HELPING YOU DELIVER ON DEMAND

Whether it’s improving soybean meal to outperform the competition or sharing the growing opportunity of high oleic soybeans, the soy checkoff has been working behind the scenes to help farmers satisfy their customers’ needs. We’re looking inside the bean, beyond the bushel and around the world to keep preference for U.S. soy strong. And for U.S. soybean farmers like you, the impact is invaluable.

See more ways the soy checkoff is maximizing profit opportunities for farmers at unitedsoybean.org
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Research programs have embraced biotechnology contributing to the important goal of using environmentally sustainable farming practices. It has let farmers reduce pesticide use, preserve and improve soil quality through the use of conservation practices, and reduces runoff therefore, improving fertilizer efficiency. In addition, the “carbon footprint” has been reduced by 58.9 billions pounds of carbon dioxide emissions between 1996 and 2012, the equivalent of taking 11.8 million cars off the road for one year. Your soybean checkoff will continue to advocate the safe and effective use of biotechnology to benefit the food supply and its consumers.

Note from the CEO

We are halfway through the board’s FY18 business year and one of the big undertakings is to develop the strategic plan for the next three fiscal years. Board members have spent time planning and deciding the direction for research programs, domestic and international marketing activities, as well as educational and communication projects. It is a careful thought process developing the goals for the soybean checkoff and the intent is to have the business plan completed by the September board meeting for implementation in FY19.

“arbage belongs to the few of us still willing to get our hands dirty.”
- Roland Tiangco

Have a safe and fast planting season.
Photo by United Soybean Board
Tony’s Take on Soybean’s Future
“Putting the Pieces Together”

I’m sure I speak for most producers in saying “Bring on the Spring!” I for one have a bad case of cabin fever and can’t wait for the snow to melt and temperatures warm up so we can get into the fields. In the winter edition of SoybeaNebraska, I used the theme “Putting the Pieces Together.” My goal is to use this theme throughout the year to help soybean producers and board members focus on putting the pieces of their own puzzles together to ensure success in 2018.

As I look at the “Soybean Production Puzzle,” 20 years ago, that puzzle was extremely easy with the adoption of Roundup Ready technology. Fast forward to 2018, and it feels like we are putting the pieces together without a design on the pieces. Now growers have so many different herbicide platforms to choose from between Roundup Ready 2 Xtend, Liberty Link, Roundup Ready and conventional soybeans. Within the next few years, we will see Dow’s Enlist soybeans, Bayer’s Balance GT and Syngenta’s MGI trait for HPPD tolerance. I would not be surprised to see a soybean plant with five or six different herbicide traits stacked on it in the next three to four years. With this possibility coming down the road, the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB) along with our universities and industry representatives are pushing to bring producers the pertinent information that they will need in the next few years as weed species are getting tougher to control.

The NSB is currently going through the process of putting together the Strategic Plan for 2019-2021. The board members will create a road map for decision-making and areas of focus that help assist us to effectively invest and leverage checkoff funds that maximize marketing, research and educational opportunities to all Nebraska soybean producers. The next large task that the board will address in March is the annual research meeting. Typically the board members will review and critique anywhere from 30 - 50 projects to help provide answers or solutions to challenges facing Nebraska soybean producers in the years to come.

As spring rapidly approaches, now is the time for every producer to make sure they have all of the correct puzzle pieces laid out and accounted for as we try to build the “2018 Soybean Production Puzzle.” I wish you all a safe planting season, and I can’t wait to see how the 2018 crop comes together.

Tony Johanson
Chairman, Nebraska Soybean Board

The Nebraska Soybean Board is a private, non-profit checkoff board that is responsible for the research and promotion of soybeans in an effort to increase the profitability of the state’s 22,000 soybean producers.

Nebraska Soybean Board Directors
District 1
Anne Meis, Elgin

District 2
Tony Johanson (Chairman), Oakland

District 3
Richard Bartek, Ithaca

District 4
Eugene Goering (Vice Chairman), Columbus

District 5
Daryl Obermeyer (Treasurer), Brownville

District 6
Larry Tonniges, Utica

District 7
Doug Saathoff, Trumbull

District 8
Terry Horky (Secretary), Sargent

At-Large
Greg Anderson, Newman Grove

United Soybean Board Directors
Mark Caspers, Auburn
Gregg Fujan, Weston
Mike Korth, Randolph
Ed Lammers, Hartington

Nebraska Soybean Board Staff
Lisa Abler
Victor Bohuslavsky
Cale Buhr
Lois Ronhovde
Aryel Smith
Teri Zimmerman
Greetings to all involved in the soybean industry.

My name is Robert Johnston, a producer from Clearwater and I was elected president of the Nebraska Soybean Association during our annual meeting this past December. I am proud to work on behalf of the soybean industry and represent soybean producers. On our irrigated family farm we raise soybeans, corn and alfalfa.

Looking back at the 2017 crop season, we remember the challenges that we were faced with. Weather and disease always seem to be an issue and in the past couple of years commodity prices have been a major concern. It is hard for me to believe that 2017 U.S. soybean acres were just short of corn acres and some forecasters are predicting 2018 U.S. soybean acres to overtake corn. I hope everyone has their planters in the shop and has been working on a 2018 marketing plan.

Every year before the planting season begins, we have the legislative law making season. Currently, we are in the 105th Nebraska Legislature. The Unicameral convened on Jan. 3rd for its second session, one that lasts 60 days. As in previous years, the NSA has made property taxes its number one priority. The directors of the NSA have always been willing to work with senators and present testimony at hearings when needed. It seems that with the property tax issues we face today, the need to be at the state capitol has escalated. Most of the testimony given the last two years has been a joint effort with other agriculture groups, called The Agriculture Leaders Working Group.

The Ag Leaders have testified on many property tax related bills. Some of those include LB 829, LB 947, LB 1103, LB1101, LB1084 and others. We appreciate those senators that see an urgent need for property tax relief. If the legislative body and governor fail to act, Nebraska property owners will be left with no other choice but to pursue relief through a ballot measure. Our work is never finished in the state capitol. I encourage you to contact your senator and let them know we need meaningful property tax reform now.

Hope we all have a safe 2018 planting season.

I Believe, I Belong…

For the short time that I have been a member of the Nebraska Soybean Association, I have seen that there are many political and economic roadblocks that affect American farmers more than we realize. With that being said, the Soybean Association has done a tremendous amount of work in the political realm to fight for what's best for American producers. By being a member of the Nebraska Soybean Association you are helping not only your future in agriculture but the future generations yet to come.

That's why I am a member of the Nebraska Soybean Association.

– Joey Robison, Bertrand, District 3 NSA Director
What are the main benefits of the Nebraska Soybean Checkoff?

I have seen many benefits of the Nebraska Soybean checkoff. Before I was elected to the NSB, I saw firsthand how checkoff dollars are being used by taking part in the See For Yourself tours sponsored by the checkoff. One of those benefits is using checkoff dollars to support and develop the biodiesel industry. Because of this funding, $0.63 has been added to a bushel of soybeans. With low commodity prices, every cent counts. I have also seen ships being loaded in the Pacific Northwest with soybeans from Nebraska and surrounding states. Checkoff dollars are being used to promote and find new markets internationally as well as domestically. This all adds value to the soybeans grown in Nebraska. Lastly, I have seen bioheat being used and promoted in New York City. Home heating oil is a big deal in NYC, and using soy oil in that process is absolutely fascinating.

Talk about NSB funded projects that have made a significant impact for soybean farmers.

One project that has an impact for soybean farmers is Soybean Management Days during the summer. Farmers can come to the event and gain information on the different research that has taken place during the growing season. That information can be applied back to their farm to help their bottom line.

Many research projects get funded through the Nebraska Soybean Board. Varieties that are resistant to different herbicides are being studied. Weeds are a huge issue and will continue to be studied to find ways to combat them. Also the cover crop conference that takes place in February benefits Nebraska farmers. Cover crops are becoming increasingly more popular and studies are taking place to know which ones to plant, why they are important to the soil, and to the next season’s crop. As you can tell, many valuable projects are funded by the NSB.

As an NSB director, what is a goal that you want to achieve through the checkoff?

One thing I would like to see achieved is more promotion and research done to increase high oleic soybean acres and the oil. I believe high oleic soybeans and the oil will benefit the producer as well as the consumer.

I was recently elected to the NSB and I am still learning what the board has done and the board is looking to accomplish in the future. Many great things have been accomplished by forward thinking individuals who are currently board members and also past members. I am looking forward to working with these talented individuals to set and achieve new goals.

As an NSB director, what is a goal that you want to achieve through the checkoff?

Well, first and foremost, it is profitability for the soybean farmers. The soybean business has been a good business to be in both here and abroad, as acres have expanded domestically and globally. Demand is strong, however as NSB directors, we are charged with the responsibility of investing checkoff dollars into those areas that will increase demand and help keep the soybean industry strong. A goal for me is to always look at that new opportunity, that new challenge, that new horizon, that will enhance profitability for the farm economy.
Become the Voice for Your District

- by Cale Buhr

In 2018, soybean farmers that reside in Districts 1, 3 and 6 are eligible to run for a director position on the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB). Soybean farmers in these districts will conduct a mail-in ballot election process to determine each District director. Ballots and candidate information regarding NSB’s election process will be sent direct mail on July 11, 2018 and must be postmarked to the tabulation office by July 31, 2018.

**Election Period:**

*December 1 – Candidacy Petition period starts*

Interested soybean farmers that reside in Districts 1, 3 and 6 can acquire a Candidacy Petition by contacting NSB’s Executive Director, Victor Bohuslavsky at (402) 432-5720.

*April 15 – Candidacy Petitions are due to the NSB office*

Candidates must obtain 50 valid soybean farmers’ signatures in the Districts which they live by April 15, 2018.

*July 11 – Ballots are mailed*

Ballots and candidate information will be sent by direct mail to each soybean farmer that resides in Districts 1, 3 and 6. The list of eligible voters is obtained through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) soybean farmer list.

*July 31 – Voting period ends*

Ballots must be postmarked and sent to tabulation office before July 31, 2018 for their vote to count.

**Who can run?**

- Be a resident of Nebraska
- Be a resident of the District in which the election is held
- Be a soybean farmer for the previous five years, who is at least 21, owns or shares the ownership and risk of loss for such soybeans, by reason of being a partner in a partnership, or is a shareholder in a corporation, or is a member of a limited liability company
- Have submitted a Candidacy Petition with 50 valid soybean farmers’ signatures in the Districts which they live

**Who can vote?**

- Be a resident of Nebraska
- Be a resident of the District in which the election is being held
- Be a soybean farmer who owns or shares the ownership and risk of loss for such soybeans, by reason of being a partner in a partnership, or is a shareholder in a corporation, or is a member of a limited liability company, during the current or immediate preceding calendar year

**Board member expectations**

**Roles:**

As an elected representative from the NSB, you will help guide the Nebraska soybean industry in the areas of research, education, domestic and foreign markets, including new uses for soybeans and soybean products.

**Responsibilities:**

Board members are expected to attend every NSB meetings (eight day fiscal year commitment) and attend and participate in other educational events sponsored by the Nebraska Soybean Checkoff. Members will not receive a salary but will be reimbursed for expenses incurred while carrying out board business. Elected members will serve a three-year term that begins Oct. 1, 2018.

If you have any questions regarding the election process, please contact NSB's Executive Director, Victor Bohuslavsky, at (402) 432-5720. For more information about the Nebraska Soybean Checkoff, visit www.nebraskasoybeans.org.
2017 Annual Report

**TOTAL FUNDING**
- Checkoff Assessments: $6,862,985
- Interest: 8,146
- Miscellaneous: 114,757
- Total Revenues: $6,985,888

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES**
- International Marketing: $1,185,410
- Research: 2,143,504
- Producer Education/Communications: 1,309,526
- Domestic Marketing: 2,376,887
- Administrative: 406,934
- Total Expenses: $7,422,261

**Change in Net Assets**: $(436,373)

**Net Assets, Beginning of Year**: $7,094,493

**Net Assets, End of Year**: $6,658,120
The Nebraska Soybean Association (NSA) elected the 2018 officers and directors during their annual meeting in December. Robert Johnston of Clearwater, Neb. was elected to a first term as NSA President. Other officers include Shane Greving of Chapman serving as Vice-President, Nathan Dorn of Firth serving as Treasurer and Adam Ickes of Roca serving as Secretary. Dennis Fujan of Prague will serve as the Chairman. Shane Greving, Wade Walters of Shickley and Robert Johnston were all re-elected to another term as district directors.

The 2017 recipient of the Nebraska Soybean Association Soybean Promoter Award was awarded to Jim Miller of Belden, Neb. This award is presented annually to recognize an individual who has shown outstanding leadership and support of the soybean industry in Nebraska.

Jim began his soybean service upon his election to the NSA board of directors in 2000. He served from 2000-2008 as a district director; also, holding the office of treasurer and serving as chairman in 2006. During his term he was top recruiter for many years recruiting more than 30 members each year. In 2008, Jim was elected to serve on the American Soybean Association board of directors. While on the ASA board he has served on the biotechnology working group, Finance committee, Investment committee, a representative of the National biodiesel board, the Public Affairs committee, the regulatory task force and the Trade policy and international affairs committee. He currently serves as the Chairman of the U.S. Soybean Export Council. Jim has participated in numerous trade missions and market development programs while on the USSEC. Jim’s term on the ASA board concluded in December and he will term out as the USSEC chairman in March of 2018.
Polly Ruhland began her new role as CEO of the United Soybean Board (USB) on Nov. 1. She brings an extensive background in agricultural nonprofit management, strategic planning, communications and regulatory compliance to the soy checkoff. Prior to USB, she was CEO at Cattlemen’s Beef Promotion and Research Board. Here, she shares her vision for her new role and the future of the industry.

What drew you to this position?
I spent the early part of my childhood in Decatur, Ill., and then moved around quite a bit before eventually graduating from high school in Maryland. What drew me to agriculture in the first place has led me to devote my entire career to it – the people. The people in agriculture – especially farmers – have deep roots and a strong pride for where they come from. They work hard to not only provide for their families, but to provide necessary food and ingredients for the world’s population and leave a legacy for the next generation. I believe in and am fully committed to the soy checkoff’s mission to maximize profit opportunities for U.S. soybean farmers in order to contribute to their long-term sustainability.

What is it about the soy checkoff that excites you?
The soy checkoff is a grower-driven self-help program that works for all soybean farmers and also on behalf of American agriculture. Working for growers in this kind of cooperative partnership toward beneficial outcomes really motivates me. The people in soy are known throughout agriculture as innovative thinkers who drive change and tackle challenges purposefully. Our focus on meeting end-user needs has given us an advantage over other feedstocks here in the U.S. and our counterparts in South America – an excellent trend that needs to continue. I’m excited to build on and hone that customer-focused mindset to continue to deliver meaningful value back to U.S. soybean farmers.

What are the biggest opportunities that you see for the soy checkoff?
The challenges and opportunities our industry faces are too big for any one organization to tackle alone. Frankly, we are much better working in tandem than we could ever be working separately. Partnerships between all kinds of soy organizations and companies are essential for continual improvement. Fortunately, that’s where our checkoff program can excel. The soy checkoff plays a vital role as a facilitator and change agent, but also as the glue and resource for bringing the right people and organizations together to make these opportunities a reality.

What are a few things that you’re going to focus on as CEO of USB?
I talked earlier about our customer focus. Understanding and meeting end-user needs is critical to our long-term success. High oleic soy is a great example of a checkoff-funded initiative that is actively improving the value of the bean, and also contributes to the solution to a major challenge soy customers were facing. I see that as a model for other opportunities to meet specific end-user needs and maximize profit opportunities for our soybean farmers. Additionally, I plan to continue to strengthen the partnerships needed to optimize innovation, and protect and encourage a profitable business environment for growers in the future. We must work together to think ahead about the soy business in 10 or 20 years. This strategic focus today will serve us well into the future.

What message would you like to share with U.S. soybean farmers in your first few months as the CEO of the soy checkoff?
There are so many exciting opportunities in front of us as an industry. One only needs to look at the positive trends in soybean bushels exported to see evidence of the powerful position of soy currently, and the bright future that may await us, with the right strategies and a focused and united effort. I am honored to work for you and with the farmer-leaders of the United Soybean Board. I look forward to meeting many of you as we work to bring the right people and organizations together and to focus our resources on the greatest opportunities to bring profit opportunities to your farms.

Five Questions for Polly Ruhland, United Soybean Board CEO

- by Julie Kenney, United Soybean Board
In today’s world, technology has changed the way we live, learn, and work. Let’s take a second to think of all that has changed in the last 50, or even 10 years. The first thing that comes to mind is, of course, the phone. From the first touch-tone phone to the first mobile phones, which usually stayed in the car because of the size, making a telephone call was the only feature for these devices. Today, we truly have ‘mobile’ phones that fit in the palm of our hands with countless applications. Not only can they make phone calls, but are also capable of providing us with unlimited amounts of information within a few seconds of wonder.

Other technological changes that are often talked about include medical advancements, education, shopping, and transportation. But what about agriculture and the way we grow and raise food? As farmers and ranchers, we understand the innovations and enhancements that have been made. Improvements in equipment, genetics and conservation have allowed for higher production on less land, more efficiencies with time and resources, and ultimately, the safest food supply in the world.

It may come as a surprise, but not everyone agrees with the benefits and use of technology in agriculture. In recent years, consumers have become more interested in how their food is grown and raised. As farmers and ranchers, we understand the innovations and enhancements that have been made. Improvements in equipment, genetics and conservation have allowed for higher production on less land, more efficiencies with time and resources, and ultimately, the safest food supply in the world.

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In 2010, a partnership between the United Soybean Board and the National Corn Growers Association created CommonGround, a group of farm women passionate about sharing the true story of agriculture. Today, CommonGround has grown to over 200 volunteers in 15 states, and over 30 volunteers in Nebraska, specifically. These farm women have taken to the airwaves, social media, blogs, grocery stores, and wellness groups to increase consumer trust in modern agriculture and connect farm families with urban consumers.

Continuing education, support, and comradery are essential in sustaining the enthusiasm and motivation to carry on the mission to bridge the gap between America’s farmers and consumers. Despite one rescheduling and a snow storm, over 20 volunteers, prospective volunteers, and coordination staff gathered in Columbus, Neb. on Feb. 6, 2018 for the annual CommonGround Nebraska conference. Those in attendance were updated on topics currently trending with consumers, presented with best practices for media interviews, and informed of the opportunities to be involved with CommonGround. The day concluded with a tour of Henningsen Foods, an egg processing plant, in David City, Neb.

René Blauhorn lives on a farm near Palmer, Neb. that grows corn and soybeans and raises beef cattle. René has recently joined CommonGround as a volunteer and loves the unique and numerous ways she can share her story. “I am very glad I was able to attend the state conference, learn about consumer concerns, and meet other farm women. I am excited to share my passion for agriculture and experiences on the farm with those that may not live it every day.”

The “What’s Trending with Consumers?” panel at the CommonGround Nebraska conference included Mary Temme, Temme Dairy; Karen Grant, Grant Family Farm; Jessica Kolterman, Lincoln Premium Poultry; and Joan Ruskamp, J & S Feedlot.
Cover crops have generated a lot of discussion in recent years, especially as farm sustainability continues to be an issue. The Nebraska Cover Crop Conference was recently held on Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018 at the University of Nebraska Eastern Nebraska Research and Extension Center (ENREC) near Mead, Neb.

The conference addressed corn and soybean growers about layering in cover crops between rotations, as well as other topics from University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) researchers and other industry professionals. Cover crops have the potential to add short and long term benefits to corn and soybean farmers, depending on their operation. The short term benefits include erosion control and can help control weeds, while the long term benefits can improve soil quality and soil organic matter.

**Presenters included:**
- The Banker Won’t like Wheat, but Your Soil Will – Here’s Why!, Nathan Mueller, Nebraska extension educator
- Will Cover Crops Be a New Home for Insects?, Justin McMechan, Nebraska extension crop protection and cropping systems specialist
- Cover Crops for Ephemeral Gully Control, Dan Gillespie, Nebraska NRCS no-till specialist
- How Cover Crops Work on My Farm, Bill Nielsen, Minden
- Why I Encourage My Customers to Use Cover Crops, Lee Briese, independent crop consultant and recipient of the 2016 International Certified Crop Advisor of the Year Award, Edgely, N.D.
- Why I Use Cover Crops on My Farm, Kelly Tobin, corn/soybean grower, New Castle, Iowa
- Cover Crops for Corn and Soybean Producers, Keith Berns, Green Cover Seeds, Bladen
- Farmer Panel with growers, landowners, and consultants.

The Nebraska Soybean Checkoff has been in collaboration with UNL researchers and extension educators to continue tests on cover crops to evaluate which varieties are appropriate for different operations. While research has shown positive results for cover crops, it has also concluded that if you use cover crops, it will depend on your specific operation. For additional news and information and to follow cover crops through the management season, visit https://cropwatch.unl.edu/cover-crops.
CREATING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR AMERICA’S SOYBEAN FARMERS

How the soy checkoff invests to grow profit opportunities for U.S. soybeans

Legendary Nebraska investor Warren Buffet famously touted the importance of "making money while you sleep." Over the years, your checkoff investment has been striving to do just that for you, by investing in growing U.S. soy’s value and volume. As a farmer, you have plenty to think about year-round to make sure your operation runs smoothly, maintains profitability, and meets the needs of your many customers. While you are busy caring for the land and feeding the world, your checkoff dollars work in many ways, in many different places – some you may be aware of but may not have known your checkoff helped make possible.

Sure, you’ve heard of biodiesel, you may even use it on your farm, but you may not know your checkoff dollars, working at the state level, gave birth to the industry. With continued checkoff support, biodiesel has seen mass acceptance and U.S. soybean farmers have seen increased profits. According to the National Biodiesel Board, demand for biodiesel increases the value of soybean oil – adding 63 cents per bushel of the whole beans sold.

Another success story, the development of high oleic soybean oil, shows how the industry can produce new soybean varieties the market demands. Created by the checkoff, QUALISOY brings together members of the soy value chain including seed companies, processors and food companies. Having stakeholders at one table enables open dialogue and a clear path forward for future oil and meal innovation that will benefit the entire U.S. soybean industry.

Planning a trip abroad in the future? Your soy checkoff dollars are there too – through the U.S. Soybean Export Council or USSEC – which works to increase demand for U.S. soy in more than 80 countries around the globe. Through USSEC the checkoff works with the American Soybean Association to represent U.S. soybean farmers across the globe. From representing U.S. soy in market access issues to demonstrating U.S. soy’s functionality and value, the checkoff is working to keep export markets growing. These efforts are paying off. Soy exports generated more than $24 billion of revenue for the U.S. last year, with more than 60 percent of the U.S. crop being exported.

Many consumers in the U.S. simply don’t know where their food comes from – maybe you have even fielded questions about what you do from curious city dwellers. The U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) works to engage in dialogue with consumers who have questions about how today’s food is grown and raised. The checkoff is one of 100 organizations working with USFRA, which, among other things, produced Farmland, a documentary to connect producers and consumers of food. The soy checkoff’s investments with USFRA work to influence food companies and the decisions they make around modern production practices.

These are just a few ways your checkoff dollars get put to use for the ultimate benefit of the U.S. soybean farmer’s profitability. To find out more about the United Soybean Board and soybean checkoff, visit unitedsoybean.org.

unitedsoybean.org
The 2018 National Biodiesel Conference & Expo kicked off a year of celebration as the event marked the National Biodiesel Board’s silver anniversary. The long-standing partnership between the soybean industry and biodiesel remains one that is mutually beneficial.

“For the visionary farmers who launched what would become the National Biodiesel Board in 1992, we want to say ‘thank you,’” said NBB CEO Donnell Rehagen in his opening conference remarks. “We take this opportunity to reflect on those first 25 years, but we are also excited to launch into the next era of growth for America’s Advanced Biofuel.”

Following a University of Missouri study that demonstrated biodiesel had potential as a diesel fuel replacement, the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council created the National SoyDiesel Development Board. Sensing the opportunity to utilize the vast surplus of soybean oil produced each year, while also expanding energy security and environmental benefits, the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB) and other state soybean associations quickly joined the effort. The new association became the National Biodiesel Board and the soybean industry has continued to invest in biodiesel’s success ever since.

“There is no doubt that the soybean and biodiesel industry’s relationship is mutually beneficial,” said Rehagen.

The NSB has invested in research, education, and development projects that have made it possible for Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) to support biodiesel in their vehicles. Production every year, including more than six billion pounds in 2017, adding $0.11 per-pound to soybean oil value, resulting in an additional $0.63 per bushel to US soybean values.”

During the four-day event in Fort Worth, Texas, hundreds of biodiesel supporters from across the country and around the world gathered to learn, network, and do business. Highlights included the introduction of the first ever Ford F-150 diesel, available to customers this spring with full B20 support; a mainstage panel discussion with the makers of the Discovery Channel biodiesel documentary “Hot Grease”; remarks from USDA Deputy Secretary Stephen Censky; and speakers from the United Soybean Board, National Oilheat Research Alliance, Ford Motor Company, Caterpillar, Inc., Purdue University, National Renewable Energy Lab, NBB, and others.

“Biodiesel is an American success story,” said Rehagen. “We have overcome countless challenges, and we will undoubtedly face many more as we continue to grow the industry. But for everyone who has pulled together for the past 25 years to make our success a reality, this conference was a great time to celebrate.”

Conference pictures and additional highlights can be found at blog.biodieselconference.org.
From the first sale of U.S. soy to China to the release of the first soybean oil-based tire, the soy checkoff has been behind the scenes, growing new opportunities and customers for the soybeans you produce. We’re looking inside the bean, beyond the bushel and around the world to keep preference for U.S. soy strong. And for U.S. soybean farmers like you, the impact is invaluable.

See more ways the soy checkoff brings value to farmers at unitedsoybean.org
Is there soy in your family room? Your tractor? Your toolbox? Maybe even in your shampoo? You could be using soybean oil and not even know it. But an increasing number of product manufacturers do.

More than one-third of U.S. soybean oil goes into products, including biodiesel, made with soy technology developed with checkoff support.

The number of brand-name products continues to grow each year as manufacturers use soy to drive corporate sustainability efforts, reduce their dependency on petroleum, and create better-performing products that are better for the environment.

Driving Sustainability

“We are committed to accelerating sustainable mobility solutions as part of Bridgestone’s “Our Way to Serve” corporate social responsibility program,” says Tom Rodgers, executive director, Bridgestone agricultural solutions. “Our objective is to engineer high-performing products in the most responsible and sustainable way. Producing ag tires that incorporate soybean oil is a natural fit.”

In 2014 the company started using soybean oil in all of the ag tires produced in its Des Moines, Iowa plant.

Last year, Bridgestone used 380,000 pounds of soybean oil in Firestone ag tires. The company continues to research ways to incorporate even more at the Bridgestone Americas Technical Center in Akron, Ohio.

“Advances in soy technology and the availability of industrial-grade high oleic soybean oil is helping us build more performance improvements into our tires,” says Amy Randall, Bridgestone manager of innovation and technology. “Our research is definitely not a ‘one and done’ thing. That’s because discoveries we make not only benefit us, they also increase industrial demand for soybean oil, which is good for farmers.”

Expanding Markets for Soy Ingredients

In their 2016 Sustainability Report, IKEA noted, “Traditional mattress foam is made of petroleum-based, non-renewable resources, and we are working to change this.” In 2015, the company started using a foam made of 15 percent soybean oil, and say they have now increased content to 30 percent in some foam types.

International manufacturers like IKEA also appreciate the sustainable farming practices of U.S. soybean farmers and the traceability of ingredients that enable them to quantify the sustainability of material they produce.

To discover more surprising new uses that are growing demand for U.S. soybean oil, visit www.SoyNewUses.org.
New York City (NYC) continues to be one of the largest biodiesel and Bioheat markets in the United States. Farmer leaders and industry professionals recently visited NYC to see how checkoff dollars are increasing biodiesel and Bioheat usage in one of the biggest cities in the world. How does this all relate to our Nebraska soybean farmers? As the Bioheat and biodiesel industries continue to increase, so does the market demand for the soybean oil used in both products.

Biodiesel is a clean-burning, renewable alternative to regular petroleum diesel that uses feedstocks such as soybean oil. Diesel engines require little or no modification to use biodiesel, and the result is the reduction of lifecycle carbon emissions by an average of 80 percent. In the last decade, biodiesel has been blended with ultra-low sulfur heating oil to create Bioheat – a clean-burning heating oil that has drastically increased in markets such as the Northeast.

The increase of Bioheat production can be attributed in large part to the work of NYC Councilman Costa Constantinides. His efforts brought forth NYC Bill 642, which requires the use of clean heating oil in the city. As of Oct. 1, 2017, the bill requires heating oil sold or used in the city to contain five percent biodiesel – an increase from the previous two percent. This will increase the demand of B100 (100% biodiesel) from 20 million gallons to 50 million.

Bioheat has also made its way into schools, such as the Bronx Design and Construction Academy. The academy offers contemporary training and sustainability practices while incorporating Bioheat into its curriculum. The academy is preparing the heating oil technicians about the benefits of Bioheat by allowing them to work with it firsthand. For more information on Bioheat, visit www.mybioheat.com.

Students from the Bronx Design and Construction Academy present how they are incorporating the benefits of Bioheat into their curriculum (photo credit: National Biodiesel Board).
California Biodiesel Industry Continues to Grow  - by Cale Buhr

California is projected to utilize more biodiesel than any other state in 2018. As biodiesel production across the country increases each year, so does the demand for its main feedstock: soybean oil.

Midwest Farmers visit the Golden State
A group of soybean farmers from the Midwest had the opportunity to see the large impact that California has on the biodiesel industry. State representatives from California spoke to the group about the current biodiesel industry and the likelihood of soybean oil feedstock volumes increasing in the future. So how does soybean oil in California impact soybean growers in Nebraska? Nebraska Soybean Board District 5 director, Daryl Obermeyer, explains how it relates to him.

“As a livestock producer, I think it’s important that we increase the demand for the oil side of the soybean to help keep the cost of the soybean meal affordable while still having a profitable price for the soybean producer,” says Obermeyer.

Although the production of biodiesel may differ across the country, most can agree that the outcome has a positive effect on the environment. The group had the unique opportunity to visit and tour a local biodiesel plant out of Ventura, Calif. called Biodico – which produces up to 20 million gallons of biodiesel each year.

Mark Caspers, Nebraska representative on the United Soybean Board and National Biodiesel Foundation Vice President, engaged with local producers about the future of biodiesel in California. “The potential is huge because they are seeing the benefits of biodiesel coming in to clean up some of the air quality concerns they have,” said Caspers. “Whether they were consumers or automobile drivers, they seemed excited about the prospects and the future of biodiesel.” For more information about Biodico, visit www.biodico.com.

INVESTING CHECKOFF DOLLARS

Terry Brase, Interim Director at West Hills College, talks about innovative agriculture courses that are being offered to its students.
Pork & Beans: A High-Quality Combination
- by United Soybean Board

Quality is important to Terry O’Neel – in his hog barns and in his soybean fields.

“As a pig farmer, I know the relationship between quality feed and animal performance,” he says. “Since the majority of the value of soybeans is derived from soybean meal that is fed to animals, it is critical to produce high-quality soybeans.”

O’Neel, soybean farmer and National Pork Board member, is uniquely qualified to speak to both sides of the equation.

He cares about the quality of the soybeans he grows not only as a crop he sells but also as a top-notch feed for his hogs.

“Quality matters to me because we rely on soybeans to provide a good protein source for our animals to grow efficiently,” he says.

The Best of Both

Raising both animals and crops is nothing new to O’Neel, who helped his dad raise dairy and beef cattle as well as grow soybeans, corn, wheat and alfalfa.

He couldn’t find land to rent after college, so he and his wife, Diane, started in the hog business by purchasing 40 feeder pigs. They began crop farming on a small scale in 1988.

Now, they have a 500-sow birth-to-market operation and 700 acres of corn and soybeans in Friend, Neb., not far from where he grew up.

O’Neel understands how soybean quality translates to his bottom line, and he takes pride in improving his own soybeans through seed selection.

“When we start with quality seed with the genetic traits to perform well under no-till conditions, we have good disease resistance, excellent weed management, and high yield and protein potential,” he says.

In addition, O’Neel pays attention to sustainable practices and harvest moisture.

“We no-till all our beans, which allows a superior seed stand because we are able to plant into good soil moisture and erosion-controlling residue,” he says. “We also strive to harvest our beans at 12 to 13 percent moisture, which enhances both quality and yield.”

Quality Matters

When it comes to feeding his hogs, O’Neel counts on that soybean quality. In his feed mill, he uses soybean meal as a protein source to balance his hogs’ rations.

“If the bean meal is not the proper protein or lysine level, our sows don’t perform as well feeding their piglets, and our pigs won’t grow as fast or develop as much lean pork – they won’t reach their genetic potential.”
Recently, the Alliance for the Future of Agriculture (AFAN) partnered with the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB) to create the stories of livestock development. These stories are uniquely crafted to highlight livestock development, emphasizing family, community, and the culture of Nebraska's agriculture roots.

Through the partnership with the NSB, AFAN created six distinctive video and radio spots highlighting the stories behind livestock development in Nebraska. Four of the six will feature different livestock sectors.

We would like to thank the following families for participating in the livestock development project:

- Thiele Family, Dairy Development – Clearwater, Neb.
- Ruskamp Family, Beef Development – Dodge, Neb.

In addition to the species specific videos, two videos bring attention to communities that have embraced livestock development.

- Broken Bow, Neb.
- Fremont, Neb.

AFAN will use these videos to recruit new and promote livestock expansion in Nebraska, because we know livestock is good for Nebraska families. We will also target their use in regions where there is the need to create community buy-in because diversifying rural economies with livestock helps communities thrive. We will share positive, impactful and memorable messages with all Nebraskans because agriculture and livestock are not only the history of this state, but its future as well.

Along with the video and radio campaign, AFAN has been busy sharing our newest informational session “Is Livestock the Answer” at both the Nebraska and South Dakota Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Conference. The program is focused on whether incorporating or expanding livestock in to their current operation is the right opportunity. The program is accompanied by a take-home handout allowing producers to sit down and work through key issues with their family including lifestyle questions and financial considerations.

Important take away points include the following:

a. The reasons why a farmer or rancher needs to consider an additional income.

b. What are the basic production requirements, lifestyle aspects and other important things to consider when looking at livestock.

c. What options are there in the livestock industry right now.

d. What items are needed when discussing the option of diversifying the farming or ranching operation with your lender.

AFAN’s Producer Empowerment Workshops have begun and are impacting producers from North Platte to Northeast Nebraska in early 2018. These half-day small group seminars are for new or existing livestock producers. Attendees are led by a trained facilitator through AFAN’s Community Conversations Toolkit and Know Before You Build Toolkit. AFAN’s Community Conversations Toolkit focuses on empowering producers with strategies and tools to tell their stories of livestock development. It offers resources and best practices for communicating with neighbors, media and interested stakeholders. The Know Before You Build Toolkit provides producers with a basic understanding of their local county zoning permit process and how to prepare and work with the county to obtain the necessary permits. These toolkits provide producers with take-home materials they can use as they move through the process of locating, modernizing or expanding their operation.

If you are interested in any of these programs, materials or seeing the new video and radio spots check out www.becomeafan.org.
Nebraska is a diverse state. Varied elevation, precipitation, topography, soils, and management decisions make farm operation across the state unique. This makes local research invaluable when looking to fine-tune farm management. The Nebraska On-Farm Research Network, a program of Nebraska Extension, has existed for over 25 years. The goal? To help farmers and agronomists conduct research on their farms, with their equipment, that will be directly relevant and applicable to their farming operation.

In the Nebraska On-Farm Research Network, Nebraska Extension Educators and Specialists work with farmers on an individual basis to help set up scientifically sound experiments and then analyze yield data to extract meaningful results. Ag technologies, such as GPS guidance, yield monitors, and aerial imagery have made on-farm research more convenient. These technologies allow researchers to look at data on a sub-field, or site-specific basis, enabling more precise within-field management.

In 2017, farmers across the state worked with Nebraska Extension to complete over 85 research studies. These studies covered a wide variety of topics, ranging from planting rates, fertilizer management plans, and integration of cover crops, to high-tech equipment such as multi-hybrid planters, sensors for nitrogen management, and drones. These research studies were shared across the state in late February at On-Farm Research Results Update Meetings. These educational events are highly interactive and farmers and agronomists who attend note that they like the “transparency”, hearing “producers talking about their experiences” and that “trials [are conducted] in our area.”

Another benefit to on-farm research is the ability to aggregate data from similar studies conducted across the state. This enables us to see trends and apply the research results more broadly. One example is research done on soybean seeding rates. Over the last several years, numerous studies were completed comparing at the optimum seeding rate for soybeans. Sixteen on-farm research studies evaluated four soybean planting rates: 90,000, 120,000, 150,000, and 180,000 seeds/acre between 2006 and 2016. These studies found that 120,000 seeds/acre with a final plant population of 80,000 to 120,000 plants/acre is generally sufficient for ensuring maximum economic return. When increasing planting rate from 90,000 to 180,000 seeds/acre, yield was only increased by 1.3 bu/acre and did not offset the increased seeding cost. Surveys found that most Nebraska farmers are planting an average of 150,000 seeds/acre. Reducing the soybean seeding rate from 150,000 to 120,000 seeds/acre (aiming for 100,000 plants/acre final stand) can result in a $10.69/acre savings without affecting yield (assumes a $60/unit seed cost at 140,000 seeds/unit).

https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2017/10-years-research-show-benefit-reducing-soybean-seeding-rates

Some soybean producers participating in the on-farm research network have partnered with researchers investigating multi-hybrid planting applications. As part of this project, soybean seed treated with ILeVO was planted in areas which have a higher risk for Sudden Death Syndrome. In areas that were not at high risk for Sudden Death Syndrome, soybean seed not treated with ILeVO was planted. Economic savings due to more precise management may be realized by using this seed treatment only in areas within the field where a yield benefit is expected.

You can learn from what other farmers have tested, as results of on-farm research studies are published in yearly books (available online as PDFs). Additionally, over 700 on-farm research studies are available online in a searchable, filterable database. Go to http://resultsfinder.unl.edu/ and search for products or practices you are interested in learning more about.

For more information about the Nebraska On-Farm Research Network and to learn how you can get involved visit https://cropwatch.unl.edu/farmresearch. The Nebraska On-Farm Research Network is a program of Nebraska Extension and is sponsored by the Nebraska Soybean Board, Nebraska Corn Board, Nebraska Corn Growers Association, and the Nebraska Dry Bean Commission.
Fungicide Resistance: Risk and Management

Chemical control is a key component of crop protection and its usefulness is at risk. Herbicide resistance is a widely-recognized consequence of lost chemical usefulness. Fungicide resistance is also problematic but may not be obvious. For example, did you know that fungicide resistance has been reported for soybean pathogens like Cercospora kikuchii (causal agent of Cercospora leaf blight and purple seed stain) from Louisiana and C. sojina (causal agent of frogeye leaf spot) from Tennessee? Fungicide resistance is said to occur when a fungicide that originally controlled a target pathogen is unable to do so due to heritable genetic changes in the pathogen. For growers, this is important because it can result in loss of time and money for repeated applications of fungicides and limited disease suppression. Recognizing the importance of this problem, the Fungicide Resistance Action Committee (FRAC) was established by industry in early 1980’s to provide guidelines for fungicide resistance management and maintain the utility of fungicide chemistries.

How can you determine the risk of fungicide resistance development?

Risk of resistance depends upon characteristics of both the target pathogen and the fungicide. Pathogen risk increases with expanding genetic diversity and greater dispersal over space and time. Risk of resistance also increases with developing fungicide target specificity, accumulating frequency of application, poor timing of application, and decreasing rate of application below label rate. You can find information on risk of pathogens to develop resistance in the published FRAC Pathogen Risk List®. For instance, C. sojina has a medium risk. For fungicides, you can find information on risk on the fungicide label itself (Figure 1). Fungicide labels include a FRAC Code that represents the target site of that fungicide. Fungicides with the same FRAC Code have the same target site. For example, Headline® and Quadris® are QoI fungicides and are categorized in FRAC Code 11. You can determine the risk of a fungicide to develop resistance by looking up its FRAC Code in the FRAC Code List®; fungicides in FRAC Codes 1, 4 and 11 have high risk and those in FRAC Codes 12 and 14 have low to medium risk.

How can you reduce the risk of fungicide resistance development?

Do not use fungicides as the sole source of reducing disease pressure. Combine applications with other strategies, like growing resistant soybean cultivars, rotating with non-host crops, and using effective biological products. Regularly scout known problematic areas of your field and keep a record of disease incidence and severity to help improve diagnosis. If you are not sure how to identify diseases, find a qualified crop consultant or send suspect samples to the UNL Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic. The Soybean Management Calendar (https://cropwatch.unl.edu/soycal/app/index.html) gives appropriate timings for scouting, initial diagnosis and recommendation. Based upon the diagnosis and field history, select appropriate fungicides. Apply fungicides in the early stages of disease development to maximize effectiveness. High disease pressure from an accumulation of the pathogen increases risk for resistance development. Read and follow fungicide label instructions carefully. Use tank-mixes of fungicides with different FRAC Codes or use combination fungicides. If multiple applications are recommended during one season, rotate fungicides with different FRAC Codes. Do not apply lower than recommended rates because that will also increase the risk of resistance development.

If appropriate application strategies are followed, we can reduce the chances of resistance development and retain the usefulness of current fungicides.

Disclaimer: Trade names of fungicides are referenced for illustration purposes only. We neither oppose nor endorse the application of chemicals mentioned or not mentioned.

Figure 1. An example fungicide, PlantSavior, has its FRAC Code or Group mentioned in the top right corner of the label.

Summary

• Fungicide resistance is said to occur when a fungicide which originally controlled a target pathogen is unable to do so due to heritable genetic changes in the pathogen

• Risk of resistance depends upon characteristics of both the target pathogen and the fungicide applied

• You can find information on risk of pathogens to develop resistance in FRAC Pathogen Risk List® and risk of fungicides to develop resistance in the FRAC Code List®

• A larger pathogen population poses a higher risk for resistance development. Diagnose the problem and apply fungicides in the early stages of disease development

• Read and follow fungicide label instructions carefully

• Use tank-mixes of fungicides with different FRAC Codes or combination fungicides

• Do not apply lower than recommended rates, as this increases the risk of resistance development
Rhizoctonia Diseases in Soybean

by Srikanth Kodati1,2, Tony Adefesemoye1,2, Nikita Gambhir1 and Sydney Everhart1

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The genus Rhizoctonia includes several soilborne pathogens that represent a major limitation to soybean production in Nebraska and other soybean growing regions. These pathogens reduce stand establishment (Figure 1) and may lead to high yield loss when conditions are favorable. Considerable diversity exists within and among species of Rhizoctonia, where R. solani and R. zeae are two important pathogens in this group. There is limited scientific understanding about the diversity of pathogens in this group, yet it is known that there is variation in their ability to cause disease, making them particularly challenging to manage. If infection has already occurred, no management tactics are effective in that growing season. However, knowledge can help to make informed decisions on management and aid in reducing the impact of future disease in that field.

Disease development and management

Disease symptoms typical of Rhizoctonia spp. are pre- and post-emergence damping off, stunting, seed decay, sunken reddish brown lesions on hypocotyl and roots, or rotted roots of germinated soybean plants (Figure 2). Outbreaks usually occur in early summer, although symptoms of Rhizoctonia diseases may also be seen in late summer. Planting early in the season when it is cooler will favor disease development. With cool soil conditions, seedling emergence and growth are delayed, making seedlings more susceptible to these pathogens. Although most pathogens that cause this disease prefer wet and warm weather conditions, some species may cause infection at different moisture levels and a wide range of soil temperatures (60°F to 95°F).

Conditions favorable to disease are increased temperatures in the spring and summer, frequent rainfall or excessive irrigation, soil that is not well drained, overly compacted soil, and plant stress induced by an imbalanced fertilization program or herbicide damage, which can reduce plant immunity.

Recommended management methods where Rhizoctonia root rot diseases previously existed or are suspected include planting certified fungicide treated seeds, tillage (where possible), crop rotation, and planting resistant cultivars, if available. Each of these recommendations has limitations. For example, fungicide seed treatments are good but they do not last throughout the season, especially due to the separation of the radicle and hypocotyl during plant growth. Therefore, effective disease management is better achieved through a combination of multiple approaches in an integrated disease management system.

Ongoing efforts to understand Rhizoctonia diseases in Nebraska soybean

Damage caused by Rhizoctonia diseases is compounded by a lack of knowledge of the specific pathogens within our state, which limits our ability to determine the best management practices. To address this, the Nebraska Soybean Board is supporting a state-wide survey of Rhizoctonia spp. from soybean fields across the state. This support allowed us to create a collection of 115 Rhizoctonia pathogens that have now been identified with molecular genetic techniques as R. zeae, four groups in R. solani, and four additional Rhizoctonia spp. Although research is ongoing, knowledge of this important group of pathogens in Nebraska will allow management recommendations to be tailored to the specific pathogens and conditions in our state.
When a human body is low in iron, a simple iron capsule can raise their level. For soybeans, the process is quite a bit more complex. Iron deficiency chlorosis (IDC) is a major yield robber for more than half of the states in the North Central Midwest, including Nebraska. This is due to the high pH soils deposited throughout the region by glaciers thousands of years ago and the tendency for these areas to have wet springs.

“It’s a very complex problem influenced by weather patterns and the physiological processes involved with moving nitrogen out of the soil and into the plant,” said Phillip McClean, professor at North Dakota State University and principal investigator for the research project “Iron deficiency chlorosis: Getting to the root of the problem.”

The complicated process McClean refers to is a five-step progression each plant must go through to get iron from the soil to its leaves. First, to separate the iron from the soil particles, the plant must release acid into the soil. The soil then releases iron in an Fe(III) state and the plant must convert it to an Fe(II) state to use it. The third step involves the iron crossing the root tissue and entering the plant itself. Once inside the plant, the iron is transported into the xylem, or water tubes, of the plant. For the fifth and final step, the iron must bind to an acid molecule to be brought to the leaves.

If anything goes wrong throughout this lengthy process, the iron won’t get to the plant’s leaves where it is most needed. Without the correct amount of iron, soybean leaves will turn yellow, reducing the plant’s ability to create the energy it needs to develop.

“We’re looking at the yellowing of the leaves and statistics show even a little yellowing for a long period of time can end up reducing a percentage of yield,” said McClean.

Iron deficiency chlorosis (IDC)

The five-step process to get iron to soybean leaves is just one of the reasons there isn’t a “quick fix” for the iron deficiency problem. While analyzing the soybean genome McClean and his co-investigators found seven different genomic regions with a factor related to IDC, affirming the complexity of battling this pathogen.

“It would be nice if there was a magic gene, but everyone in the field knows that’s not the case. It’s more complex and that makes it difficult to work with,” said McClean.

McClean worked with researchers from Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa and North Dakota on the project. The information collected by these researchers will be able to offer a proxy for field screening, saving research programs money and time. This means that farmers can get the information and products they need faster.
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Ensuring Farmers Have a Seat at the Table in National Transportation Debate

- by Mike Steenhoek, Executive Director, Soy Transportation Coalition

As the nation increasingly examines and explores the need to enhance our multi-modal transportation system, many suggestions from policymakers and constituents have been long on ambition but short on specifics. Moreover, there is a concern within agriculture that the transportation interests of urban areas could exclude the interests of rural areas.

In an effort to ensure the transportation needs of the U.S. soybean industry are understood and considered in the midst of this national debate, the Soy Transportation Coalition (STC) released its “Top 10 Most Wanted List” (below) of infrastructure priorities. Throughout this process, it is critical that the farmer perspective has a seat at the table. If farmers are unwilling to promote the transportation system that benefits the industry, we should not expect others to do it for us.

Given how soybeans and many agricultural products have arguably the most diverse and elongated supply chain of any industry, the list highlights opportunities to enhance rural roads and bridges, highways and interstates, freight rail service, the inland waterway system, and ports. The STC board of directors also decided to simply list the top ten priorities, rather than ranking them against each other.

Some of the items on the list require higher degrees of investment, while others are focused on the cost side of the equation. Higher funding levels are important, but greater stewardship and cost containment is also critical. After all, farmers have to make their dollars stretch on their own operations. There is no reason why federal, state, and local government can not do so as well when improving and managing our transportation system.

Top 10 Most Wanted List

- Maintenance and rehabilitation of locks and dams to significantly reduce the potential for unexpected, widespread, and prolonged failure. Priority should be devoted to ensuring the reliability of locks and dams along the nation’s inland waterways. Available funding for new construction of locks and dams should be directed first to locks and dams 20-25 on the Mississippi River.
- Dredging the lower Mississippi River between Baton Rouge, La., to the Gulf of Mexico to 50 ft.
- Ensuring the Columbia River shipping channel from Portland, Ore., to the Pacific Ocean is maintained at no less than 43 ft.
- Permit six axle, 91,000 lbs. semis to operate on the interstate highway system.
- Increase the federal tax on gasoline and diesel fuel by ten cents a gallon and index the tax to inflation. Ensure rural areas receive proportionate, sufficient funding from the fuel tax increase.
- Provide greater predictability and reliability of funding for the locks and dams along the inland waterway system.
- Provide block grants to states to replace the top 20 most critical rural bridges.
- Provide grants to states to implement rural bridge load testing projects to more accurately diagnose which bridges are sufficient and which are deficient.
- Ensure full utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for port improvement initiatives.
- Permanent, or multi-year at a minimum, extension the short line railroad tax credit.
“La soya de U.S.A. es producida de manera sustentable,” is printed on the souvenir washcloths those who attended the United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) educational opportunity this January in Campeche, Mexico. “Soy from U.S.A. is produced sustainably,” as the phrase is translated, was a key focus of this year’s event. Sustainability has become a concern to more than just farmers as many consumers look for indications of sustainability throughout their purchases, thus creating a larger demand for responsibly raised livestock and fish, one priority topic discussed among attendees.

As a way to meet the growing desire for seafood, the farm raised fish industry has seen advancements in the feed as well as the aquatic housing. Through the incorporation of new technologies, such as In-Pod Raceway Systems (IPRS) and US Soybean meal, this progress is made possible. Board members and staff were able to learn from international coordinators as well as university researchers about how these developments continue to bring a demand for US Soy.

The IPRS is the most modern system currently being used in pond production. This system allows for less water and energy to be used per unit, while allowing for maximum nutrient uptake and minimal environmental impact. Air-lifts, which are commonly used in farm raised fish, allow for continuous movement of water inside. As a result, there is more aeration of water thereby moving waste water downstream for more efficient collection and removal.

In tandem with promoting more effective production, USSEC has encouraged the use of the U.S. Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP). A third party audit allows for quantifiable standards to be met with the assurance that the soy fish farmers are feeding is grown in a sustainable manner. This protocol meets the demands of the consumer helping to give US Soy the edge to its international competitors.

Attendees of the educational opportunity concluded their time in Campeche by seeing first-hand the use of IPRS and US Soy at local farms. Touring two locations, guests were able to observe the first IPRS used in the Americas at La Granja tilapia farm. They also experienced an inside look at an innovative hatchery system operated by Central Acuícola.

After spending two days in a classroom setting, followed by the field trip to local farms, Nebraska’s five representatives were able to bring home a new appreciation and understanding of the international market and demand for their soybeans. "These raceway fish farms show a lot of promise and the economics are there," said Ed Lammers, USB member and NSB ex-officio. “I’m really excited about it and I think as a Nebraska soybean producer, we should all be.”
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