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Estimating Corn Yields Prior to Harvest

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There are several techniques for estimating corn grain yield prior to harvest. This version was developed by the agricultural Engineering Department at the University of Illinois. A numerical constant for kernel weight is figured into the equation in order to calculate grain yield. Since weight per kernel depends on hybrid and environment, errors in yield estimation is common.

Step	Action	Comments
1	Find the number of feet of row needed to make 1/1000 of an acre, for example 17 feet 5 inches for 30 inch row spacing.	Use at least 8 sample areas, more if field is highly variable.
2	Count the number of harvestable ears.	Small, secondary ears should not be counted
3	Count the number of kernels rows per ear on every fifth ear; calculate the average number.	Row number should be even; usually 14, 16, or 18; but use actual average.
4	Count the number of kernels per row on each of the same ears; calculate the average.	Do not count kernels on either the butt or tip that are less than half size
5	Calculate yield as: (number of ears X average row number X average kernel number per row) ÷ 90.	Be cautious, there are many places in which to make errors in estimate.