

Getting the Most Out of Your Corn Harvest

Key Points

- Estimating your corn yield is a relatively simple process. However, it's worthwhile to invest a bit of time so you can ensure you get an accurate result.
- Once you're ready to harvest, see our simple guide on page 2 for tips on getting the most out of your harvest.

Steps for estimating the yield of your field

1. Ensure your samples accurately reflect the overall field.

- Due to the natural variance of environmental factors and field conditions (yes within the same field), the best practice is to choose areas that best-represent the entire field.
- Avoid going straight to the best areas (or the worst) for sample collection as this can drastically affect results.

2. Walk into the field to measure-off .001 (one/one thousandth) of an acre.

- Note, the distance you need to measure-off depends on your row width. Use this chart as a guide.

Row width inches	Length for 1/1000th acre feet inches
7	74' 10"
15	34' 10"
20	26' 1"
22	23' 10"
30	17' 5"
36	14' 6"
38	13' 10"
40	13' 1"

(For demonstration purposes, we'll say our field has 30" row width)



3. Count the number of harvestable ears within 17 feet and 5 inches of a row.

(substitute the appropriate distance to measure-off according to the row width of your field).

- For demonstration purposes, we'll say we counted 32 harvestable ears.

4. Husk back every 5th ear within the 17 ½ feet of the row as your sample ears.

5. Count the average number of kernels/row from each sample ear (husked ear).

- Avoid counting kernels towards the tip as they may or may not develop fully.
- Account for any noticeable damage from birds, etc.
- For demonstration purposes, we'll say we counted an average 28 kernels/row.

6. Break sample ears in half and count the number of kernel rows.

These should always be even. For demonstration purposes, we'll say we counted 16 kernel rows.



7. We now have all the numbers we need for estimating yield (bu/ac).

- Example: 32 harvestable ears x 28 avg. kernels/row x 16 kernel rows divided by 90 x .90 = **143 bu/ac** (estimated yield).
- Note 1: Dividing by 90 calculates your bushels/acre yield (based on 90,000 kernels/bushel).
- Note 2: Multiplying by .90 accounts for a 10% margin of error.

8. Repeat the process and average results (approximately 20 times per 100-acre field).

Skip the math with our online estimator.

If you prefer a simpler method to estimate your corn yield potential, Pioneer is pleased to offer an online Corn Yield Estimator at www.pioneer.com/ca-en/tools-services/corn-yield-estimator.html

Corn Harvest Tips

Follow this simple guide to get the most out of your corn harvest:

Scout fields to gauge stalk strength.

- Approximately 2-3 weeks before harvest, cut a few plant stalks close to the bottom of the plant (10"-12" off the ground) to look for partial hollowness in the center.
- Fields with weaker stalks may be prone to lodging.
- Ensure fields with weaker stalks are scheduled to be harvested first.

1. Check ears.

- Look for grain quality and potential mould.
- Corn on corn fields and those with high plant populations can have quality concerns, schedule these fields for early harvest.

2. Perform yield estimates.

- Use the instructions from Estimating Corn Yield or the Corn Yield Estimator to calculate your yield potential (be as accurate as possible).

3. Calibrate yield monitors accordingly and recalibrate when/where necessary.

4. Note potential 'problem fields' before and during harvest.

- Fields hit by diseases or insects such as Goss's Wilt, European Corn Borer or had damage from herbicides or environment (early frost, poor emergence, lodging from high winds).
- Adjust field timing accordingly.

5. Consider an early harvest.

- There is a growing trend to harvesting wetter corn.
- Many agronomists recommend a moisture level of approximately 24 – 25%, while others recommend starting harvest at 20 – 25%. Consider harvesting some fields early to effectively manage your time.

6. Choose hybrids that dry down faster than others

- Especially if you have had problems with corn hybrids extending too late into the fall.
- Not all corn hybrids are the same for this trait.
- Dry down makes a significant difference and improves the time management on your farm at harvest.