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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

Monday, May 24 2021

Roundup: CBOT agricultural futures in correction

CHICAGO, May 22 (Xinhua) -- CBOT agricultural futures corrected recent gains last week on overbought technical conditions, Chicago-based research company AgResource noted.

AgResource's long term view of CBOT agricultural futures stays bullish, but there could be some back-and-forth in the short run.

Spot CBOT corn gapped lower following May's expiration, with July testing medium-term chart support. Improved soil moisture in U.S. Northern Plains and lack of glaring climate threats in U.S. Midwest are noted. The early May rally was based on concerning Central U.S. and Southern Canadian Prairie weather and reflects the size/speed on how the market will react to any coming weather supply threat.

Global cash corn markets continue to indicate real and widespread supply issues. Brazil's interior market this week again scored a new all-time high. Cash corn in Western Europe is trading above 8.50 dollars per bushel as supplies are exhausted. Chinese cash corn prices are perched at 11 U.S. dollars per bushel, near its historic high. And interior U.S. basis has failed to crack as ethanol plants compete with a massive U.S. corn export program to China. Global cash market strength implies there is zero tolerance for supply dislocation in 2021. Weather risks to the upside of corn are sizeable into August.

U.S. wheat futures ended sharply lower amid improving North American soil moisture and the potential for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to raise its U.S. winter wheat production estimate by 70-100 million bushels in the June report. Crop potential across the Southern and Central Plains has been elevated by abnormally heavy spring rainfall.

Corn values imply that wheat is cheap when compared to alternative feed sources. Historically large wheat feed use is anticipated across the world this summer.

Otherwise, rallies will struggle as harvest nears. However, concern over arid growing conditions in Southeast and South Russia remain intact. AgResource notes that drought will not end across the U.S. Northern Plains and Canada, where rain totals have fallen on the low end of expectations. Breaks remain buying opportunities as global wheat consump-



tion in 2021-2022 reaches a new record. Wheat also follows corn to sizable gains if U.S. Midwest weather turns adverse in June-August.

Soybean futures corrected recent gains last week as cash markets turned down. Spot futures rallied 3 dollars from mid-April to mid-May, and the market gave back 0.78 dollars last week. New crop prices followed old crop lower, but reluctantly. The July/November soybean spread narrowed 24 cents to a 1.66-dollar July premium.

Through Sunday, USDA reported that a near-record 61 percent of the soybean crop was planted. AgResource estimates that progress should top 80 percent this week.

Old crop soybeans likely scored a season high two weeks ago as spot futures traded through long-held target of 16.50 dollars. But the need for trend or above yields is acute in 2021-2022.

AgResource looks for heightened volatility as the summer weather market kicks off. Market volatility looks to stay elevated in the weeks and months leading into harvest.

Military conflict looms in southern Yemen as tension rises between rivals:

ADEN, Yemen, May 22 (Xinhua) -- Military confrontations between forces loyal to the Southern Transitional Council (STC) and Yemen's government became imminent amid rising tensions over the control of key areas, a military official told Xinhua on Saturday.

Tensions escalated in the wake of recent government's accusations to the STC on refusing to implement a Saudi-brokered deal signed between the two rivals in 2019.

"The government and the STC dispatched heavy troops backed by armored vehicles to areas near the coastal town of Shuqrah that's located on the Arabian Sea," the source said on condition of anonymity.

"The two sides are currently blaming each other for truce breaches and failure to implement the remaining security provisions of Riyadh deal," he said.

He said the STC's troops were fully prepared and ready to engage in new armed confrontations against the government forces in the country's south.

On the other side, the government forces raised the level of combat readiness

of some units in an attempt to prevent the STC's troops from advancement on-ground and seizing new key southern areas, according to the official.

Another security official confirmed to Xinhua that the relationship between the two rivals representing the country's recent power-sharing government has strained further as the STC's troops tightened its grip over the Socotra Archipelago, an area officially part of Yemen.

"The STC that's part of Yemen's government heavily deployed its military units and tightened the security measures in the strategic Socotra Island," the official said anonymously.

Socotra is located in one of the busiest shipping routes in the world and Yemen's warring factions sporadically engage in armed confrontations over establishing military bases there for controlling the strategic island.

In 2019, Saudi Arabia persuaded the STC and the Yemeni government to hold reconciliation talks, which succeeded in reaching a deal to form a new technocratic cabinet and ending a deadly conflict in the country's southern regions.



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Iran reports 8,005 new COVID-19 cases, 2,823,887 in total

TEHRAN, May 22 (Xinhua) -- Iran reported on Saturday 8,005 new COVID-19 cases, taking the country's total infections to 2,823,887.

The pandemic has so far claimed 78,381 lives in Iran, up by 187 in the past 24 hours, the Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education said in a written briefing published on its official website.

A total of 2,319,746 people have recovered from the disease or been discharged from hospitals across the country, while 4,945 remain in intensive care units, the ministry said.

The report adds that 18,810,335 tests have so far been carried out across the country.

By Saturday, 2,478,936 people have received coronavirus vaccines in the country, while 451,721 both doses.

Earlier in the day, the spokesman for the Iranian National Headquarters for Combating the Coronavirus, Alireza Raisi, announced new official regulations for the upcoming campaign of Iran's presidential election.

Political rallies in closed spaces are prohibited, and any meeting in the open area must be limited to a maximum capacity of one person per 8 square meters, Raisi said, as quoted by the Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education's official website.

Currently, he noted, the daily number of cases detected is decreasing throughout the Iranian territory, except for some counties in the southern provinces.



China's Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine 67% effective in preventing symptomatic infection

Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine CoronaVac was 67% effective in preventing symptomatic infection in the first real-world study of the Chinese shot, the Chilean government said on Friday.

The vaccine was 85% effective in preventing hospitalizations and 80% effective in preventing deaths, the government said in a report prepared by the Chilean health ministry.

The release of the data makes Chile one of a handful of countries, including the United

Kingdom and Israel, that have used inoculation campaigns to gather insights into how effective vaccines are outside controlled clinical trials and when faced with unpredictable variables in societies.

Israel's real-world study of the effectiveness of Pfizer's (PFE.N) vaccine looked at the results among 1.2 million people, a mix of those who received the shot and those who did not. Chile's study examined CoronaVac's effectiveness among 10.5 million people, again looking both at people who had been vaccinated and those who had not. Vaccines were administered in Chile approximately 28 days apart.

Editor's Choice



Stefania of Greece performs during the second semi-final of the 2021 Eurovision Song Contest in Rotterdam, Netherlands. REUTERS/Piroschka van de Wouw



A dog that has been trained to sniff out the coronavirus screens a sweat sample at Chulalongkorn University, in Bangkok, Thailand. REUTERS/Jorge Silva



A man wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) cremates a body of a coronavirus victim at the crematory as the country recorded the highest daily increase in deaths since the pandemic began, in Kathmandu, Nepal. REUTERS/Navesh Chitrakar



A Moroccan boy swims using bottles as a float, near the fence between the Spanish-Moroccan border, after thousands of migrants swam across the border, in Ceuta, Spain. REUTERS/Jon Nazca



Sally, a Havanese Pomeranian mix aged 5, sits at the bar with her owner Matt Friedlander, 39, of New York City at the White Horse Tavern (est. 1880) as restrictions eased on indoor drinking in bars, allowing seating at the bar, during the outbreak of the coronavirus in Manhattan, New York. REUTERS/Andrew Kelly



Medical personnel prepares the body of a patient who died of COVID-19 inside the "farewell room" at the coronavirus Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the "Klinikum Darmstadt" clinic in Darmstadt, Germany. REUTERS/Kai Pfaffenbach

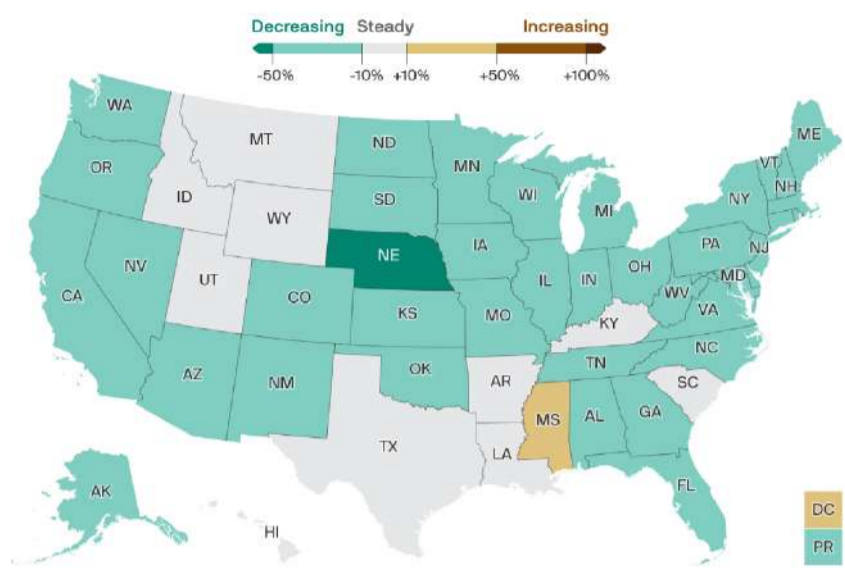
Southern DAILY Make Today Different

BUSINESS

New U.S. Coronavirus Cases Down By 20%

Change in new COVID-19 cases in the past week

Percent change of the 7-day average of new cases on May 11 and May 18, 2021



Data: CSSE Johns Hopkins University; Map: Andrew Witherspoon/Axios

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Coronavirus Infections Continue To Fall Across The U.S.

Why it matters: Experts have warned many times over the past year that it wouldn't be safe to rush back into pre-pandemic life without containing the virus. Now, though, the U.S. is finally containing the virus.

By the numbers: The U.S. averaged about 30,000 cases per day over the past week.

- The progress is happening remarkably fast, and across the board.

- It was just last week that average daily cases dropped below 40,000, for the first time in months. This week's figures are a 20% improvement over last week.

- 39 states saw their caseloads improve over the past week.

- Alabama showed an increase in new cases, although the state had some unusual reporting

glitches this week.

- Technically, cases also increased in Washington, D.C., but it's no cause for alarm: The District has fewer new cases per day (about 48, on average) than any state.



What's next: This is all happening because of the vaccines. The more people get vaccinated, the better it'll get. (Courtesy axios.com)

Related
With COVID-19 Cases On The De-

cline, U.S. States Moving Forward

Across the country, everyone from governors to business owners are asking "What's next?" as states record falling COVID-19 cases and more Americans are vaccinated against the novel coronavirus.

But despite the progress, White House Chief Medical Advisor Anthony Fauci, MD, warned this weekend that indoor case counts fall well below the average 43,000 currently seen across the country.

"As you get more people vaccinated, the number of cases per day will absolutely go down. We're averaging about 43,000 a day. We've got to get it much, much lower than that. When that gets lower, the risk of any infection indoor or outdoor diminishes dramatically," Fauci said on "This Week."



Twenty-two states still require masks indoors, according to the *New York Times*.

The United States reported 21,392 new COVID-19 cases yesterday and 238 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins COVID-19 tracker. In total, the country has confirmed 32,725,013 cases of COVID-19, including 581,939 deaths.

CDC: 44% of all adults fully vaccinated
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID Data Tracker shows that 329,843,825 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been delivered in the United States, and 261,599,381 have been administered, with 115,530,780 Americans fully vaccinated.

A total of 71.5% of all Americans 65 and older are fully vaccinated, as are 44.3% of Americans 18 and older. And nearly 60% of those over 18 have had at least one dose of vaccine.

In an effort to encourage more vaccine uptake, the Biden administration is pushing for more vaccine availability at doctors' offices. Physicians have largely been left out of the vaccination campaign this far, Politico reports, but vaccines have been shipped in quantities most offices are not equipped to handle or store.



The administration says making vaccines widely available at doctors' offices is the next step in ensuring that 70% of the adult population is vaccinated by July 1.

Other US developments:

- A California bar owner has been arrested for allegedly selling fake COVID-19 vaccination cards in what's believed to be the first thwarted scheme of its kind, NPR reports.

- New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy says the state is considering paying people to get vaccinated, according to Fox News. The state is aiming to have 70% of adults vaccinated by the end of June.



- A new report shared with *USA Today* suggests that the nation's leading social media companies, with the exception of Facebook, are losing the battle against COVID-19 disinformation. Debunked claims about vaccines are circulating widely on Twitter and TikTok. (Courtesy <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/>)

Related

Covid-19 Cases Are Falling In The U.S. Could It Be The Calm Before A Variant-Driven Storm?

If the U.S. Covid-19 epidemic were a marathon, the country might have made it to Mile 20. It's been through a lot, and already, there are signs things are getting better. But there are building leg cramps that could make this last push, which isn't actually all that short, really painful.

Cases and hospitalizations have fallen precipitously since their peaks last month, and now deaths — which are a lagging indicator

— have turned downward as well. That will ease the burden on health systems and offer a reprieve from what had for months been worsening infection and death data.



While the numbers are going in the right direction, they are still at once unimaginably high levels. Even on the best days, more than 1,300 people die of Covid-19 in the U.S., and many more than that die on many days, according to the Covid Tracking Project. The country just logged fewer than 100,000 new confirmed infections in a single day for the first time since early November; some days in January had more than 200,000 cases.

Experts fear the decline might just be temporary. A more transmissible — and, as evidence increasingly suggests, a seemingly deadlier — form of the coronavirus called B.1.1.7 is starting to build up in the U.S., even as overall case numbers come down.



It's not clear whether the variant could cause cases — and thus hospitalizations and deaths — to increase once again, but the specter of it is adding pressure to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible and to drive down overall cases as low as possible.

"We keep rolling the dice and keep letting the virus and its variants stay in the population at pretty high levels," said Jason Salemi, an epidemiologist at the

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

COMMUNITY

Swine Flu Virus With Human 'Pandemic Potential' Found In Pigs In China



The new flu strain is similar to the swine flu that spread globally in 2009

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

A swine flu virus emerged recently in China and is carried by pigs, but can infect humans, it has been reported. The researchers are concerned that it could mutate further so that it can spread easily from person to person, and trigger a global outbreak.

While it is not an immediate problem, they say, it has "all the hallmarks" of being highly adapted to infect humans and needs close monitoring.

As it's new, people could have little or no immunity to the virus. The scientists write in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* that measures to control the virus in pigs, and the close monitoring of swine industry workers, should be swiftly implemented.

Pandemic threat

A bad new strain of influenza is among the top disease threats that experts are watching for, even as the world attempts to bring to an end the current coronavirus pandemic. The last pandemic flu the world encountered - the swine flu outbreak of 2009 - was less deadly than initially feared, largely because many older people had some immunity to it, probably because of its similarity to other flu viruses

that had circulated years before.



Nasal swabs from more than 30,000 pigs in China over 7 years found an increase in an avianlike influenza virus that has swapped genes from several strains.

That virus, called A/H1N1pdm09, is now covered by the annual flu vaccine to make sure people are protected. The new flu strain that has been identified in China is similar to 2009 swine flu, but with some new changes.

So far, it hasn't posed a big threat, but Prof Kin-Chow Chang and colleagues who have been studying it, say it is one to keep an eye on.

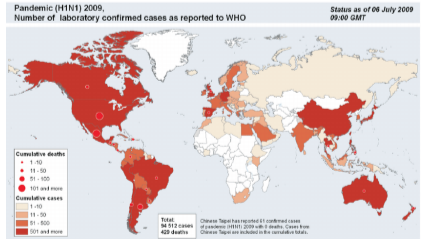
How worried should we be?

The virus, which the researchers call G4 EA H1N1, can grow and multiply in the cells that line the human airways. They found evidence of recent infection in people who worked in abattoirs and the swine

industry in China when they looked at data from 2011 to 2018.

Current flu vaccines do not appear to protect against it, although they could be adapted to do so if needed. Prof Kin-Chow Chang, who works at Nottingham University in the UK, told the BBC: "Right now we are distracted with coronavirus and rightly so. But we must not lose sight of potentially dangerous new viruses."

While this new virus is not an immediate problem, he says: "We should not ignore it." A World Health Organization spokeswoman said: "Eurasian avian-like swine influenza virus are known to be circulating in the swine population in Asia and to be able to infect humans sporadically. Twice a year during the influenza vaccine composition meetings, all information on the viruses is reviewed and the need for new candidate vaccine viruses is discussed. We will carefully read the paper to understand what is new."



"It also highlights that we cannot let down our guard on influenza; we need to be vigilant and continue surveillance even during the COVID-19 pandemic." (Courtesy <https://www.bbc.com/>)

What the world doesn't need now is a pandemic on top of a pandemic. But a new finding that pigs in China are more and more frequently becoming infected with a strain of influenza that has the potential to jump to humans has infectious disease researchers worldwide taking serious notice.

When multiple strains of influenza viruses infect the same pig, they can easily swap genes, a process known as "reassortment." The new study, published today in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, focuses on an influenza virus dubbed G4. The virus is a unique blend of three lineages: one similar to strains found in European and Asian birds, the H1N1 strain that caused the 2009 pandemic, and a North American H1N1 that has genes from avian, human, and pig

influenza viruses.

The G4 variant is especially concerning because its core is an avian influenza virus—to which humans have no immunity—with bits of mammalian strains mixed in. "From the data presented, it appears that this is a swine influenza virus that is poised to emerge in humans," says Edward Holmes, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Sydney who studies pathogenic. "Clearly this situation needs to be monitored very closely."



As part of a project to identify potential pandemic influenza strains, a team led by Liu Jinhua from the China Agricultural University (CAU) analyzed nearly 30,000 nasal swabs taken from pigs at slaughterhouses in 10 Chinese provinces, and another 1000 swabs from pigs with respiratory symptoms seen at their school's veterinary teaching hospital. The swabs, collected between 2011 and 2018, yielded 179 swine influenza viruses, the vast majority of which were G4 or one of five other G strains from the Eurasian avianlike lineage. "G4 virus has shown a sharp increase since 2016, and is the predominant genotype in circulation in pigs detected across at least 10 provinces," they write. Sun Honglei, the paper's first author, says G4's inclusion of genes from the 2009 H1N1 pandemic "may promote the virus adaptation" that leads to human-to-human transmission. Therefore, "It's necessary to strengthen the surveillance" of pigs in China for influenza viruses, says Sun, also at CAU.



Influenza viruses frequently jump from pigs to humans, but most do not then transmit between humans. Two cases of G4 infections of humans have been documented and both were dead-end infections that did not transmit to other people.

"The likelihood that this particular variant is going to cause a pandemic is low," says Martha Nelson, an evolutionary biologist at the U.S. National Institutes of Health's Fogarty International Center who studies pig influenza viruses and their spread to humans. But Nelson

notes that no one knew about the pandemic H1N1 strain, which jumped from pigs to people, until the first human cases surfaced in 2009.

"Influenza can surprise us," Nelson says. "And there's a risk that we neglect influenza and other threats at this time" of COVID-19.

The new study offers but a tiny glimpse into swine influenza strains in China, which has 500 million pigs. While Nelson thinks the predominance of G4 in their analysis is an interesting finding, she says it's hard to know whether its spread is a growing problem, given the relatively small sample size. "You're really not getting a good snapshot of what is dominant in pigs in China," she adds, stressing the need for more sampling in the nation's pigs.

In addition to stepping up surveillance, Sun says it makes sense to develop a vaccine against G4 for both pigs and humans. Webster says at the very least, the seed stock to make a human vaccine—variants of a strain that grow rapidly in the eggs used to make a flu vaccine—should be produced now. "Making the seed stock is not a big deal, and we should have it ready," Webster says. (Courtesy <https://www.sciencemag.org/>)