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**(Regional)- Rural Midwest Bankers Expect More Economic Growth**

By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 04/18/2013 04:17 PM

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) - A monthly survey of bankers says that strong farm income continues to boost the economy in rural areas of 10 Midwest and Plains states.

The overall economic index for the region grew to 58.3 in April from March's 56.9.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss oversees the survey. He says agricultural businesses and energy-producing firms continue to thrive in the region.

But the continued growth in farmland price index that hit 66.9 in April remains a concern for smaller farmers.

The index ranges from 0 to 100, with 50 representing growth neutral. Any score above 50 suggests economic growth in the months ahead.

The index is based on a survey of rural bankers in Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.