

Information Sheet for Unusual Agriculture Production

We think of products like meat, corn, and soybeans as produced primarily for food for humans, but actually, we consume little of this directly.

- Meat that you see in the supermarket or at the butcher is just part of the animal. Only about 60% of the animal is harvested for food, the remaining percent ends up in things like cosmetics, fuel, and vehicle tires.
- Corn in the United States is a highly productive crop, with typical yield between 140 and 160 bushels per acre. However much doesn't make it to the food system. Today's corn crop is mainly used for biofuels (roughly 40% of U.S. corn is used for ethanol) and as animal feed (roughly 36% of U.S. corn, plus distillers grains left over from ethanol production, is fed to livestock). The rest is exported. Only a tiny fraction of the nation's corn crop is directly used in food for Americans, and most of that for high-fructose corn syrup.
- When soybeans are processed, a 60-pound bushel will yield about 11 pounds of crude soybean oil and 47 pounds of soybean meal. Soybeans are about 18% oil and 38% protein. Because soybeans are high in protein, they are a major ingredient in livestock feed. Soybeans are processed for their oil and meal in the animal-feed industry. A small amount is processed for human consumption and made into products including soy milk, soy flour, soy protein, tofu and many other food products.