



The SOYBEAN JOURNEY

After a farmer harvests his soybeans, they need to be transported to get to their next step in the journey from pod to plate. There are three main ways that soybeans and soybean products are transported: on a barge down the river, on a semi-truck on the highway, and on a train. Read below about each method.



RIVER TRANSPORTATION:

Soybeans can be moved using very little fuel on a barge. A barge can move one ton (2,000 lbs.) of cargo for 514 miles with only one gallon of fuel. You can move a larger amount of soybeans on a barge as well. One barge can hold 1,500 tons of cargo. The average river tow is 15 barges tied together, so that is a lot of soybeans! Barges take most of their cargo to Louisiana where there is a port to ship to other countries.



HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION:

The majority of soybeans are transported via trucks. Trucks can take soybeans and soybean products from the fields to grain elevators, processing plants, biodiesel plants, and other manufacturing plants. They can also transport processed soybean products to the store. Trucks are the most flexible and quickest way to transport goods. They are also the most expensive way to transport goods. One ton of cargo on a truck can only be moved 60 miles on one gallon of fuel. A truck can hold 26 tons of cargo.



RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION:

Trains can transport soybeans, soy oil, and soy biodiesel. Soy oil and biodiesel can be transported in a tanker car and soybeans in a hopper car. A hopper car can carry up to 224,500 lbs. of soybeans. A tanker car can hold 30,000 gallons of fuel or oil. Trains transport soybeans to river terminals or grain elevators to be delivered to buyers. A train can move one ton of soybeans 202 miles on one gallon.



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There is a soybean cargo load that weighs 25 tons that needs to be moved from Princeton, IL to the river terminal in Rock Island, IL. At the terminal, the cargo will be sold and joined with a cargo of 9,000 tons. This larger cargo will need to be moved to a port in Louisiana to export to other countries. Using the transportation information sheet, explain the best methods of transportation to get this cargo from the beginning to the end destination. Explain your choices and give concrete reasoning as to why you chose them.

There is a soybean cargo load that weighs 22 tons that needs to be moved from a farm in DeKalb, IL to a soy oil processing plant in Quincy, IL. After the soybeans have been processed into oil, the 19,500 gallons of oil need to be transported to a buyer in South Carolina. Using the transportation information sheet, explain the best methods of transportation to get this cargo from the beginning to the end destination. Explain your choices and give concrete reasoning as to why you chose them.