Table 1 presents indices for each factor, while Table 2 lists bankers top 2021 farming concerns with a 10 indicating most important, and a 1 indicating the least important issue or concern. As scored, bankers expect water availability to be the top 2021 farming issue, and farm labor cost and availability as the second most important 2021 farm concern. Farmer liquidity was the least important concern.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 1: Rural Mainstreet Economy Last 2 Months & One Year Ago: (index > 50 indicates expansion) |
|  | Dec.- 19 | Nov. - 20 | Dec. - 20 |
| Area economic index | 49.1 | 46.8 | 51.6 |
| Loan volume | 50.0 | 25.8 | 43.8 |
| Checking deposits | 61.1 | 87.1 | 78.1 |
| Certificates of deposit and savings instruments | 50.0 | 46.8 | 42.2 |
| Farmland prices | 52.8 | 55.0 | 54.8 |
| Farm equipment sales | 27.9 | 42.9 | 50.1 |
| Home sales | 58.6 | 73.3 | 71.0 |
| Hiring  | 60.0 | 53.2 | 50.0 |
| Retail business | 51.4 | 37.9 | 40.6 |
| Confidence index (area economy six months out) | 45.8 | 50.0 | 62.9 |

|  |
| --- |
| Table 2: Top 2021 concerns for farming economy (10= most important, 1=not important)  |
|  | Average score |
| 1. Water availability | 7.4 |
| 2. Farm labor (cost and availability) | 7.0 |
| 3. Third party financing | 6.7 |
| 4. Land rents and land values | 5.7 |
| 5. Uncertainty around tariffs and trade | 5.3 |
| 6. Covid-19 and its economic impacts | 4.9 |
| 7. Total leverage | 4.5 |
| 8. Federal government financial support | 4.4 |
| 9. Farm income levels | 4.3 |
| 10. Farmer liquidity (working capital) | 3.8 |
| Source: Creighton’s December 2020 Rural Mainstreet Survey |

Follow Ernie Goss on Twitter [www.twitter.com/erniegoss](http://www.twitter.com/erniegoss)

For historical data and forecasts, visit our website:

<https://www.creighton.edu/economicoutlook/>

For ongoing commentary on recent economic developments, visit our blog at:

<http://www.economictrends.blogspot.com/>