Freedom to Operate Key to Success

- Push for Better Biotech Approval Process
- Urban Influence can Affect Market Access
Sprout something extra this year!

Cash in on your soybean crop and make the most of every acre. Visit www.SoybeanPremiums.org to find first purchasers, locations and details for programs such as non-GMO contracts and food grade soybeans. Programs are available throughout the United States.

Click on “Find a Premium Program” to see all of the latest opportunities in your area.

Funded by the Illinois soybean checkoff.
Freedom to Operate Key to Success

Freedom to operate is a key to success for any Illinois soybean farmer. Armed services veteran Ed Seifert, Auburn, Ill., pictured here at harvest, poses in front of the American flag that has flown on the family operation’s combine since 9/11. Ed’s son, Tim, is an ISA director. Photo by Ken Kashi-an, Illinois Farm Bureau

6 Cover Story
Biotech Regulatory Review Slows Technology Availability

The U.S. biotechnology regulatory approval process has become a challenge. The time it takes for a product to get deregulated and into farmers’ hands has drastically increased the last several years, and that can put Illinois farmers at a disadvantage in the field and around the world.

10 Aquaculture
Demand Projections Bode Well for Soy-Based Aquafeeds

Illinois soybean farmers continue to invest in aquaculture as the fastest growing food sector. That’s good news, since market watchers predict a 33 percent growth in fish production during the next decade. Almost 60 percent of seafood consumed globally will come from aquaculture.

11 Animal Agriculture
Soybean Farmers can Learn from Pork’s Pressure

Scientifically speaking, the pork industry should win the gestation stall argument with consumer groups. But the dispute is not about science. Pressure to ban the use of stalls is about perception and emotion. Soybean farmers can take a page from the pork industry’s experiences, as issues that include potential biotech food labeling filter into legislative sessions.

12 Yield
Crop Science Scholars Help with Challenges

While Illinois soybean farmers work to manage crop issues in the field, ISA crop science scholars are taking on tough soybean production challenges in the lab. The checkoff-funded scholarship program allows students to help solve problems facing the state’s farmers while furthering their education. Read about some of the research currently underway.

14 Market Access
Urban Legislators can Influence Ag Policy

Most of the elected representation in Springfield and Washington, D.C., comes from urban areas. That makes connecting with those legislators crucial to Illinois soybean industry success. Growers can build relationships with these legislators in a number of ways, individually and through the Illinois Soybean Association, and educate them about agriculture’s value.

18 Customer Profile
Illinois Company Strives to Fuel Fleet with Biodiesel

Biodiesel makes sense economically and environmentally. That’s why G&D Integrated, a logistics services company headquartered in Morton, Ill., fills up half of its fleet exclusively with a biodiesel blend, and other trucks as they are able. Learn why this company finds biodiesel clearly is an advantage to the company’s bottom line, performance and competitiveness.
Freedom to Operate Encompasses More than Legislation

Illinois farmers have long enjoyed the ability to produce soybeans in a state where yield potential is high, soils are productive, and we are surrounded by ready domestic markets and international transportation outlets. To protect our freedom to operate in such a tremendous environment, we must be proactive in addressing a multitude of market access opportunities and challenges.

Freedom to operate not only involves addressing legislative and regulatory issues in Springfield and Washington, D.C., it involves addressing market access issues across the entire food chain. ISA has prioritized those issues to include such areas as animal agriculture, transportation, quality, sustainability and aquaculture, and is where we invest checkoff and membership dollars. For example:

- Economic research shows that raising animals generates income, jobs and taxes in Illinois. At the same time, demand for high-quality meat is growing around the world. ISA encourages an environment conducive to local livestock production and helps create demand and market opportunities for U.S. meat globally.

- ISA understands the issues threatening efficient soybean transportation, and is focused on facilitating solutions. ISA is working on ways to involve industry partners in a push to improve the transportation system.

- Although Illinois farmers are known for a consistent and reliable supply of soybeans, a 10-year trend shows that soybean protein and oil levels are declining. That threatens competitiveness in the marketplace. ISA has efforts underway to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of protein and oil.

- Environmental pressures and social and economic needs associated with sustainability are shaping opinions about food production around the world. As sustainability becomes more important in the global marketplace, ISA will help Illinois soybean farmers inform customers about improvements made and show sustainability has always been a priority.

- The future of the global aquaculture community depends on renewable and efficient sources of fish feed, including Illinois soybeans. Availability of a high-quality, renewable protein product like soybean meal is critical to the industry's growth. ISA monitors the regulatory roadblocks that face global aquaculture. In addition, ISA funds the research needed to increase use of soy in aquafeed rations.

ISA has an aggressive agenda to maintain market access and the freedom to farm. That takes good people. If you are passionate about these issues, I encourage you to get involved with soybean industry leadership. We welcome your participation. As 2013 gets underway, please seriously consider volunteering to serve on the ISA board. Several district director positions will be open for election in the coming months.

Happy New Year.

Bill Wykes
ISA Chairman
Exports are absolutely vital to Illinois agriculture. Every year, the industry sells almost 40 percent of its commodities – corn and soybeans, pork and beef – overseas. In fact, with sales of $5.8 billion, Illinois ranks as the fourth-largest agricultural exporter in the United States.

These figures are significant, but not just to farmers. While 75 percent of Illinois’ land is devoted to production agriculture, its 76,000 farms are just the foundation of a multibillion dollar industry. Illinois has 2,514 food companies – more than all but five states – and hundreds of agribusinesses that provide the tools farmers need to produce commodities. Ag-related businesses combined employ nearly one of every four Illinois workers.

Considering that about two of every five rows of corn and soybeans planted here are shipped overseas, to a large extent each and every one of those paychecks is tied to foreign trade. Market development, therefore, is good not only for agriculture, but also for our economy.

We are fortunate to have a governor who understands the economic vitality of Illinois depends upon its ability to cultivate global markets. Governor Pat Quinn has set an ambitious goal of doubling Illinois exports by 2015 and created an Export Advisory Council to help achieve it. The council, whose membership includes top Illinois business and association executives, will recommend strategies to the governor’s office to increase trade and business investment.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture is one of two, cabinet-level agencies on the council, and will play an instrumental role in creating markets for Illinois food and agricultural products.

In the last year alone, the department:
• Organized a successful Illinois Products Expo. The two-day event, which featured food, wine and agricultural goods from 77 Illinois companies, attracted 7,718 consumers and produced $130,000 in sales, shattering records for both figures.
• Led 22 foreign buyers on a five-day tour of the state’s grain industry. The effort paid immediate dividends. Buyers are projecting purchases of more than $52 million from businesses they visited. The prior three tours combined produced $25 million in sales.
• Participated in 13 international and domestic trade shows, led five foreign buyers’ missions, facilitated 5,474 buyer-seller introductions and disseminated 1,741 trade leads. These activities generated $71 million in actual sales and another $763 million in projected sales for Illinois food companies and agribusinesses.

Despite our best efforts to open markets for products, challenges often surface. This year, Mother Nature brought us one of those challenges in the drought. In addition to the impact on yields, reduced water in rivers and streams complicates our ability to ship products worldwide.

Part of our mission is to collaborate with state and federal partners to find ways to ensure rivers like the Mississippi continue to be navigable. Under Gov. Quinn’s leadership, we continue to work with commodity groups, agribusinesses, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and our Illinois congressional delegation to find every means possible to ensure our waterways remain navigable and transportation of our products remains unimpeded.

Regulatory Review Slows Technology Availability

By Kenna Rathai

The U.S. biotechnology regulatory approval process has become a challenge. Need proof? If March 2013 hits without USDA approval of Monsanto’s dicamba-tolerant soybeans, the trait will have been in deregulation review for nearly three years. Dow AgroSciences’ latest multi- trait product is heading into its fourth year of review. The time it takes for a biotech product to get deregulated and into farmers’ hands has drastically increased the last several years.

Far-Reaching Implications

The U.S. Administration pledged to streamline the regulatory process and remove inefficiencies in 2011. However, USDA approved only one product in 2012, which was backlogged due to litigation. Six traits from 2009 are still awaiting a decision.

Contrast that with the average time to approve a biotech product in Brazil, which is 27 months. According to Mindy Whittle, soybean industry affairs lead at Monsanto, Brazil approved its new insect-protected trait in fewer than 20 months.

“The product pipeline has never been more rich,” she says. “It is important that farmers have access to these tools in a timely manner not only to help improve production, conserve resources and manage their farms, but also to compete on a global scale.”

With the escalation of biotech product approvals worldwide, industry officials find that USDA’s delays in reviewing products can put U.S. farmers at a disadvantage. Timely and predictable regulation shows international trading partners the U.S. commitment to sound regulatory policy and helps discourage overly conservative actions by other countries.

“We need to ensure that farmers have access to the seeds they want and that both domestic and export markets are not interrupted by concerns about biotechnology,” says Cathleen Enright, executive vice president, food and agriculture, Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO).

Dow AgroSciences has, for the first time, a weed control system with three herbicide tolerance genes stacked as part of a single genetic event in the soybean ge-
nomic. Portions of the system are currently under USDA review. Matt Rekeweg, U.S. industry relations and food chain leader for the company, is optimistic that the system will work more efficiently.

“It is a privilege to work with the U.S. regulatory system,” he says. “It employs scientific reviews, studies and other methodologies to assess risk to consumers and the environment in a transparent structure that is very open to public participation. And that is a good thing.”

Rekeweg also was optimistic when USDA announced an improved efficiency model last year, when the company’s new weed control system was submitted.

“There was a new, initial public comment period early on in the process,” he says. “These comments should help guide USDA efforts so that when assessments are complete and open again for a final comment period, it should be further along and more efficient to finalize.”

Dow AgroSciences expects to see the fruits of its labor after the second stage of the comment period, which is expected this spring.

Regulatory Process Slows

Between 1992 and 1999, USDA took an average of 178 days to approve a biotech crop. Now that process takes two to five years. More than 20 soybean biotech events and novel traits are under review or scheduled to be submitted to USDA between now and 2020. Countless others are in the industry pipeline. While part of the struggle may be sheer volume, industry officials point to inefficiencies, duplication within the regulatory structure and slowdowns from lawsuits.

“For any regulatory system to work, it has to be science-based, predictable, timely, defensible and work for all sized sectors,” says BIO’s Enright. “Our biotech regulatory system is not timely or predictable. USDA has been hammered by frivolous lawsuits that delay the ability to commercialize products by years. There is an increased blurring of the line among the roles of USDA-APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service), which regulates the plant, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which regulates insect resistant traits. That has resulted in duplication, more review and unnecessary data requirements.”

Last summer BIO helped file a letter to the chair of the House Committee on Agriculture on behalf of several of its members, including the American Soybean Association (ASA). The letter supported 2012 farm bill provisions that would better clarify the roles of regulatory agencies in reviews, direct resources to high-priority tasks and reinforce the principle of sound science.

Advocate for Biotechnology

Ron Moore, soybean farmer from Roseville, Ill., and ISA director, has traveled to Europe and South Korea as part of larger efforts to reach out to global export customers to maintain and expand markets for biotech soybeans. “They need to hear firsthand from a farmer why we use it and how we’re doing a better job as stewards of the environment because of it,” he says.

Moore has been taking advantage of biotech traits to improve productivity since Roundup Ready soybeans were launched in the mid-1990s. “Farmers have issues with certain resistant weeds that need two, sometimes three, different chemistries to take care of them,” he says.

“We desperately need alternatives, and delays in the regulatory approval process just prevent soybean farmers from being able to increase productivity.”

Consequences of not getting biotech products approved also include having to use older practices to control pests, which may not be as sustainable or good for the environment.

“Farmers have the loudest, most credible voice when it comes to advocating for the biotech products they value,” says Enright. “People expect the industry to promote biotech, but my advice to farmers is to speak loudly and often. They are more influential as the users of these products. When farmers speak about agriculture, Congress listens.”

As a rapidly growing global population requires farmers to produce as much food in the next 50 years as during all previous recorded history, efficiently approving new biotech products is critical. “Contact your legislators to let them know the importance these biotechnology tools bring to your farm and make them aware of the current challenges,” says Moore. ♦

“Contact your legislators to let them know the importance these biotechnology tools bring to your farm and make them aware of the current challenges,” says Ron Moore, soybean farmer from Roseville, Ill., and ISA director.

Let Your Voice be Heard

1. Visit legislative representatives in Washington, D.C., or in local district offices.
2. Submit supportive comments during public comment periods.
3. Reach out to the general public or key influencers in your community who may not be involved in agriculture.
Soy Talk

Market Watch

The past year has given many soybean farmers a roller coaster ride when it comes to prices and marketing decisions. A year ago, soybean prices hovered around the $11.50 per bushel mark. As the growing season developed and dry conditions played out across much of the country, the market price blew up. Drought throughout much of the soybean belt raised concerns over a short crop, driving prices to around $18 a bushel by mid-summer. Rains in August and September helped farmers avert soybean disaster as yields in many areas were better than expected and the markets responded by shaving nearly four dollars off the market price to around $14.

While soybean yields are expected to finish slightly better than many had anticipated, demand from export markets, particularly China, are also expected to remain strong. Larry Stenberg, grain leader for Dow AgroSciences says because South America had a disappointing soybean harvest, many markets turned to the United States for their supply, supporting strong prices.

However, Stenberg says South America is on pace for a huge soybean crop that would be available in March, setting the stage for soybean prices to trend downward in the coming months.

“We could have a huge inversion,” Stenberg says. “We are looking at soybeans near $14 now, by May they could be another dollar lower and by next November they could be struggling to hold onto double digit values.”

Stenberg says if farmers believe in trend line yields in the U.S. and believe South American farmers will have a large harvest, those with a supply of unsold beans need to take advantage of any price rallies or bounces to maximize profits.

“We could be looking at an 8 percent ending stocks to use ratio, which won’t support $15 beans, and possibly something under $10,” Stenberg adds.

Stenberg says signs point to soybean prices continuing a downward trend for the near future. A combination of U.S. farmers planting more soybean acres and bumper South American crop would support that trend. So, Stenberg says, while farmers may remember having beans at $18 a bushel just months ago, reality says those prices aren’t likely to be back anytime soon, so producers will need to sell when the prices rally and lock in good profits when they can.

Attend the 2013 Illinois Soybean Profitability Summit

ISA will host the Illinois Soybean Profitability Summit, “Shape Your Future as a Soybean Grower” at Illinois State University’s Bone Student Center, March 4, 2013, in Normal, Ill. Funded in part by the Illinois soybean checkoff, the event urges farmers to learn new techniques and innovative practices to boost yields and maximize profits.

The conference brings together farmers and industry representatives from major crop input suppliers and manufacturers for learning and networking and a trade show. Speakers include John Baize, president, John C. Baize & Associates, international ag trade and policy consulting firm; Ken Ferrie, independent agronomic consultant from central Illinois; Steve Johnson, Iowa State University Extension farm management specialist; Darin Newsom, senior market analyst with DTN; and Marion Calmer, farmer from Alpha, Ill., and president of Calmer Research Center and Calmer Corn Heads.

Participants at the 2012 Illinois Soybean Summit received an update about the Yield Challenge, a program targeted at helping boost Illinois soybean productivity. This year’s event will provide more tips to help soybean farmers maximize profitability.

Four breakout sessions will be offered, and feature Calmer, John McGillicuddy, independent agronomist from Iowa City, Iowa; Fred Below, Gary Schnitkey and Nick Paulson, all area specialists from the University of Illinois.

“We look forward to our second annual summit,” says Bill Wykes, soybean farmer from Yorkville, Ill., and ISA chairman. “It is a great opportunity for farmers, consultants and agronomists to learn and network with an emphasis on improving yield and profitability.”

The Illinois Soybean Summit is free to Illinois farmers. Registration is limited by the Feb. 15 deadline. For more information, visit www.ilsoy.org/summit or call 888-826-4011.
YOU HAVE ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT. OUR SOYBEAN SEED ISN'T ONE OF THEM.

With crop production full of uncertainties, there's one thing you can count on — Mycogen® brand soybeans. Our seed offers a unique combination of strong genetic performance and innovative technology. Add a dedicated agronomy support team with more than 300 years of experience, and you have what you need to help unleash your farm's true potential. Discover what our soybean seed can do for you at Mycogen.com.
New Demand Projections Show Soy-Based Feed Critical to Aquaculture Growth

Illinois soybean farmers continue to invest in aquaculture as the fastest growing food sector. “Illinois soybeans will continue to provide a consistent, high quality protein source for even more aquafeeds,” says Duane Dahlman, soybean farmer from Marengo, Ill., and ISA vice chair for aquaculture. ISA uses checkoff dollars to fund feed research for several marine species. “Innovative soy-based feed research will really move the needle to help the aquaculture industry scale up, in order to meet the growing demand for this healthy and sustainable food source.”

Dramatic Growth Projections
The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recently projected aquaculture production could grow 33 percent to 79 million metric tons by 2021. Additionally, a new study by the Worldwatch Institute projects aquaculture will produce 60 percent of all seafood consumed globally by 2020, up from the current 50 percent level.

Such growth is apparent in large-scale ventures around the world. The largest industrialized aquaculture plant in Europe opened in Poland in mid-September. Multilateral, multibillion dollar deals also are developing aquaculture in low income countries in Africa and Asia.

However, Dahlman reports that the prospects for thriving aquaculture growth in the U.S. remain dim, despite groundbreaking Marine Aquaculture Policy released in 2011 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Conflict exists between NOAA and state regulators with regard to siting and environmental impact. Absence of federal permitting guidelines for each regional fishery management council creates a potentially lengthy, expensive and uncertain permitting process that deters investment in offshore aquaculture.

Dahlman says all eyes now are on the first proposed shellfish farm in federal waters, off the coast of Long Beach, Calif. How the farm fares with the regulatory process could set the tone for domestic offshore aquaculture, which holds the greatest potential for U.S. aquaculture growth.

Sustainable Requirements
“The current trend in major U.S. and European seafood markets focuses on sustainability,” he says.

Retailers on both continents are adopting sustainability certification schemes such as GlobalGAP in Europe and Global Aquaculture Alliance’s Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) in the U.S. Industry watchers say the most hotly anticipated certification expected to have the most public awareness and acceptance is the Aquaculture Stewardship Certification (ASC), based on standards-setting dialogues backed by World Wildlife Fund. The first ASC-certified products, tilapia from Indonesia and pangasius from Vietnam, recently debuted in Europe.
A few years ago, when sow gestation crates were just starting to make headlines, Mike Haag believed the Illinois pork industry would need to deal with the issue and stop pretending it did not exist. Haag, who helps manage his family's 1,200-head, farrow-to-finish operation in Emington, Ill., now is afraid it may be too late.

As a past president of the Illinois Pork Producers Association (IPPA) and an officer since 2004, Haag has been on the front lines of the issue from the start. He believes in 10-15 years, producers will have to modify gestation stalls.

“I don’t know exactly what that compromise will look like – that’s yet to be determined. My hope is to keep farrowing stalls, but housing for gestating sows will change,” he says. “To some degree, we’ve already lost the argument. The longer we kick and scream, the worse off we are likely to be. How we move forward with this issue could really affect what kind of leverage we have with consumers on the next issue.”

Haag, who also grows soybeans and corn, thinks the next issue may be biotech or air quality. “Spray drift or dust coming off buildings and combines – I am nervous about that,” he says. “All I know is there will be a new issue, and science alone won’t win the argument.

“Scientifically speaking, we should win the stall argument, but it’s not about science,” he says. “This is about perception and emotion. We need to improve our image first.”

Dan Farney, soybean farmer from Morton, Ill., and ISA secretary, concurs. “Farmers need to talk on an emotional level now,” he says. “We need to use science as our foundation, but also we need to educate consumers about our values.”

Consumers Response is Emotional

New research from the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) mirrors Farney’s thoughts. Science-based arguments do not hold water because consumers respond emotionally to food. They do not want to eat anything that “messes with nature,” and they no longer give farmers the benefit of the doubt. Research shows consumers have fundamental concerns about anything used in food that is “not natural,” including antibiotics, hormones, fertilizer or chemicals.

Farney says USFRA’s Food Dialogues and the Illinois Farm Families (IFF) initiative are addressing these concerns. “Both reach consumers and help improve understanding of modern farming practices,” he says. “Bringing moms out to farms for honest conversations is an excellent avenue to show Illinois consumers what we are doing and how we are doing it. We don’t have anything to hide. We are all buying and eating the same groceries.”

Haag agrees, “IFF has done some really good work reaching out to Chicago consumers and bloggers. We will continue to build confidence with them. All of us in agriculture need to work together to build trust with consumers, so that someday, whatever the next big issue is, we will have relationships already in place.”

USFRA and IFF receive funding from the Illinois soybean checkoff. IFF also is supported by beef, pork and corn groups and Illinois Farm Bureau. Visit www.watchusgrow.org for more details.
Crop Science Scholars Help with Production Challenges

While Illinois soybean farmers work to manage crop issues in the field, ISA crop science scholars are taking on tough soybean production challenges in the lab. The scholarship program, currently in its third year, allows students to help solve problems facing the state’s farmers.

“The scholarship has attracted bright students to crop science, and credit should be given to ISA for the foresight,” says Brian Diers, University of Illinois soybean breeder, who has three crop science scholars currently working in the greenhouse, field and lab. The scholarship is funded by Illinois soybean checkoff dollars. “The students are working on research focused on solving current production problems and on increasing yield. The research is funded by the checkoff, and includes developing new soybean varieties and improving resistance to soybean aphids, sudden death syndrome and soybean cyst nematode. The partnership allows full-time researchers to get more work done and gives students hands-on opportunities.”

Nathan Waldeck, Farmersville, Ill., a 2010-11 scholar and prospective 2014 graduate, has worked with Diers since September 2010. Nick Steppig, Waterloo, Ill., a 2011-12 scholar and prospective 2015 graduate, has been in the lab for about a year. Devin Hammer, Urbana, Ill., who transferred into the crop science program from another major, will graduate in 2014. He started working with Diers during the summer of 2012.

“Research in crop improvement has skyrocketed the past couple of decades. With all of the new developments, it is difficult for farmers to know the right options to pursue,” says Waldeck. “I know from talking to my dad and grandpa, who are both farmers, that they are astounded by the changes that a single year can bring. They used to plant the same ‘top-producing’ varieties for about five seasons. Now varieties change all the time. The big challenge is staying current on new technologies and determining if higher prices for these developments are truly worth it.”

Steppig sees DNA extraction as the most exciting and relevant work in making crops of the future. He agrees that soybean farmers face a large number of choices.

“There is a huge variety of data that can be overwhelming to sift through in order for a farmer to choose a particular variety that he or she thinks will perform optimally,” says Steppig. “Research that shows success in one area of the state does not necessarily translate into success in another. As we advance technologically, it seems the process is becoming more and more complicated and the mastery of the art is more impressive than ever.”

Both Waldeck and Steppig believe the scholarship provides good training opportunities for future crop scientists. “The scholarship has allowed me to connect with many leaders in ISA and the crop industry. I have been able to tour research facilities on campus that I would not have known about if both the university and ISA board members had not invited me,” says Waldeck.

Steppig says attending the ISA Yield Challenge Summit allowed him to meet industry professionals, as well as students from other universities in crop sciences. “Working at the National Soybean Research Lab has given me worlds of hands-on experience that has made me even more sure of my career path and excited to be involved in such a great industry,” he says.
The 2012 drought may have reminded Illinois soybean farmers that yield is very important. But farmers also need to remember that yield is not the only success-determining characteristic. Soybean farmers must also mind their “Ps and Os” – protein and oil content.

“We’re learning protein and oil content contributes to a successful soybean crop, just as yield does,” says Ross Prough, soybean farmer from Greenfield, Ill., and ISA director.

USDA’s November crop report projected the average Illinois soybean yield at 43 bushels per acre this year, down 4.5 bushels from 2011.

Fewer soybeans to go around may be a challenge in itself, but industry sources say it also is becoming apparent that U.S. soybeans are not meeting the standard for protein. Jennifer Bareksten, protein export trader for ADM, told a group of farmers at a checkoff-funded quality workshop in Decatur, Ill., last November that ADM had to lower its guarantee on percent of protein in soybean meal because of inconsistent quality compared to countries like Brazil.

Steve Dennis, grain department manager, Evergreen FS, Inc., Bloomington, Ill., was concerned about being able to fulfill contracts. He expected smaller beans and lower protein and oil content.

“A trend I am seeing is that immature soybeans and more pods and stems are getting picked up and exceeding the one percent foreign matter maximum,” he says. “This can mean beans aren’t meeting full potential for protein and oil, and more protein and oil means more value.”

ISA collected samples last fall from grain elevators in 97 Illinois counties to measure protein and oil content. The ultimate goal is to share data with farmers and help increase protein and oil content in specific locations so farmers can increase overall value. Preliminary results from the sampling show state levels fall just short of meeting industry standards.

“Based on the approximately 500 samples we received and analyzed at 13 percent moisture, crude protein levels averaged 34.3 percent and oil 19.0 percent,” says Sharon Bard, program coordinator at Centrec Consulting Group, the firm analyzing sample results. “These results tell us there is room for improvement to surpass minimum goals and even set a higher standard.”

Get More P and O in 2013

For farmers to pursue improved content, Dennis advises along with management practices like weed control, farmers should choose seeds with high protein and oil potential – at least 35 percent protein and 19 percent oil. That standard is echoed by other soybean processors.

“All farmers have to do is ask their seed dealers for varieties that deliver the yield and other characteristics they’re looking for and specifically what the oil and protein content is for those varieties,” says Prough.

Data are displayed in some companies’ online seed catalogs as well as at these checkoff-funded sites: VIPSoybeans.org and unitedsoybean.org/resources/tools/soybean-quality-toolbox/.

“Mind your Ps and Os contributes to a successful soybean crop, just as yield does,” says Ross Prough, soybean farmer from Greenfield, Ill., and ISA director.
MARKET ACCESS

Connecting with Urban Legislators Influences Ag Policy

According to the 2010 census, 88.5 percent of the Illinois population lives in urban areas on just more than seven percent of the state’s land. Consequently, most of the elected representation in both Springfield and Washington, D.C., comes from urban areas. That makes connecting with those legislators crucial to Illinois soybean industry success.

“Because of their numbers and the power they have, it is critical to help urban legislators understand our business,” says Paul Rasmussen Jr., soybean farmer from Genoa, Ill., and ISA director. “Our local representatives are our neighbors. We helped them get elected. But they are a minority compared to those from Chicago and surrounding counties.”

Bruce Kinnett, ISA lobbyist in Springfield, echoes those words. “These individuals are instrumental in developing policy that impacts Illinois agriculture,” he says.

Rasmussen notes that because of lack of knowledge, urban legislators sometimes make uninformed decisions that may have unintended consequences. Such policy decisions can directly influence farmers’ freedom to operate and market access, even though there may be no farmers or farmland in some urban districts. For example:

• Illinois lawmakers manage a budget that includes maintenance for state, county and local roads and bridges.
• Legislative action can direct regulation by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other state agencies.
• Tax credits and sales tax exemptions on agricultural inputs and equipment can always be revisited.
• Legislators could consider future food labeling laws, similar to California’s defeated Proposition 37, regarding biotech ingredients.

Build Relationships and Knowledge

“The November elections introduced a tremendous number of new faces in the Illinois General Assembly and the Illinois congressional delegation this year,” says Kinnett. “Many may not realize how agriculture affects their urban and suburban constituents.”

ISA will address this knowledge gap with several efforts in 2013:

• Meeting and educating new legislators about ISA and key issues like food safety, animal welfare, sustainability, environmental impact, health benefits of soybean products and the economic impact of soybean production in Illinois.
• An Adopt-a-Legislator Program will foster relationships and establish common values and priorities with soybean farmers. Participating legislators will have the opportunity to visit farms, but farmers may visit urban districts as well. ISA directors can show urban legislators how agriculture directly ties to industries like food processing or biotechnology in their districts.
• Legislator’s Acre will pair ISA directors with key urban legislators. The program is designed to let lawmakers participate in the soybean growing season and help make agriculture real. The interested legislator would “adopt” an acre, with profits going to the charity of his or her choice.

According to Kinnett, these efforts complement ongoing programs to reach out to urban and suburban legislators and their constituents. “Educating key influencers, like soccer moms, about Illinois agriculture and teaching them how farmers are working to ensure a safe, abundant food supply is critical in our ability to impact public policy,” he says.
New Illinois Congressional Look for 2013

The Illinois map shows the new Congressional districts, which took effect with the last election. U.S. Census data are used to redraw legislative boundaries every 10 years. Illinois soybean growers are still evaluating how this may have affected 2012 election results. For more information about the new Illinois General Assembly, visit www.ilga.gov or search for your representatives at Voice for Soy.

Voice for Soy Matters

Legislation can affect the way farmers produce soybeans, so lawmakers need to hear from farmers on issues that matter. Voice for Soy lets farmers easily connect with legislators to take action and advocate for Illinois agriculture. The Voice for Soy site is an easy, one-stop shop to track key issues, share information with farmers, and mobilize quickly when necessary.


January 2013
ISA Selects New Soy Ambassador Leadership Class

Seven soybean farmers were recently named to ISA’s new leadership class of Soy Ambassadors. The program, funded by the Illinois soybean checkoff, is a two-year program made up of a select group of soybean farmers chosen to develop qualities that can be channeled toward future leadership roles. Soy Ambassadors gain the inside track on state, national and global soybean industry issues and provide input on ISA activities. In addition, Soy Ambassadors promote soybeans at key events and have the opportunity to travel on an international mission.

“The Soy Ambassador program provides participants with the opportunity to gain expertise, exposure and perspective that is critical to becoming an effective soybean industry leader,” says Bill Wykes, soybean farmer from Yorkville, Ill., and ISA chairman. “A number of past Soy Ambassadors have assumed not only state, but also national leadership positions.”

The 2012-13 Soy Ambassadors were named during the Illinois Commodity Conference:

- **Cassandra DeJaynes**, LaHarpe, is involved with a no-till/strip-till corn and soybean rotation and a 250-head cow-calf herd. She has a degree in interdisciplinary studies.

- **Matthew DeSutter**, Woodhull, is a partner in a family corn and soybean farming operation with his dad, two uncles and a cousin. He attended the University of Illinois and graduated with a degree in ag business. He participated in the New Century Farmer Program and the Tomorrow’s Top Producer Seminar. DeSutter also is part of the Farm Bureau Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT) program.

- **Frank Legner**, Odell, farms corn and soybeans with his father. He also is a precision farming consultant. Legner has a degree from Bradley University in mechanical engineering and

The new class of Soy Ambassadors was announced during the Illinois Commodity Conference last November. Pictured (left to right) are Matthew DeSutter, Austin Rincker, Kate Longley, Frank Legner, Cassandra DeJaynes and Jeff Lynn. Jenny Mennenga is not pictured.

- **Jeff Lynn**, Oakford, is part of a family farm dating back to 1833 in Illinois that includes corn and soybeans and seed soybeans. The farm is in the top eight percent of seed production for the seed company, and currently is growing regulated dicamba soybeans. He previously sold insurance and led tours for a major equipment manufacturer.

- **Jenny Mennenga**, LeRoy, farms corn and soybeans with her family, and has a small cow-calf herd. She previously was an agronomist for a large ag company. Mennenga has a degree in agronomy from Iowa State University and is a Certified Crop Adviser (CCA). She is involved with her church and the Cultivating Master Farmer program.

- **Austin Rincker**, Moweaqua, manages Hunter Grain, Inc., a corn and soybean farm with a small herd of Angus cows. Rincker has a degree in agricultural economics from the University of Illinois, and has an Illinois auctioneer license. He is active in his church, Shelby County Farm Bureau and volunteers with local 4-H and FFA chapters.

Farmers interested in gaining the expertise, exposure and perspective that is critical to becoming an effective soybean industry leader are encouraged to apply for one of the positions available for the 2014-15 program year. Applications may be completed online at www.ilsoy.org and must be submitted by the July 1, 2013, deadline for consideration.
ISU Studies Potential in Turkey

Illinois State University (ISU) researchers, with endowed research support from the Illinois soybean checkoff, recently evaluated the U.S. soybean market potential in Turkey. The country has a preference for non-biotech soybeans, which complicates meeting customer needs there. The goal of the project was to obtain a firm grasp of transportation and logistics in Turkey, learn the culture and eating habits, examine the meat producing industry and what soy products have the potential for success. Turkey is one of the world’s fastest-growing economies, and protein consumption is rising. However, researchers concluded Turkey faces government and consumer roadblocks to acceptance of biotech soybeans. Meanwhile, livestock and poultry producer associations appear to be interested in importing soybeans for feed.

Extreme Beans App Available

A new “Extreme Beans” smartphone app developed by the United Soybean Board (USB) includes two calculators that can help farmers plan for their next crop. One calculator helps users determine whether the yield benefits of various input combinations justify the costs. The other uses the main maturity rates for a farmer’s region, soybean seed costs and an estimated price of soybeans at time of sale to determine an optimal seeding rate based on a percentage of return. The app also includes documents and videos that describe the research behind each tool. The Extreme Beans app is available for Apple iPhone and Android-enabled smartphones and other devices. Farmers can easily find the app by simply searching by title. The Extreme Beans app is a result of the soybean checkoff-funded “Maximum Yield through Inputs” study.

CEO Changes at Crop Improvement

New Illinois Crop Improvement Association CEO Douglas E. Miller assumes full responsibilities for the organization this month. Miller formerly served as seed technology manager and business development director. In his new role he will work to ensure growth in established markets such as seed testing, grain testing, field inspection and winter farm services, as well as new markets such as trait and product development services.

Miller joined the Illinois Crop Improvement Association in 1994 as greenhouse supervisor. “Biotechnology was becoming a major force in the seed industry and the effort Illinois Crop made to stay relevant has driven much of our success,” he says. Miller spearheaded reorganization of the Puerto Rico Soybean Trait Introgression Program and will continue to develop services for off-shore company licensing traits from U.S. technology developers.

Illinois is Strong Export State

According to the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, Illinois’ gross state product, or economic output, was an estimated $651.5 billion in 2010, the most recent data available, accounting for 4.5 percent of U.S. total gross product. If Illinois were a country it would rank 23rd in the world. Illinois’ export shipments rank sixth among the states.
Illinois Company Strives to Fuel Fleet with Biodiesel

Why does G&D Integrated use biodiesel?

Biodiesel makes sense economically and environmentally. Quality biodiesel from a trusted supplier treated with a top-tier additive is a win for all stakeholders – soybean farmers, suppliers, fleet operators and truck drivers. Our trucks fueled by B20 travel more than 18 million miles each year at a reduced cost to us, even after factoring in the additive/stabilizer. Treated biodiesel helps reduce emissions tremendously as millions of pounds of carbon and reduced pollutants.

We often wonder why other transportation companies continue to downplay biodiesel's positives. If you could save money, see comparable miles per gallon at a lower cost, reduce petroleum imports and help protect the environment, isn't biodiesel the best choice?

Does using biodiesel affect your client relationships?

Absolutely. We increased our Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) SmartWay program standing, a national program incentivizing freight shippers, carriers and logistics companies to improve fuel efficiency and save money. Some of our existing customers further encourage our efforts by reimbursing us a higher fuel surcharge based on a better SmartWay score. We’ve seen a trend to award business to carriers with demonstrated commitment to economic sustainability.

Has the growth of Illinois’ biodiesel market helped with quality assurance?

From what I have seen, the quality of biodiesel has improved over the past few years, which could be due to changes in refinement practices, government incentives, better regional availability or suppliers taking the quality assurance issue more seriously. Whatever the reason, there is a correlation between the recent growth of biodiesel in Illinois and the quality of the product we get today. G&D has had no quality concerns to date with its source of treated biodiesel.

Do you have any advice for using biodiesel during cold weather?

Using a top-tier additive and stabilizer is important. The product we use will keep B20 stable down to about 0° F. Having a single source of tested biodiesel and a dynamic supplier who can blend different percentages of biodiesel based on the forecast is key. Also, routine tank cleanings at least twice a year are a must. Water buildup, inevitable with any type of diesel, will eventually start to affect engine performance.
Little Difference between Swedish and U.S. Farmer Concerns

Like U.S. farmers, Swedish farmers hear about sustainability. But it doesn’t drive every decision they make. They, too, have other priorities to consider. They are conscious of their impact on the environment, but also worry about grain prices, weather, input costs, land prices and availability, and government regulations.

“Agriculture is often being blamed for environmental problems,” said Lena Johansson, Federation of Swedish Farmers, during the 2012 International Federation of Ag Journalists Congress in Sweden. “Recently more people have begun to look upon farming with fresh eyes. Except being the base of vital food production, agriculture could also provide ‘clean’ and renewable energy.”

Amy Roady, ISA communications director, attended the conference.
BECK'S ESCALATE® DELIVERS +5.4 Bu./A.

SUSPECT OF SUCCESS

Farmers are achieving a high level of success with Beck's Escalate® yield enhancement system. Due to Practical Farm Research (PFR)*, investigators have revealed that over the last three years Escalate delivered an average yield advantage of 5.4 Bu/A. when compared to untreated seed. Escalate is a seed-applied insecticide and fungicide coating that comes standard on every bag of soybeans offered by Beck's. To help capture the Escalate yield enhancement system, call our tip line at 1.800.937.2325.

Beck's Hybrids is a family-owned and operated seed company that serves farmers in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Kentucky. According to a recent media survey, Beck's ranks as the sixth largest seed company in the United States.

*Three year data collected from Beck’s 2010, 2011 and 2012 Practical Farm Research (PFR)* Central Indiana Beck’s Escalate vs. Untreated Study. Escalate® and PFR® are registered trademarks of Beck’s Superior Hybrids, Inc.