April platinum settled up \$2.40 at \$1,500.10 an ounce.

Benchmark oil fell \$1.77 to finish at

\$99.10 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Heating oil dropped 1.05 cents to \$3.0541 per gallon, gasoline futures fell 3.2 cents to \$2.7313 per gallon, and natural gas decreased 6.6 cents to \$2.737 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Orange juice futures continued to plummet. They rose to their highest since 2007 earlier this week after the Food and Drug Administration said it was testing shipments for a fungicide that had been found in low levels in orange juice. Investors have taken profits since then.

Orange juice for March delivery fell 10 cents, or 5.3 percent, to \$1.781 a pound.

## Classes to help men learn skill to be great dad

By Christina Beringer  
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Northwest Kansas Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect aims to help area dads hone their parenting skills with a free six-week "24/7 Dad" fatherhood program from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

The first session will be Tuesday, Jan. 31, at Redeeming Love Ministries, 345 N. Franklin.

"The comprehensive '24/7 Dad' program will cover all aspects of fatherhood so that men of all cultures, races, religions and backgrounds can benefit from the program," said Paige Campbell, program director for the group. "This program brings fathers to-

gether and gives them tools for improvement and to build on their strengths.

"The program focuses on five characteristics that a father needs to be a great dad 24 hours a day and seven days a week."

Campbell said the program will help fathers learn about self-awareness, caring for ones self and fathering, parenting and relationship skills. She said all of this should help to increase the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible and committed fathers.

The six-week program will be facilitated by W.G. Romine and Jarrod Spencer, both fathers and both Colby ministers. This will be

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## Senate to start work on new district maps

TOPEKA (AP) — A Kansas Senate committee is preparing to start work on redrawing the state's political boundaries.

The Reapportionment Committee planned an afternoon meeting today to discuss the rules it will use as it adjusts the outlines of state Senate and U.S. House districts.

The Kansas Constitution requires legislators to redraw the lines once every 10 years, following the national census. Lawmakers also will adjust the districts for

State Board of Education members.

The House Redistricting Committee already has adopted rules that will allow each district's population to vary up to 5 percent from the statewide average. That's in line with what past court decisions allow.

Senators are likely to adopt a similar standard for their districts.

By tradition, neither chamber gets directly involved in drawing districts for the other's members.

### Addition going up



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press  
Workers were enclosing a new building at Colby Fertilizer, south of town on K-25, on Friday. Mike Kersenbrock said it will enclose the firm's chemical storage and is designed to contain any spills. It's the first new construction since the plant was built in the 1970s, he said.

## Some offices to close

City, county to work Monday while banks and feds take day off

Federal and state offices, banks and financial institutions will be closed on Monday for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, while city and county offices and most businesses will be open.

Area post offices will be closed, and there will be no mail delivery.

Offices that will close include the K-State Experiment Station and the court services, district court and community corrections offices at the courthouse. Federal offices include the U.S. Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

All Colby banks will observe the holiday, except the Dillon's branch of Farmers and Merchants Bank, which will be open regular hours on Monday.

City and county offices will be open, said Jo Strange at the city manager's office. Trash collection will proceed on the regular schedule.

At the courthouse, said County Clerk Shelly Harms, county offices will be open. The landfill will be in operation and county services will be normal. Only the state court offices will be closed, because they follow the state's holiday schedule.

Even the county commissioners will be working. They have a busy agenda for their meeting, which starts at 9 a.m.

### Closing up a hole



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press  
A crew from APAC Kansas out of Hays was pouring concrete Monday on Webster Street east of Range. The firm has been replacing a six-inch water line, said city Public Works Director Chris Beiker, and hopes to finish next week.

## Governor's plan aims to build state's reserves, limit spending

By John Hanna  
AP Statehouse Correspondent

TOPEKA — A tight, \$14.1 billion budget outlined Thursday by Gov. Sam Brownback would keep state funding flat for Kansas public schools and build up cash reserves in an attempt to promote the state's long-term financial health.

Brownback's spending plan for the fiscal year beginning July 1 does increase the state tax dollars set aside for social services as the administration prepares to overhaul the Medicaid program, which provides health coverage for the needy. However, it also quickly drew criticism because it would cut support for children's programs from the state's share of past legal settlements with tobacco companies.

His proposed budget would reopen a corrections camp in Oswego in southeastern Kansas to ease crowding in the state's prisons, and it would use \$10 million in revenues generated by new state-owned casinos to pay off the bonds that financed an underground parking garage completed at the Statehouse in 2004.

Brownback's recommendations don't include a general pay raise for state government workers.

Release of the budget followed Brownback's promise Wednesday night in his State of the State address to seek \$465 million in cash reserves at the end of June 2013, as a financial cushion. The governor also outlined a sweeping proposal to rewrite the

state's individual income tax code, cutting rates and helping business operators whose earnings are taxed as personal income.

"The budget's all about fiscal stability," Brownback's budget director, Steve Anderson, said before briefing lawmakers. "The tax plan is all about economic prosperity, and the two are married."

The budget plan calls for spending a little less than \$6.1 billion in general state revenues on government programs, compared to a little more than \$6.1 billion under the current budget. The difference is about \$39 million, or a little less than 1 percent.

The overall budget, including the portion financed with federal funds, would drop 4.1 percent, or \$597 million, from the current budget's estimated total of \$14.7 billion. The drop proposed by Brownback partly reflects a decline in federal transportation and disaster relief funds.

But Brownback's administration also expects federal funds to decrease in the future as the federal government wrestles with its own financial problems. Anderson told reporters that the state's com-

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