

US Fertilizer Market Summary 5/4/2026

	5/1/26	Last Week	Year Ago
Urea US Gulf NOLA	623-660	610-695	380-420
DAP US Gulf NOLA	730-740	700-730	615-630
MAP US Gulf NOLA	765-775	755	610-635
Potash Us Gulf NOLA	335-340	324-340	315-320

The fertilizer market is currently dominated by the Iran-US conflict and the subsequent effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz. This has paralyzed approximately one-third of the global seaborne trade for urea and ammonia. While global prices have spiked to levels nearly double pre-war baselines, recent days have seen extreme volatility as markets react to conflicting reports about potential shipping re-openings and new export quotas from major producers like China and Russia.

US Urea Market

Current Status: NOLA (New Orleans) barge pricing is highly volatile, settling between **\$610–\$695/st** FOB. Prices surged in early April but retreated slightly as India hesitated to award its latest tender due to high costs. However, interior U.S. prices remain "sticky" and high, with the Cornbelt averaging **\$750–\$800/st**.

Acreage Impact: High nitrogen costs are projected to shift U.S. planting decisions, potentially reducing corn acreage by 1 to 1.5 million acres in favor of soybeans, which require less nitrogen.

Price Drivers (Next 3 Months):

- **Strait of Hormuz Status:** Any verified "humanitarian corridor" or naval escort for fertilizer vessels would immediately cool the NOLA market; conversely, more seizures will drive prices toward \$1,000/st.
- **China Export Quotas:** China's April 23 announcement to cut 2026 urea exports by 33% (to 3.3 million mt) and ban sales to India removes a massive supply "safety valve" for the global market.
- **U.S. Shipping Waivers:** The White House's 90-day extension of the Jones Act waiver (through August) eases the cost of moving fertilizer between American ports using foreign-flagged ships, providing some relief to domestic logistics.
- **Natural Gas Volatility:** European production costs remain elevated (around \$539/mt), keeping a high floor under global prices as gas prices fluctuate with the conflict.

US DAP/MAP (Phosphate) Market

Current Status: Prices are currently supported more by tight supply than robust demand. NOLA DAP prices fell slightly this week to **\$700–\$730/st** as buyers resisted high levels. However, global benchmarks remain firm, with India seeing offers in the **upper-\$800s/mt CFR**.

Price Drivers (Next 3 Months)

- **Moroccan Turnarounds:** OCP (Morocco) has moved up its maintenance schedule, which will likely constrain global DAP availability through early summer.
- **Sulfuric Acid Squeeze:** The war has tightened the sulfuric acid market (a key input for phosphate production). Manufacturers like Lynas report that high acid prices will continue to inflate production costs rather than just limit volume.
- **Russia/China Controls:** Russia extended its 20 million mt fertilizer export quota through December but prioritized domestic supply. China's ban on phosphate exports remains a major supply risk for Brazil and the U.S.

US Potash Market

Current Status: Potash has been the "calmest" major nutrient. NOLA prices are stable at **\$324–\$340/st**. While nitrogen and phosphate prices have surged, potash remains relatively affordable, with global supplies considered "optimistic" and well-balanced for 2026.

Price Drivers (Next 3 Months)

- **Soil Replenishment Demand:** Record crop yields in North America have depleted soil potassium levels; major producers like Nutrien and Mosaic anticipate record global shipments in 2026 as farmers seek to rebuild soil health.
- **Inventory Lag:** If farmers cut back on P (Phosphate) applications due to cost, K (Potash) applications often fall as well, since they are frequently applied together. This could soften demand during the "spring top-off" window.
- **Logistics Bottlenecks:** While supply is ample, U.S. inland lock repairs (e.g., Lockport Lock closure through May 19) are blocking access to key Chicago-area terminals, potentially creating localized price spikes in the Midwest despite flat NOLA values.