

Spring 2026 Land Trends and Values Survey

By Chuck Schwager

Brad Marcus and I along with fellow RLI members attended the Realtor Land Institute Land Conference on March 11th in Ankeny. The results of the Realtors Land Institute March 2026 Land Trends and Values Survey are in. The survey shows an increase in values in all 9 districts across the state of Iowa. The results of the survey shows a statewide increase in values of 1.3% from September 2025 to March 2026. East Central Iowa had a 2.0 % increase for the 6 month period. This increase comes after a period of 12 months prior that prices were relatively flat with a decrease of just 2.6%. The highest increase in values was at 3.4% in the Northeast district and the lowest increase was 0.5 % in the North Central district.

Lower commodity prices continue to pressure land values along with interest rates to finance land purchases. There continues to be a lower supply of land offered on the market, and good yields helping to hold values despite lower net farm income compared to recent years. Government payments in the coming months are expected to provide additional relief to producers who are feeling the pressure from low cash flow and small profit margins. Local farmers continue to be active in the market when land is available for purchase in their neighborhood. Some investors continue to view farmland as a reliable long term investment.

Non-crop acres have shown similar trends although there have been some strong sales of pastureland and timberland. Livestock producers and recreational buyers are still aggressive when the right parcel comes up for sale. Non-cropland, especially timber ground is in demand with smaller parcels bringing a premium. Farmers continue to be the majority of buyers for farmland.

Realtor Land Institute members who specialize in agricultural land brokerage on a daily basis have conducted the survey every March and September since 1978. For more information on this survey or if looking to buy or sell farmland contact Chuck Schwager (563-599-4277) or Brad Marcus (319-213-3222) at East Iowa Real Estate, 125 South 2nd St., Maquoketa, IA. Office phone 5630652-0000.

ANKENY, Iowa — Iowa farmland values held steady over the past six months, according to the Iowa REALTORS® Land Institute's (RLI) spring 2026 survey. The March survey, which evaluated land values as of March 1, showed a 1.3% increase since September 2025.

Key Findings -Survey respondents identified Commodity Prices as the leading factor driving the land market, followed by the supply of land and interest rates. Values on tillable acres were up in all nine of nine Iowa crop reporting districts, with the Northeast district reporting the largest increase at 3.4%. The Iowa farmland market remains stable despite poor margins on commodity production. Limited inventory continues to support values, and government payments are expected to provide additional relief. Demand persists for quality farms in desirable locations, however, tightening balance sheets may temper activity for some producers. Pasture values increased 2.6% over the past six months. The cattle market continues to support demand for pasture ground, with feeder cattle prices remaining steady. Timber and recreational land values rose 2.2%, reflecting continued interest in recreational ground despite broader market uncertainty. Iowa farmland has demonstrated resilience over the past 12 months, posting a net 0.3% gain after a brief 1.0% dip in the prior period (March 2025-September 2025). Following the rapid appreciation of 2021 and 2022, the market has found its footing and values have held stable over the past 6 months.

Land Supply -Nearly a third of survey respondents said there is a similar amount of land for sale now compared to a year ago. Limited inventory continues to be a defining feature of the Iowa land market. Expectations matter as some landowners are choosing to hold their properties rather than bring them to market in an uncertain environment.

Quality and Location Premiums -Despite the broader market trends, buyers remain willing to pay a premium for high-quality farmland or parcels that complement their existing operations. Location and soil quality continue to be key differentiators in sale outcomes. Outlook Looking ahead, 70% of survey respondents said they expect land values to increase 0–10% over the next five years. Only 5% expect values to be lower five years from now. The long-term outlook reflects continued confidence in Iowa farmland as a stable asset class, with both operational and investor buyers expected to sustain demand regardless of short-term market fluctuations.

About the Survey -REALTORS® Land Institute – Iowa Chapter's farmland value survey has been conducted in March and September since 1978. This survey plus the RLI Farm and Ranch Multiple Listing Service are activities of REALTORS® specializing in agricultural land brokerage daily. The survey gathers input from land professionals across Iowa's nine crop reporting districts to track farmland values and market trends. The spring 2026 survey evaluated values as of March 1, 2026, and results were released at the ASF/MRA/RLI Joint Spring Seminar on March 11, 2026, at Toast in Ankeny, Iowa.



March 2026

REALTORS® Land Institute (RLI) - Iowa Chapter
Survey of Farm Land Values In Dollars Per Acre

Land Classification By Potential Corn Production

	High Quality Crop Land		Medium Quality Crop Land		Low Quality Crop Land		Non - Tillable Pasture Per Acre		Timber Per Acre		Percent Change in Tillable Cropland Values Past 6 Months
	September	March	September	March	September	March	September	March	September	March	%
Central	13,783	13,923	10,564	10,678	7,434	7,465	4,638	4,749	4,247	4,317	0.9%
East Central	14,824	15,240	11,801	12,013	8,391	8,461	5,293	5,515	4,908	5,066	2.0%
North Central	13,653	13,800	10,751	10,830	7,480	7,400	4,713	4,749	4,000	4,165	0.5%
Northeast	14,446	14,919	11,919	12,308	8,800	9,136	5,483	5,713	5,055	5,181	3.4%
Northwest	15,297	15,481	12,467	12,530	9,004	9,025	5,554	5,713	4,888	4,972	0.7%
South Central	10,704	10,793	8,454	8,444	5,900	5,974	4,746	4,771	5,071	5,077	0.6%
Southeast	14,429	14,539	10,562	10,690	7,276	7,462	5,392	5,579	4,971	5,038	1.3%
Southwest	11,967	12,127	8,887	8,924	6,396	6,466	5,438	5,480	4,688	4,813	1.0%
West Central	13,927	14,076	10,724	10,833	7,792	7,858	5,233	5,424	4,889	5,025	1.0%
State	13,670	13,878	10,681	10,805	7,608	7,694	5,165	5,299	4,746	4,850	1.3%

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