

New president looking forward to the future



KENTUCKY
CORN
GROWERS
ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENT

**Micah
Lester**

As I step into my presidency, I just want to say how grateful I am for the opportunity to serve my fellow farmers and corn growers in this role. I know just how much time and effort both the Ky. Corn Growers Association and the Ky. Corn Promotion Council put into these organizations. I truly appreciate the trust that has been placed in me.

Serving Kentucky corn growers has never been simple. We're dealing with weather that doesn't cooperate, markets that can change overnight, rising costs, and increasing pressure from regulations and public perception. But if there's one thing I know about this organization, and about corn growers in general, it's that we don't shy away from hard work or hard conversations.

Looking back on 2025, we fought for several wins for corn growers that we saw cross the finish line. We defended essential pesticides like atrazine and glyphosate when they were called into question by the MAHA Commission, increased ethanol access in foreign markets with US-UK and Japan trade deals, saw Mexico rescind the 2023 Decree banning GM corn, and so much more.

The full details of our 2025 initiatives are published in our annual report, which will be arriving in our members' mailboxes soon.

In 2026, we are entering a year that is expected to be challenging on many fronts. Our organization has a lot of work to do to support farm profitability, expand corn markets, and help Kentucky farmers navigate change.

This year we have already mobilized on ethanol and plan to continue those efforts as the issue evolves. The renewal of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement this summer is another top issue for 2026, along with some potentially emerging risk management policy initiatives.

Looking ahead to my term, and the rest of this year, my goal is pretty straightforward: keep this association focused, effective, and valuable to our members.

A few things I want us to prioritize together:

First, strong, practical advocacy. I take the duty of representing corn growers very seriously; whether that's in Frankfort, in D.C., or with agencies that don't always understand farming. I want us to stay proactive, not reactive, and make sure our voice is being heard early and often.

Second, supporting grower profitability and long-term sustainability. That means backing research, education, and programs that actually help farmers on the ground, not just in theory. There are many areas we pursue this, but I'm particularly hopeful about our focus on finding more uses for this incredible pile of corn we have.

Third, membership and engagement. Our strongest asset is our involved and dedicated members. Policymakers pay attention when we raise our voices together, and we have seen real change come from our collective efforts to make a difference. I want to invite corn farmers to stay involved in KY Corn, because it's your effort that makes this change possible. We pack a punch far above our weight class with the help of your grassroots advocacy.

I don't pretend to have all the answers, and I don't want to. I value the experience and perspectives of each and every corn farmer across the state, and I intend to lean on our grassroots members, listen carefully, and make decisions collaboratively.

I'm optimistic about where this association is headed. We have a solid foundation, committed leaders, and growers who care deeply about the future of corn farming in Kentucky.

Thank you again for the confidence you've shown in me. I'm proud to serve you, and I'm looking forward to the work ahead.

There's no heresy in the law of supply and demand

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will have on Iowa. Presently, for example, the Iowa Cancer Registry notes that "Iowa has the second highest cancer incidence—new cancer—rate in the U.S."

Also, "Iowa's overall cancer incidence rate is rising while the U.S. rate is falling. Only six states have rising incidence rates, but Iowa's is rising the fastest." So fast, in fact, that the American Cancer Society's advocacy arm calls it a "cancer crisis."

Researchers are now examining today's agriculture as a contributor to the rise; 31 million of Iowa's 35.7 million acres are intensively farmed.

Other anticipated E15 costs are known. For example, claims the report, a "potential" six billion gallons of "ultra-low-carbon ethanol"—created by simply capturing CO2 while making ethanol, then piping and storing it underground—could be sold by 2040.

The word "potential" does a lot of lifting here, however. First, Iowans, like residents of several other Midwestern states, have repeatedly told their state officials they want nothing to do with ethanol pipelines.

Second, current estimates peg federal subsidies tied to the not-yet built pipelines at \$10 billion and climbing. That open taxpayer checkbook for a controversial, unproven product is far from assured.

And, third, there is still a roaring debate over whether ethanol is even "green," or—at best—at least environmentally neutral, as its farm proponents preach. Opponents point to decades of independent studies that prove the exact opposite.

Most importantly, the report fails to mention the simplest solution to what it sees as the coming catastrophic "demand gap:" plant something else. After all, there's no rule, federal or otherwise, that requires farmers to grow corn.

That's not heresy; it is, in fact, a law. The law of supply and demand.

Good teachers can make a lifelong impact

FROM PAGE 4

their efforts - because of his gift to our Forever Blue Endowment, an instrument of perpetual generosity.

Teaching agriculture is not an easy job. It's more than a job; it's a lifestyle. It's committing to your students, your community, agriculture and constantly growing and changing. Soon, you will see all over Kentucky FFA social media, our 2025-2026 Golden Owl Award winners as we surprise them and recognize the constant effort of committed and thoughtful agriculture teachers across Kentucky. With the support of Nationwide, we get to award 12 regional winners \$500 and our state winner, \$3,000! It deeply matters that we recognize and encourage good teaching.

If your life has been influenced by an excellent teacher, especially an ag teacher - I ask that you thank them. Tell them what they meant to you. As I sat in Dr. Byers funeral, I bet at least 75 hands went up of former students attending. Let's not wait until the end of our days to tell the people who matter that they mattered. Let's be encouragers who invest in others - just like ag teachers do every day.

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