

2023 DARIEN

# cornfest



Sept. 8 to 10 at  
Darien West Park

*I wanna go where the  
Big Corn Roasts*

**FREE  
SWEET CORN**

Saturday and  
Sunday, 11 a.m.  
to 3 p.m.

PUBLISHED BY  
Southern Lakes Newspapers  
and Rock Valley Publishing

Sept. 2023



# Birds Eye supports fest with free corn

Birds Eye foods in Darien donates the sweet corn for the annual Cornfest celebration. Free roasted corn on the cob will be served all Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 9 and 10, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Darien West Park.

According to the Birds Eye website, Clarence Birdseye was a man of vision, curiosity and persistence.

Birdseye was a naturalist, a businessman and a skillful inventor who used his unique gifts to develop a flash freezing process that not only preserved food safely but also preserved its taste and appearance.

He returned to the United States and formed the General Seafood Corporation with some wealthy partners who believed in his process. The partners' financial support allowed the inventive Birdseye



to develop and perfect a machine called a "Quick Freeze Machine" that he unveiled in 1926.

Birdseye then focused on marketing. He tested refrigerated grocery display cases and entered into a joint venture agreement to manufacture them.

Birdseye's company began leasing refrigerated boxcars to transport frozen foods by rail in 1944. This made national distribution a reality and Birdseye a legend.

### Fresh from the farm

Birds Eye has a long history of working with local farmers and some of the company's family farms go back generations, according to the website.

"Some companies have lofty goals. To fight disease. Or feed the world. Or save the planet. At Birds Eye our ambition is

humble. We just want to help people eat more vegetables," the Birds Eye website states.

Birds Eye says its vegetables ripen in the field – not on the truck.

"We pick our vegetables at the height of nutritional value. Our farmers carefully select only the best, highest-quality vegetables and they are flash frozen within hours to lock in that freshness," the website states.

"Birds Eye veggies are as nutritious when they hit your plate, as the day they were picked," it states.

### Responsible growing

Birds Eye supports farmers' efforts with irrigation water conservation to reduce usage and enable reuse of post-use water, according to the website.

The company also works together to treat only specific parts of their fields with fertilization, avoiding unnecessary costs and potential environmental impact of

spraying entire fields.

According to its website, Birds Eye has invested in technology in the fields that enables it to communicate directly with the plants. This allows them to time harvesting with their production schedule, so that they pick the vegetables at peak ripeness and transport them directly to the plants that are ready to receive, wash and freeze them all within a few hours.

This process conserves water and energy, while locking in important nutrients and great taste, the website states.

For more information about Birds Eye, visit [www.birdseye.com](http://www.birdseye.com).

**above:** People patiently wait in line for free sweet corn during a past Cornfest event. This year's fest will be Sept. 8-10 at Darien West Park.

FILE PHOTO Cornfest 2023

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# 'I wanna go where the Big Corn Roasts'

*Annual Darien Cornfest celebration ready to roast*

The 62nd annual Cornfest runs Sept. 8 to 10 at Darien West Park. This year's theme is "I wanna go where the Big Corn Roasts."

Darien West Park is at the intersection of Highway 14 and North Road at 335 W. Madison St.

Cornfest features family friendly activities throughout its three-day run with live music, children's activities, a parade, fireworks and carnival. The festival also offers sporting tournaments in softball, horseshoe, Hammerschlagen and volleyball and.

The annual celebration of all things corn has all-you-can-eat sweet corn, donated by Birds Eye Foods, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 10 and 11.

The Delavan-Darien Athletic Booster Club is, once again, hosting a breakfast

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



**THE TOYS**

## 2023 Darien CORNFEST

**Sept. 8 to 10  
in Darien West Park**

Featuring free sweet corn Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**All weekend** – 32-team Men's Softball Tournament, volleyball tournament, horseshoe tournament, merchandise and crafts, bingo and midway.

**Carnival \$25 wristband specials** – Friday, 6 to 10 p.m.; Saturday, noon to 4 p.m. and again on Saturday, 5 to 9 p.m.

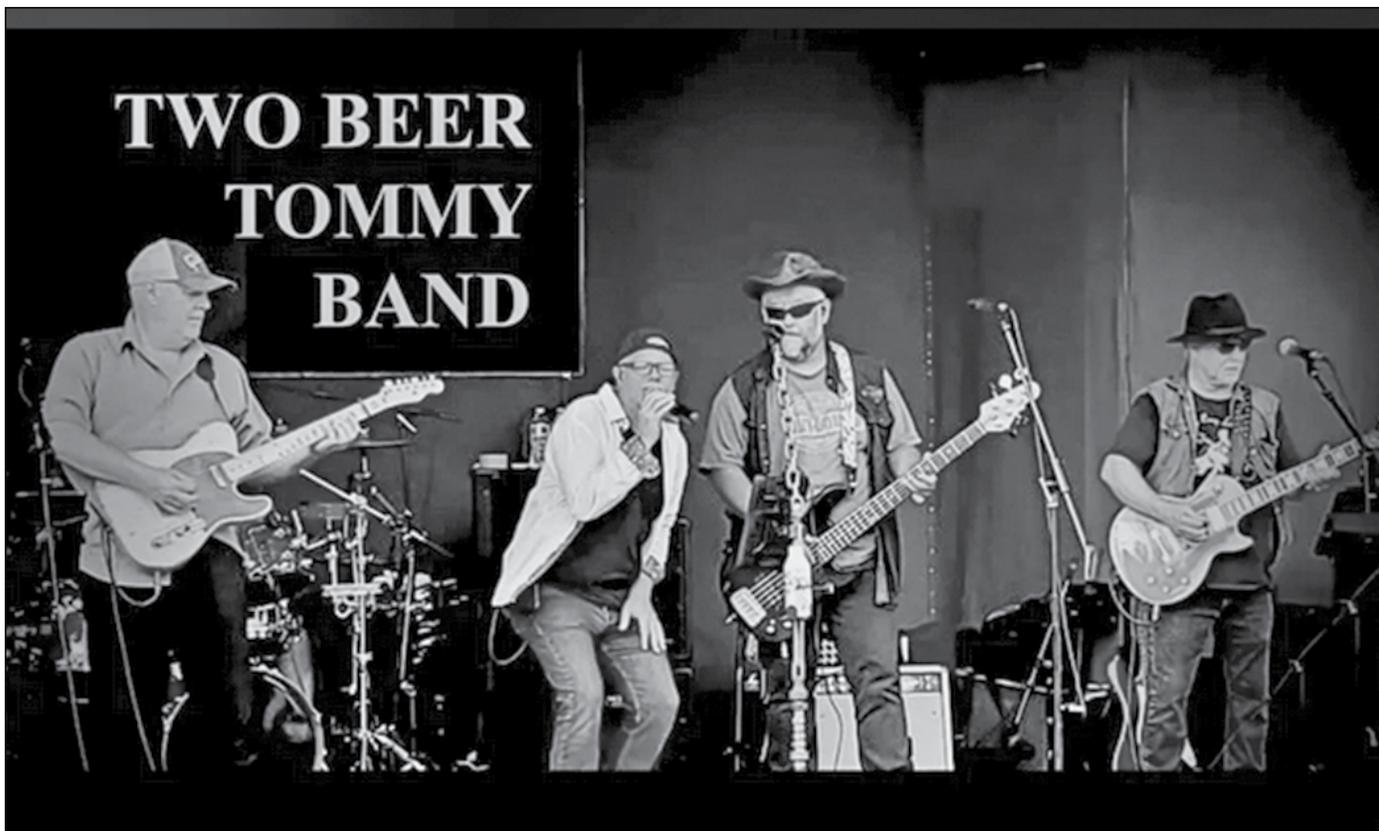
### ENTERTAINMENT

**Friday, Sept. 8**

- 7-11 p.m. Two Beer Tommy

**Saturday, Sept. 9**

- 7-11 p.m. – The Toys



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## 2023 DARIEN CORNFEST

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People of all ages enjoy sweet corn and Darien Cornfest is an ideal place to sit down with an ear and take in a festival that celebrates corn. Organizers continue to make sure it's a family friendly event, from a carnival and games to bingo, tournaments and live music.

STOCK PHOTO Cornfest 2023



A truckload of corn is delivered during a past Cornfest event. Free sweet corn is served from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday during the annual celebration, donated by Birds Eye foods. There is generally a line of people waiting to get the free corn but it's reportedly worth the wait.

FILE PHOTO Cornfest 2023

from 7:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Saturday and 8:10 to 10:30 a.m. on Sunday.

Other highlights include the Mini-Rod Tractor Pull at noon on Saturday and the Big Corn Shell-Out at 3 p.m. Sunday, followed by the annual raffle drawing at 4 p.m. (tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5.)

### Tri-County Pullers

Another fun activity for kids of all ages is the Tri-County Pullers Mini Rod Tractor Pull on Saturday afternoon.

"Tri-County Pullers Inc. brings some of the loudest and fastest paced mini-rod tractor pulling in Southern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. Creating exciting entertainment for all ages for the last 30 years, the Tri-County Pullers, Inc. is a family-based organization pulling at fairs and festivals with the finest built tractors in the nation. We support your local Lions clubs and Fire and EMS organizations," the Tri-County Pullers website states.

### Tournaments, contests

Every year, Cornfest hosts a 32-team softball tournament. Prizes are awarded for the top placing teams. Games are played Saturday and Sunday.

Prizes will be awarded to top three teams in championship round. There will be a "toilet bowl" round as well.

For more information or to sign up (deadline is Sept. 1), contact Nolan at rook\_09@yahoo.com or 262-203-2894.

The volleyball tournament of competitive co-ed 6's is Saturday at the Darien West Park volleyball courts

A mandatory captain's meeting will be held at 8 a.m. on Saturday, play at 8:30. Rules – USA volleyball rules. Pool play, two games of 25. Games played will be determined by the number of teams and pools.

Cornfest also hosts horseshoe and Hammerschlag games.

Hammerschlag is a German game reportedly dating from 1940 in which several contestants try to hammer a nail into a post. The hammer is passed between players until someone countersinks their nail into the wood. It is usually considered an adult game but children can play it when accompanied by an adult.

Hammerschlagen is played just outside the corn barn Friday night and Saturday afternoon. Prizes are awarded to the winners and are subject to change.

### Parade

The 2023 Cornfest parade kicks off with the Liberty Bike Ride at 11:15 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 10, followed by the parade line up, which steps off in downtown Darien at noon.

The Liberty Bike Ride is an annual tradition that features military veterans on motorcycles giving tribute to our current and lost military men and women with decorated motorcycles.

Any veteran who would like to ride a motorcycle (all kinds welcome) in the Liberty Bike Ride can fill out the parade form at the Cornfest website, [www.dariencornfest.us](http://www.dariencornfest.us).

Line-up for parade units being judged will begin at 10 a.m. Parade participants must be lined up in your spot before 11 a.m. to be judged.

The parade route is about three-quarters of a mile long. There will be two reviewing stands the first will be in front of the Farmers Inn and the other on Madison Street.

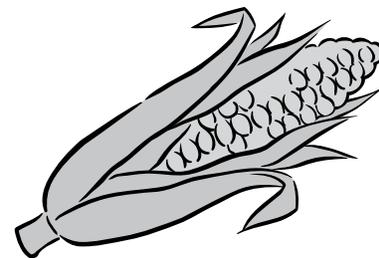
Parade line-ups are sent out in advance. If there are any questions (including those on parade day), go to the staging area at Darien Legion Hall.

Cornfest awards ribbons for novelties, horses and tractors. Ribbons and cash prizes are awarded for floats.

### Carnival

The carnival is open all three days of the event with wristband specials at \$25 from 6 to 10 p.m. on Friday, noon to 4 p.m. and again from 5 to 9 p.m. on Saturday.

Headlining on the Miller Lite Stage again this year are the Two Beer Tommy on Friday and the The Toys on Saturday. Both bands take the stage at 7 p.m.



## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Friday, Sept. 8

6 to 10 p.m. – Carnival rides  
5 to 9 p.m. – Bingo  
6 p.m. – Co-ed softball, Hammerschlag, carnival  
7 p.m. – Two Beer Tommy on the Miller Lite Stage  
9 p.m. – Fireworks

### Saturday, Sept. 9

7:30 to 10 a.m. – Booster Club breakfast  
All day – 32-Team men's softball tournament, volleyball tournament, merchandise and crafts, bingo, Hammerschlag  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Bingo, merchandise and crafts, volleyball tournament  
11 a.m. – Horseshoe tournament  
11 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Darien Women's Club Carmel Apples Delights  
11 a.m. – Cornhole tournament  
Noon to 3 p.m. – Stateline Play Boys  
Noon p.m. – Mini-Rod Tractor Pull, Hammerschlag  
3:30 p.m. – Walworth County Cloggers  
7 p.m. – The Toys on the Miller Lite Stage

### Sunday, Sept. 10

8 to 10:30 a.m., Booster Club breakfast  
All day – 32-Team men's softball tournament, merchandise, crafts, bingo and carnival  
11 a.m. – Horseshoe Tournament  
11 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Darien Women's Club Carmel Apples Delights  
11:15 a.m. – Liberty Bike Ride  
Noon – Parade in downtown Darien  
3 p.m. – The Big Corn Shell-Out  
4 p.m. – Raffle drawing (\$1 each or six for \$5)

For more information on Cornfest events, go to [www.dariencornfest.com](http://www.dariencornfest.com).

# Cornfest tournaments offer fun for all



Sports tournaments and games have always been a part of the Darien Cornfest event. From softball to volleyball and corn hole to Hammerschlagen there is something for everyone.

## **SOFTBALL**

Darien Cornfest hosts a 32-team softball tournament every year. Prizes are awarded for the top placing teams. Games start Friday night and run all weekend.

For more information or to sign up (deadline is Sept. 1), contact Nolan at [rook\\_09@yahoo.com](mailto:rook_09@yahoo.com) or 262-203-2894.

## **VOLLEYBALL**

The volleyball tournament of competitive co-ed 6's begins Saturday morning at the Darien West Park volleyball courts.

Rules – USA volleyball rules. Pool play, two games of 25. Games played will be determined by the amount of teams and pools.

Teams pre-register for this event.

## **HORSESHOE**

The horseshoe tournament will be on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 9 and 10.

Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. and the tournament starts at 11 a.m. both days.

For more information, visit the festival website at [www.dariencornfest.com](http://www.dariencornfest.com).

## **CORNHOLE**

The cornhole tournament is at 11 a.m. on Saturday. Sign-up begins at 10:30 a.m.

## **HAMMERSCHLAGEN**

Hammerschlagen is a German game reportedly dating from 1940 in which several contestants try to hammer a nail into a post.

The hammer is passed between players until someone countersinks their nail into the wood. It is usually considered an adult game but children can play when accompanied by an adult.

Hammerschlagen is played just outside the corn barn Friday night and throughout the day Saturday. Prizes are awarded to the winners and are subject to change.

## **BINGO**

Bingo is played Friday from 5 to 9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It takes place in the Fire Station garage next to the festival grounds.

Cash prizes are awarded (amounts vary depending on participation).



The Darien Cornfest features a variety of tournaments including corn hole, horseshoes, softball and volleyball. Volleyball is a pre-registered competition while teams can register on site for horseshoes as well as corn hole. The horseshoe pits on the grounds were refurbished a couple of years ago, much to the delight of players.

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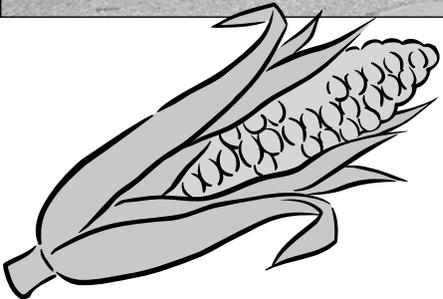
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# Rides & treats

Kids of all ages take a ride in a tractor-pulled train during a past Cornfest event in Darien. This year's festival returns with free corn, numerous sports tournaments, a carnival, a parade, fireworks and a variety of food and drinks available for purchase.

DAVE DRESLOW FILE PHOTOS Cornfest 2023



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*Enjoy the Cornfest!*

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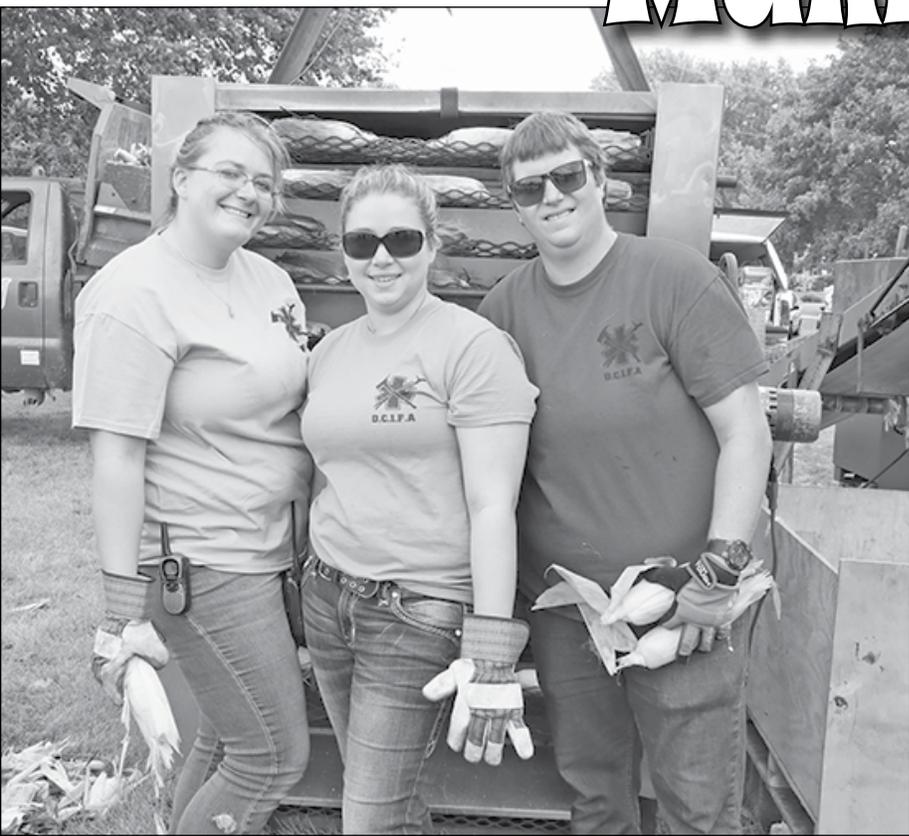
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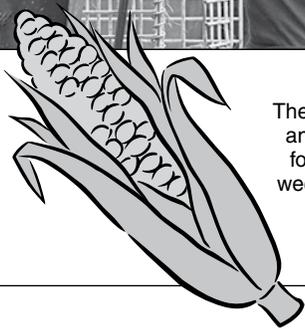
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# Making memories



Darien Cornfest is in its 62nd year. Here's a look back at just a sampling of memorable moments from previous festivals. **top:** The Delavan-Darien High School's band, the Blue Regiment, brings the tunes to the 2022 Cornfest parade. **above:** This trio is all smiles while helping at corn roasting stations, which rely on plenty of volunteers. **top right:** A Merchandies & Crafts event is held Saturday and Sunday during Cornfest. This year the marketplace area will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday. **at right:** Busy B's float – decorated with some "corny" characters as well as local kids, rides the parade route during a past event.



The 2023 Darien Cornfest will be Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 8-10. In addition to free corn for a limited time on Saturday and Sunday, the weekend will feature several sports tournaments, a carnival and live music.

FILE PHOTOS Cornfest 2023



One of many popular events during Darien Cornfest is the Tri-County Pullers Mini Rod Tractor Pull, which begins at noon on Saturday, Sept. 9. According to the TCP website, they aim to bring some of the "loudest and fastest paced mini-rod tractor pulling" to venues in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Tri-County has been running pull events for 30-plus years and is a "family-based organization. We support local Lions clubs, and fire and EMS organization," the website states.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Cornfest 2023

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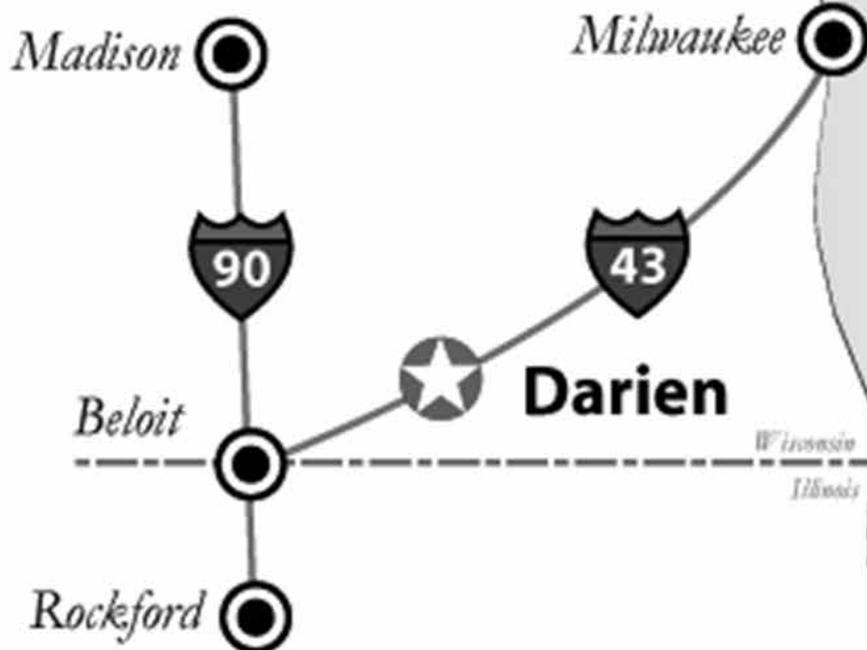
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# How to get to Cornfest

Darien Cornfest is at Darien West Park, which is just east of Interstate 43 (Exit 15) on Highway 14. Darien is about 15 minutes north of Beloit, an hour from Milwaukee and only minutes from Lake Geneva and Fox Lake, Illinois.



# Going green isn't easy

## Challenges farmers face with organic farming

Organic production represents less than 1% of U.S. crop acres, but according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the demand for organics is rising. As a result, many farms are adding organic acreage to their farming operations.

“Consumer demand for more organic vegetables has driven our company in that direction,” says Adrian Garcia, an in-house pest control adviser with Braga Fresh Family Farms.

For Burkey Farms, the decision was purely economic. “We looked pretty smart when we sold organic corn for \$9 per bushel, and conventional corn was at \$3.10,” said Eric Thalken, operations manager.

Organic farming can be profitable, but there are still several obstacles to widespread adoption. Below are three significant challenges facing organic farmers.

### Pest and weed control

Weed, disease and insect control are shared challenges for organic growers. They have limited pesticide options because they can only use those approved by the Organic Materials Review Institute.

Some producers like Burkey farms use biological practices like cover crops that prevent soil erosion, increase soil quality, suppress weed growth, prevent disease and manage pests. Organic farms may also use mechanical weed control, though that requires two cultivations and two passes with a rotary hose. In rainy years, weeds can still get the upper hand.

At Braga Fresh Family Farms, in-season weed control is often by hand. Over the past three years, the farm began to rely on robotic weeding machines to save labor and remove weeds more effectively. To control pests, the farm has purchased



Organic farming can be profitable, but there are still obstacles to widespread adoption, even as demand for the product is increasing.

STOCK PHOTO Cornfest 2023

thousands of beneficial insects – including parasitic wasps, lacewings and Aphidoletes – that are released into the field by a drone. They then reproduce and feed on harmful pests.

While these strategies work well in the West, it's nearly impossible to keep ahead of constant pest pressure in tropical climates where it rains most afternoons. Hot, humid weather fosters insect reproduction, weed growth and fungal diseases. Biopesticides can be used, but they need to be applied almost daily, increasing costs for farmers.

### Shrinking yields and growing costs

Despite strides to improve organic tools and practices, yields still lag. USDA data from 2016 show conventional crops out-yielded organics for every U.S. crop except forages.

“We spend less on crop seed, fertility and chemicals but more on equipment, labor and cover crops than an average farm in our area,” Thalken says. “Overhead can be slightly more with increased costs of administration.”

Production costs for organic agriculture can vary widely. In California, Garcia

estimates that costs to grow organic vegetables are 20%-25% higher than non-organic, due to added pest control steps and higher labor costs.

Fertilization is a major variable. Commercial organic fertilizer is expensive, and it's challenging to reach the necessary nitrogen levels needed for farming. Burkey Farms saves on fertilizer costs by applying hog manure. As with conventional crop producers who rely on manure for fertilizer, there is a risk of damaging the buildup of sodium and potassium in the soil.

### Environmental impacts

The environmental impacts of agricultural production vary by practice. With lower yields, organic production requires more land to generate the same amount of food. According to a 2016 analysis of USDA yield data, if all crops switched to organic production, more than 100 million more farmland acres – an area the size of California – would be needed to achieve the same crop output.

OMRI-approved pesticides have impacts, too. Organic farmers commonly use copper sulfate as a fungicide. Although a natural compound, copper sulfate can accumulate in the soil and harm soil microbes, according to the Genetic Literacy Project.

The multiple passes for weed control in organic production consume more fuel and increase soil compaction. Disturbing the ground with mechanical weed control also can erode soil and damage soil health.

“At the end of the day, the population is growing,” said Liz Hunt, head of sustainable and responsible business at Syngenta. “We need to make sure we are meeting these needs in a way that optimizes land and input use.”

# 62ND ANNUAL DARIEN CORNFEST



**3 BIG DAYS**  
**September 8, 9, & 10**  
**at Darien West Park**

## FRIDAY, SEPT 8

- TWO Beer Tommy**  
**On the Miller Lite Stage**  
7PM-11PM
- Bingo** 5-9PM
- CoEd Softball** 6PM
- Fireworks** 9PM
- Hammerschlag**
- Carnival Rides** 6PM-10PM

## SATURDAY, SEPT 9

- DDSAB Breakfast** 7:30-10AM
- Softball Tournament**
- Bingo** 10-4PM
- Merchandise & Crafts**
- Carnival Rides**
- Volleyball Tournament**
- Darien Women's Club**
- Carmel Apple Delights** 11-4PM
- Corn Hole Tournament** 11AM
- Stateline Play Boys** Noon-3PM
- Horseshoe Tournament** 11AM
- Mini-Rod Tractor Pull** Noon
- Hammerschlag**
- Walworth County Cloggers** 3:30PM

**The Toys**  
**On The Miller Lite Stage** 7PM-11PM

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**Delicious FREE**  
**Sweet Corn**  
**Saturday & Sunday**  
**11AM - 3PM**  
*Donated by*  
**BIRDS EYE**

## SUNDAY, SEPT 10

- Mens Softball Tournament**
- DDSAB Breakfast** 8-10:30AM
- Merchandise & Crafts**
- Bingo** 10-3PM
- Carnival Rides**
- Darien Womens Club**
- Carmel Apple Delights** 11-5PM
- Horseshoe Tournament** 11AM
- Liberty Bike Ride** 11:15AM
- HUGE Parade** Noon  
(Downtown Darien)
- The Big Corn Shell-out** 3PM
- Raffle Drawing** 4PM  
(\$1 each or 6 tickets for \$5)

**Carnival Wristband**  
**Special \$25**  
Friday 6pm-10pm  
Saturday noon-4pm &  
Saturday evening 5pm-9pm

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