Illinois Leads U.S. Soybean Production

• Manage 2014 Marketing Plan Now
• Revisit Manure Value as Fertilizer
It’s time to take a stand against soybean cyst nematodes.

Soybean cyst nematodes have been sucking the life out of your plants long enough. Take back control with Clariva™ Complete Beans nematicide/insecticide/fungicide, proven to offer direct and season-long activity against SCN to maximize yield potential. Clariva Complete Beans helps minimize hidden and costly damage from SCN independent of environmental conditions, and features the unsurpassed early-season insect and disease protection that growers know from CruiserMaxx® Beans with Vibrance® insecticide/fungicide. Contact your Syngenta representative to learn how you can take back your fields.
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Optimism Abounds as Another Calendar Year Closes

Harvest reports seem to confirm better yields than perhaps expected for many of our state’s soybean farmers. Certainly, the crop overall appears to be much better than last year’s drought-reduced crop. And I believe that is the basis for some optimism as we head into 2014, as the number one soybean-producing state.

Illinois soybean farmers have other reasons to think positively as well. Successes we recently have experienced can serve as springboards to continued progress in the coming year.

First, I would like to acknowledge all of the Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) membership recruiters. We met our goal for increasing membership for FY13, and I encourage Illinois soybean farmers who have not joined to do so by visiting the website, www.ilsoygrowers.com. Remember, just because you invest in the soybean checkoff does not mean you are a member of ISG. Members pay dues and have a say in those regulatory and legislative issues that affect our freedom to farm. You can read more about other membership benefits on the site.

Illinois soybean farmers also may reap benefits from projects funded on the checkoff side in 2013. Several could have a direct impact on your bottom line, including:

• Adding livestock to grain operations. ISA created an information brochure to help address questions grain farmers may have about incorporating livestock onto their own farms. The information ties into the ISA website, where more tools are available to download or use online to guide the decision-making process about raising livestock.

• Finding transportation infrastructure solutions. ISA’s “Let’s Find a Way” campaign raises awareness of industry and infrastructure issues. Priorities include roads and bridges, locks and dams, rail and container exports. ISA has formed partnerships that are critical to making soybean transportation more economical and efficient.

• Improving weed management. ISA’s new interactive weed management map can help farmers combat herbicide resistance. Farmers have access to detailed information about the most prevalent resistant weeds by county, including specific chemistry resistances. The online tool also provides a photo gallery of weeds at various growth stages and links to other sites to more easily identify and address any occurrences.

• Obtaining timely production management tips. ISA’s Management Matters program can help farmers take action at the right time in-season to better manage operations. To gather tips for 2014, plan to attend the Soybean Summit, Feb. 6, at the Keller Convention Center in Effingham or the Soybean Summit, March 7, at the Civic Center in Peoria.

For more profit-building project ideas, visit www.ilsoy.org. ISA’s goal is to use 600 million bushels of Illinois soybeans by 2020. Let’s ring in 2014 with optimism, and together tackle legislative and regulatory concerns and implement sound checkoff-funded advice to reach that goal. Happy Holidays.

Bill Raben
ISA Chairman
Health insurance issues are not new. President John Kennedy had a vision for government health care for senior citizens when he campaigned in the 1950s. Medicare was created in 1966. Mitt Romney made Medicare a central issue in the election with Paul Ryan as his running mate. Ryan proposed a “Medicare Exchange” that would allow participants to select among insurers.

Why pay attention? Since you are likely self-employed and may have huge expense in health insurance, you will collect Social Security and get government health insurance at retirement.

The Affordable Care Act, or “Obamacare,” affects many people, although it does not affect Medicare. Medicare is the largest health insurance program in America, and now contains four parts. Part A, which carries no premium, is hospital insurance. Part B is optional medical insurance for doctors’ bills, lab tests and outpatient care. Relatively newer parts C (Advantage plans) and D (prescription drugs) have many variables depending on the plan chosen. Some people even get “disenrolled” from Medicare Advantage due to changes in networks.

If you receive Social Security, you automatically are enrolled in A and B when you turn 65. If you aren’t yet receiving Social Security, you have to apply for Medicare coverage. The enrollment period for B and D begins three months before you turn 65 and lasts seven months. If you miss the window, your coverage is delayed and premiums are higher.

Enrollment rules are different if you are still working:

- If your current employer has 20 or more employees, you and your dependents can remain in your employer’s health plan, but you should sign up for Part A anyway. There is no cost and you won’t have to do it later when employer coverage ends. Once you stop working, sign up for Part B during the special enrollment period that lasts eight months following your final day of employment. Many people inadvertently miss the deadline because they go on COBRA. Employees who leave their jobs to continue coverage under their employer’s plan — generally for 18 months — enroll in Part B only after the benefits run out. The clock for Part B starts when you leave your job, not when benefits end.
- If your employer has fewer than 20 employees, enroll in Medicare as soon as you are eligible. Your employer’s health insurer will assume you have Medicare coverage and won’t pay for anything Medicare would cover.
- If you are self-employed and have no retiree health coverage from a current or former employer or spouse, sign up for Medicare Parts A and B as soon as you can. You can deduct part or all of the cost as a business expense.

The Affordable Care Act has made Medicare more reasonable. Preventive screenings, such as colonoscopies, are covered, and the Part D “doughnut hole,” which causes many seniors to pay for prescription drugs out of pocket, is being phased out.

Regardless of your employment status, know and manage your health insurance options now to prevent problems in the future.

Jim Martin is a Chartered Life Underwriter and president of Kankakee Valley Association of Insurance & Financial Advisors. He owns Midwest Insurance & Tax Service in Pontiac, Ill., is a member of Illinois Soybean Growers and a past ISA SoyLeader.
Carefully Manage Marketing and Taxes in Year Ahead

By Joanie Stiers

Every year contains its “should-haves.” In 2013, the most common should-have may be that farmers should have priced more grain ahead. But farmers who carry a heavier-than-normal marketing load into 2014 have company.

“A lot of people did not forward contract in 2013, so it’s going to be a tough year,” says Edward Usset, grain marketing specialist, University of Minnesota. “I can see producers who have two burdens to carry: 2013 crop that hasn’t priced yet and next year’s crop that hasn’t priced yet.”

The previous two years penalized farmers for pricing early. But Usset says that was the wrong lesson to take into 2013, particularly for corn.

The year’s decline in soybean prices has been less disappointing. Monthly average cash soybean prices dropped 50 cents per bushel from February to August, according to University of Illinois data, and $1 per bushel from the summer peak ahead of harvest.

“We ought to forget about last year when we think about the year ahead,” says Usset.

Lower Price Expectations

The 2012-13 marketing year contained the highest average soybean prices in history. From September 2012 to August 2013, farm prices averaged $14.60 per bushel in Illinois, according to University of Illinois data. The nationwide price is only expected to average $11.33 for the 2013-14 marketing year, says Lisa Elliott, commodity marketing specialist, South Dakota State University, who quotes Food and Agricultural Research Policy Institute (FAPRI) estimates.

A quick review of market factors in 2013 shows prices were supported by stronger-than-average soybean exports, although uncertainty about prevented plant acres and the government shutdown that halted USDA reports pressured prices later in the year. Strong, but lower prices preceded harvest when an inverted market encouraged farmers to sell, not store.

Darrel Good, agricultural economist at the University of Illinois, holds lower price expectations as well, and anticipates prices around $12 per bushel to be more common in 2014.

“We won’t repeat what we’ve seen in the last few years with the extreme highs,” he says.

Factors to Watch in 2014

A number of market factors that could affect the price outlook in the year ahead include:

- Pace of Chinese soybean purchases.
- China accounts for more than 60 percent of world soybean trade. Good says varied concerns about the growth rate of the country’s economy often are discussed in context with livestock production and soybean meal demand. Overall, Chinese demand looks strong into 2014 and beyond, he adds.

- Planting intentions. Corn and soybean price spreads ahead of planting may influence some decisions. A shift in acreage can impact prices.

- Potential changes to biodiesel volumes under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). Elliott says RFS volume changes may pressure soybean crush margins if the government reduces expected advanced biofuels levels for the new year.

- South America’s crops and currency. Success of the current crop will be important for price direction in 2014. Elliott predicts the continent may have record soybean plantings.

“One thing to watch besides weather...
in South America is the monetary policy issues associated in Argentina,” Elliott says. “Larger economic problems and the uncertainty of the settlement of Argentina’s default on debt with creditors have caused producers in Argentina to use their crops as a hedge against currency inflation. There is some uncertainty with how the resolution to Argentina’s debt default case will impact the overall financial stability of Argentina and the soybean market going forward.”

Keep Pace with Tax Laws
In addition to marketing soybeans, farmers will need to keep pace with changes in the tax laws. The farm bill extension that came as part of the fiscal cliff deal at the start of 2013 generated new taxes and tax rules that will impact some farmers. Neil Harl, emeritus professor of economics at Iowa State University, highlights tax implications to consider as farmers look to 2014.

• Depreciation limits. The American Taxpayer Relief Act continued some provisions related to depreciation for 2013. Section 179, or “fast depreciation,” allows farmers to deduct the full price of eligible machinery, breeding stock, fences, tile lines, grain bins and more, Harl says. The 2013 deduction limit matches 2012 at $500,000 with a phase-out beginning at $2 million. Without Congressional action, Section 179 will drop to a limit of $25,000 in 2014, he says. Bonus depreciation, set at 50 percent, is available for items purchased new. Unlike Section 179, bonus depreciation is available to cash rent landlords and includes buildings and property with a recovery period of 20 years or less.

• New Medicare taxes. An additional 3.8 percent tax on investment income will apply to farmers with higher incomes. Thresholds are $200,000 in adjusted gross income for single filers or $250,000 if filing jointly. The major concern is rents for which the 15.3 percent self-employment tax was not paid, Harl says.

• Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payment taxes. In the past, only active farmers paid self-employment tax rates on CRP rental income. This summer, the U.S. Tax Court ruled investors who are not retired and receiving Social Security benefits or Social Security disability benefits also are subject to the 15.3 percent tax for CRP, Harl says.

• Land gifts with low basis. Landowners may consider gifting land to avoid future estate taxes. Land that is gifted retains its original basis, Harl says. If that basis is low, the gift recipient is subject to income tax on the gain. Harl encourages landowners to retain these assets until death when the basis is reset at current value.

• New tax bracket for high income taxpayers. Starting in 2013, the American Taxpayer Relief Act set a new top tax bracket with a rate of 39.6 percent. Thresholds are $400,000 in adjusted gross income for single filers or $450,000 if filing jointly. This bracket will see the capital gains tax rate increase from 15 to 20 percent.

• Crop insurance payouts. Farmers eligible for crop insurance payouts due to destruction or damage to crops in 2013 may be able to defer that income to 2014. To qualify, farmers must use a cash method of accounting and show a history of deferring more than 50 percent of the crop to the following year. Recovery based on revenue insurance is not eligible for deferral, Harl says.

Finally, Harl advises farmers to keep an eye on the Affordable Health Care Act, which will bring health requirements for all Americans, including farmers. In addition, the $14,000 federal gift tax annual exclusion per recipient will remain in 2014. And the $5.25 million estate tax exemption limit for 2013 will be indexed with inflation and increase in 2014.
**Project Investigates Productive Use of Invasive Asian Carp**

If there’s a silver lining to the challenge invasive Asian carp present to Illinois waterways, soybean checkoff-funded research may find it. The fish, which are voracious eaters and generally weigh 30-40 pounds, have damaged boats and injured people when jumping from the water, and are a threat to native fish species found in Illinois rivers. But they also may be a good source of feed for other fish species.

“We’re excited about this particular project, because it addresses an environmental problem caused by invasive Asian carp, which is damaging the ecosystem balance of our rivers and lakes,” confirms Duane Dahlman, soybean farmer from Marengo, Ill., and ISA director. Dahlman also is chair of the Soy Aquaculture Alliance. “It benefits local fish farmers, as well as stimulates the local market for soy feed ingredients.”

The checkoff-funded research project, which is being conducted at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), focuses on feed rations for hybrid striped bass and largemouth bass, two dominant fish reared in Illinois. The feed for these species contains considerable amounts of fish meal and oil from wild-caught sources. New formulations have about a 1.3:1 ratio of soybean meal to fish meal, and about a 1.2:1 ratio of soybean oil to marine-origin fish oil. More than 25 percent of the formulation is soy-derived.

Dahlman says fish-based feed sources are costly and unsustainable. “Research has shown that soy products are cost-effective alternatives to marine-derived ingredients, although growth performance can be slightly reduced without fish meal and fish oil,” he explains.

Enter the Asian carp. Researchers are evaluating the suitability of the invasive species as an alternative to marine fish meal to boost the growth of fish fed soy-based feeds. The finalized formulation currently is being compared with commercially available feeds in farm-level feeding trials. Assessment of production costs and product value of fish raised on the local feed will be made via taste tests and market surveys.

Mark Albertson, Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) director of strategic market development, says results so far suggest the carp meal is equivalent to marine fish meal.

“When it comes to many carnivorous fish, feeding soybean meal and fish meal is a very complimentary combination,” he says. “The problem is that aquaculture is already using most of the fish meal available in the world. Without new feed resources, aquaculture cannot keep pace with growing seafood demand. We are proving invasive Asian carp, like those found in the Illinois River, can be combined with soybean meal to create effective aquaculture feeds and even used locally. It’s a real lemons-to-lemonade story.”

Dahlman points out that using Asian carp for feed also benefits local fishermen, who harvest the carp they catch to render into protein meals for use in fish feed.

“It is great to support fish farmers and fishermen in Illinois, and help our local waterways deal with a threatening species at the same time. This is a true implementation of Illinois soybean farmers’ commitment to sustainability,” he says. “We know the global market for soy in aquaculture diets is growing faster than any other form of protein production. We will continue to help the industry seek solutions for the marketplace.”

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**Checkoff Fact:** Illinois Farmers Show Aquaculture Vision

Duane Dahlman, soybean farmer from Marengo, Ill., and ISA director, says Illinois soybean farmers have long been lauded for visionary support of aquaculture research. ISA-funded efforts help make global production more sustainable with soy-based feed formulations for popular marine farmed fish, such as cobia and white seabass.
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A growing number of soybean customers would like to import soybeans via containers, and ISA and industry partners continue to leverage Illinois’ world-class logistics infrastructure to efficiently fill such requests. The work is supported by a recent soybean checkoff-funded study that found soybean quality is maintained during transport in containers.

“Illinois’ combination of high-quality soybeans and easy access to containers puts the supply chain in a good position to capitalize on containerized exports,” says Paul Rasmussen, soybean farmer from Genoa, Ill., and ISA transportation first vice chair. “We must keep improving logistics to efficiently get soybeans into containers and to customers to remain competitive.”

According to Richard Galloway, former soybean crush plant executive, some international soybean end users buy containerized soybeans for their specialized quality, whether non-biotech, high protein and oil or identity-preserved. Containers also are an attractive option for importers who lack capacity to handle standard bulk shipments.

“Showing quality is preserved creates confidence on the receiver side that the product will meet grade and quality standards,” says Ken Eriksen, senior vice president, Informa Economics, Inc., the firm that conducted the study with the Illinois Crop Improvement Association. “This allows shippers to market higher quality at higher prices, which will trickle down to farmers.”

Researchers measured more than 20 quality variables -- including proteins, sugars, amino acids and oil, grade, weight and moisture -- at the origin and destination for 17 shipments of Illinois soybeans to Asia. While differences were recorded, researchers concluded quality is largely maintained during containerized transit. Read the full study at http://bit.ly/1aIRYkD.

Hub in the Heartland

Others are taking notice of container potential to deliver quality products as well, adds Rasmussen, including the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative and Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM). In September 2013, ADM opened an intermodal container ramp located on 250 acres at its Decatur, Ill., processing complex. ADM projects it will handle 50,000 containers per year initially, with potential to increase to 150,000 containers per year. A single container carries an average of 26 tons of soybeans.

“The new intermodal hub brings to life an area ISA’s transportation committee has made a main priority: aligning farmer needs with those of the supply chain and downstream customers,” says Rasmussen. “As ADM has done, ISA seeks opportunities to partner with aligned organizations to improve market access and the Illinois economy. End users determine price. Delivering the highest quality we can from field to elevator will help increase our bottom lines.”

ADM projects it will handle 50,000 containers per year initially, with potential to increase to 150,000 containers per year. A single container carries an average of 26 tons of soybeans.

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**Checkoff Fact:** Illinois Infrastructure Gets Interactive

Where there’s a will, there’s a road, water or railway -- and a new interactive resource takes users on a journey to discover just how much each mode of transportation affects the Illinois soybean industry. To get started and learn more about checkoff-funded programs to improve Illinois transportation infrastructure, visit www.ilsoy.org/isa/transportation/.
THE WAY OUT OF THIS FIX IS TO START FIXING IT.

LET’S FIND A WAY

Closed roads. Crumbling locks and dams. Extensive detours. Outdated railroads. They’re all part of a deteriorating infrastructure that results in increased costs and lost productivity for Illinois farmers, processors and shippers, undermining our competitiveness in domestic and global soybean markets. And the problem will only get worse with added bushels in coming years.

Visit ilsoy.org/isa/transportation/ to learn more about how we can fix this fix we’re in.
Develop Plan of Attack for 2014
Weeds, Pests and Diseases

Weather is the primary factor that can affect soybean yield, but pressure from weeds, insects and diseases also can reduce soybean yields and profitability. Agronomists have their attention focused on several potential yield-steaders for 2014, and urge farmers to begin to prepare.

While we can’t do much about the weather, there are several steps Illinois soybean farmers can take to get their 2014 crop off to a strong start,” says Don Guinnip, soybean farmer from Marshall, Ill., and ISA Production Committee chair.

Watch Out for Weeds
Palmer amaranth will make headlines in 2014. Similar to waterhemp, Palmer amaranth plants produce an abundance of seeds that easily are moved by harvesting and tillage equipment. Researchers estimate the fast-growing weed can cause yield losses approaching 80 percent.

“Palmer amaranth is perhaps the personification of a weed species that requires an integrated management approach,” says Aaron Hager, University of Illinois weed scientist.

Similarly, marestail will be a repeat nuisance across Illinois in 2014. An annual native to North America, marestail can exist as either a winter or summer annual. Winter annual marestail typically emerges during the fall months, within a few days or weeks after seed drops from the parent plant. Summer annual populations sprout in early or late spring or early summer.

Hager says management recommendations to keep troublesome weeds in check include monitoring for signs of herbicide resistance and rotating chemistries when possible.

Keep Eye on Insect Pressure
Often considered the number one soybean yield robber, soybean cyst nematode (SCN) infests approximately 80 percent of Illinois soybean fields, according to Jason Bond, Southern Illinois University Carbondale Plant, Soil and Ag Systems associate professor. While SCN can never be completely eradicated, Bond says it can be managed with a few simple steps.

A field inspection often is not enough. Testing soil samples for both number and type of SCN present is important to proper management, including variety selection. Depending on test results, rotating an infested field to a non-host crop such as corn may help manage the problem. A good plan that includes adequate soil fertility and pest control can minimize yield losses from SCN.

Defend against Diseases
White mold, sudden death syndrome (SDS) and brown stem rot (BSR) are diseases to watch for in 2014. With limited options for in-season management, agronomists suggest farmers continue to select resistant varieties and apply management as needed to help reduce yield losses.

White mold is easily distinguished from most other soybean diseases by the presence of mycelia, a cottony, moldy growth; and sclerotia, a hardened mass of fungal tissue. Depending on weather conditions, white mold can substantially reduce yield, especially when management practices favor high yield potential. Cooler-than-normal temperatures, higher humidity and fog-like conditions can increase the potential for white mold outbreaks.

SDS and brown stem rot symptoms include yellowing or browning between leaf veins. Examining internal tissue in the lower stem of the plant is recommended to pinpoint the problem. If the pith is white, the plant was affected by SDS. If discolored, BSR is the culprit.

Checkoff Fact: ISA Provides 2013 Season in Review
ISA developed a video for the Oilseed and Grain Trade Summit, held in Minneapolis during October, that featured four Illinois soybean farmers discussing the past season. The video also includes a montage of photos from the checkoff-funded SoyCam project, which highlights each farmer’s crop during the season. The video can be found on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufVG222E3Xs.
Pioneer® brand T Series can help you hit your yield goals with soybeans designed for your acres. Packed with the latest defensive and agronomic traits to keep you ahead of the game, the 2014 lineup also includes products with the Genuity® Roundup Ready 2 Yield® trait. Talk to your Pioneer sales professional about the best fit for your fields. Pioneer.com/tseries

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High Oleic Soybeans Benefit Farm Profits and Consumer Health

Cutting-edge technology improves soybean agronomic traits to solve on-farm problems. The same methods can be used to enhance traits off-farm customers care about most. High oleic is a biotech trait that enhances the functionality and nutritional profile of soybean oil.

“Decades ago, conventional soybean oil faced growing competition from other edible oils and market demand for diets low in saturated and trans fats,” says Jeff Lynn, soybean farmer from Oakford, Ill., and ISA at-large director. “Today, high oleic varieties fill this gap and help keep food and restaurant customers from switching oils.”

High oleic variety developers say as its name implies, the new oil is high in oleic acid (omega-9), with additional benefits including zero trans fats, lower saturated fat than commodity soybean oil, two to three times longer fry life and extended shelf life in packaged foods. A report by Edgar B. Cahoon, USDA-Agricultural Research Service Plant Genetics Research Unit, finds its stability also carries over to extended product life in industrial applications such as lubricants.

Two brands of high oleic soybeans are currently available: Plenish by DuPont Pioneer and Vistive Gold by Monsanto, approved for use in the U.S. in 2009 and 2010.

Lynn first planted high oleic soybeans in 2012, and increased Vistive Gold production by 80 acres last year, approximately one-quarter of his total soybean acreage. The beans must be managed and monitored differently than conventional varieties, but the return is an increase in his bottom line.

“Corn has been king in past years, but that’s changing with help from premium soybean varieties and better management. Niche varieties are another way to make soybeans more profitable, and cause farmers to really think about who we’re growing for beyond the elevator,” says Jeff Lynn, soybean farmer from Oakford, Ill., and ISA director.

“Corn has been king in past years, but that’s changing with help from premium soybean varieties and better management,” says Lynn. “Niche varieties are another way to make soybeans more profitable, and cause farmers to really think about who we’re growing for beyond the elevator.”

Checkoff Fact: National Checkoff Supports Development

In July 2013, USB pledged $60 million during the next five years to quickly expand seed production of high oleic soybean varieties across a wide geography, and market high oleic soybean oils to food companies and other stakeholders. For more information, visit www.unitedsoybean.org/topics/high-oleic-soy/.

What’s Next for High Oleic Soy?

• With increased function comes more sales opportunities. USB projects nine billion pounds of high oleic soybean oil will be available by 2023 to meet global demand. That translates to 18 to 23 million planted acres by 2023.

• The soybean checkoff and industry stakeholders are working with DuPont Pioneer and Monsanto to expand availability of existing high oleic technology in maturity groups I to V by 2023. Without checkoff support, companies only would have developed high oleic varieties in late maturity group II and early maturity group III in the same time frame.

• USB is building awareness of the product among farmers, processors, seed technology companies and others. USB and seed technology providers also will work to increase farmer adoption by sharing results of on-farm varietal performance.
Discussions on Capitol Hill and at the Illinois Statehouse directly affect how Illinois soybean growers farm. For example, this fall the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a reduction in the required production of biomass-based diesel, including soy biodiesel. As the top producer of biodiesel, such a decision directly affects the Illinois soybean market.

Even before the EPA announcement, a handful of Illinois soybean farmers worked to influence the Renewable Fuel Standards (RFS) discussion, sending emails to legislators through www.VoiceforSoy.org. Illinois Soybean Growers followed up with in-person visits to the Illinois Congressional delegation, and Senator Dick Durbin publically noted the visit.

VoiceForSoy.org provides Illinois soybean growers with a free and easy way to speak directly to lawmakers. Quantity and quality of responses matter. Here’s how all farmers can help:

- Sign up as an advocate at VoiceForSoy.org. You will be connected with your state and federal elected officials.
- When an issue needs action, you will receive an email with a short overview and a response link to send a letter directly from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
- Personalize your letter to explain how your farm will be affected. Personal stories stand out and reinforce how legislation impacts you, your community and your ability to support the legislator.
- Make VoiceForSoy.org your go-to resource.

Crop Sciences Scholarship Applications Available

ISA will again offer up to 10 college scholarships for the 2014-15 school year to promising students majoring in a crop sciences field. Students must be entering their junior year or be transfer students with 60 credit hours next fall at the University of Illinois, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Western Illinois University or Illinois State University.

The scholarship is worth $4,000 for the first year ($2,000 per semester). An additional $4,000 for a second year is awarded upon successful reapplication for a total of $8,000. Applicants must be completing a bachelor’s of science degree in a crop sciences discipline, such as plant breeding, biotechnology, plant pathology, weed management or crop management.

The scholarship is administered by the Illinois Farm Bureau’s IAA Foundation. Applicants may visit the IAA website and download application materials and guidelines. All applications must be submitted electronically or postmarked by Feb. 1, 2014. For details, visit www.iaafoundation.org/iaaf/Scholarships/ISA_Crop_Science_Scholarship_Program.html.
Soybean buyers face new pressures from customers to ensure their supply chains are sustainable. Some customers even already are refusing beans that don’t meet their sustainability standards.

While 30 years of USDA data prove Illinois farmers have increased production while protecting the environment, soybean buyers want proof. ISA invests soybean checkoff funds into sustainability awareness programs to keep sales channels open. ISA also supports the U.S. Soybean Export Council’s (USSEC) Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol. The protocol launched a certification system in October to help U.S. farmers meet sustainability standards.

“Certifications generally ask farmers to collect data about factors such as soil loss, greenhouse gas emissions and fertilizer use or social considerations. At least one standard requires a process for farm employees to air grievances,” says David Droste, soybean farmer from Nashville, Ill., and ISA director.

“Some farmers may need extra resources to gather information, but that could be offset by extra income from adopting practices. It’s important for farmers to stay close to grower associations, which track these developments.”

Sustainability requirements first reached farmers raising crops, such as potatoes, years ago. The situation is relatively new to soybean farmers, Droste continues. “For example, biofuel feedstock importers in the Netherlands recently began to require conformance to one of several standard options, which affects Illinois farmers selling oil for biodiesel,” he says.

However, support for some new standards appears to be waning before getting much traction. New standards continually emerge, and some existing standards evolve as supporters figure out the markets they are trying to influence, says Droste. That raises questions about which standard to follow.

For example, at least one of the standards from the European Union requires farmers to certify they are not clearing grasslands or forests to produce soybeans, which applies more to South America than Illinois, Droste continues. Global food companies, including General Mills and some mayonnaise manufacturers, have invited farmers into voluntary field tests to document sustainability performance and measure changes over time.

“It’s not a question of if sustainability standards will be required, but when,” Droste says.

**Been Approached about Certification?**

As more farmers are approached by certifying groups, ISA offers these suggestions:

• Thank the group for their shared interest in sustainability.
• Ask them to provide information about their organization, or the division of the organization, that’s requesting certification, the certification process and any costs.
• Forward the information to Amy Roady at roadya@ilsoy.org for help with a response. Sharing the details with ISA helps keep everyone aware of the evolving certification issue.

The U.S. Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol website, ussec.org/why-u-s-soy/u-s-soy-advantage/sustainability/, helps verify the certification process of soybeans and products produced in the U.S.

**Checkoff Fact:** Farmer-Driven Sustainability Certification Surfaces

USSEC’s sustainability certification verifies U.S. soy product exports are raised in a sustainable manner. The U.S. Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) certification system captures the conservation and sustainability focus of U.S. soybean farmers USDA outlined in the U.S. farm program through production practices and data collection. The U.S. farm program includes 95 percent of U.S. farms, along with more than $6 billion in annual conservation agriculture investments, says USSEC Regional Director of Europe and Middle East Brent Babb.
“We aren’t selling you a bag of seed, we’re selling you a stand of corn”, is a motto attributed to Francis Beck, founder of Beck’s Hybrids. That motto, from the late 1930s, lives on today as Beck’s 100% Replant Policy. If there is a need to replant a field of corn, soybeans, wheat or elite alfalfa, as determined by a Beck’s representative, Beck’s will furnish the seed and royalties FREE of charge. Experience the Difference. Plant Beck’s.

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Each July a string of red, yellow, green, orange and blue tractors stretches along country roads in northeastern Illinois. Just in front of this 75-plus tractor fleet is Duane Dahlman, ISA District 2 director from Marengo, Ill., and founding member of the McHenry County Tractor Trek.

“He has assisted with all avenues of planning the event,” says Dan Volkers, McHenry County Farm Bureau manager. “Typically we travel 35-45 miles, have donuts and coffee in the morning, a lunch stop, an ice cream break and an end of the day refueling, which is sponsored by Conserv FS.”

The Tractor Trek allows participants the opportunity to enjoy a fun-filled day with other antique tractor enthusiasts and at the same time to lend support to ag education, says Volkers. McHenry County Farm Bureau and the McHenry County Antique Farm Equipment Association of Illinois sponsor the Tractor Trek. Proceeds from the event are donated to the Agriculture in the Classroom program to promote agricultural awareness in McHenry County.

“The first year no one knew what we were getting into,” Dahlman says. During the past 10 years the event has grown. One year, more than 100 people participated. He adds, “Some people from central Illinois put this event on their calendar every year. They trailer their tractor up and join us for the day.”

Although Dahlman drove a tractor in the first Tractor Trek more than a decade ago, his current role is route master. Throughout the day, Dahlman will give the go signal, talk with law enforcement officials and monitor the weather.

“We have to be ready to change on a moment’s notice,” Dahlman says. “One year we got ready to stop for ice cream. We knew the storm was coming so we grabbed ice cream and told everyone, ‘Here is the shortest route back to the starting point or to a place to park your tractor.’ The sky opened up and it just poured. Every tractor and driver got a good bath.”

Like Dahlman, almost everyone who participates in the Tractor Trek has a connection back to the farm. In Dahlman’s shed on his own farm sit two special tractors - one green and one red. The green one is a 95 percent original John Deere 3020, which was produced in 1964 – the same year John Deere debuted the tractor model. The red one is a 1950 or 1951 Farmall M.

“‘There is not a thing unique about it,’” Dahlman says. “It’s just really cool that my grandpa owned it, then my dad owned it, and now I own it.”

Fun Fact:
The McHenry County Tractor Trek route is usually about 45 miles because that distance can be covered by tractors without refueling. A video of the Tractor Trek can be found on YouTube.
Biodiesel Powers Illinois School Buses

More school districts are using biodiesel in their school buses and other vehicles because biodiesel is renewable and offers clean air and performance benefits. That helps drive demand for soybean oil, which continues to serve as the primary feedstock for U.S. biodiesel.

One of the school districts that uses biodiesel is Olympia Community Unit School District 16 in Stanford, Ill. One of the largest school districts in Illinois, Olympia uses 90,000 gallons of biodiesel each year in its 35 school buses and 15 operations, maintenance and support vehicles.

“We switched to biodiesel in 2002 as soon as it became available. Our district is in a rural area surrounded by corn and soybean fields, so I am glad we can support local farmers,” says Trent Keller, Olympia transportation director. “We get better fuel mileage with biodiesel. It also gives our buses more power with a lot less exhaust. Our fuel and operating costs have gone down.”

For more than 20 years, the soybean checkoff has funded quality and performance testing, making biodiesel one of the most tested renewable fuels on the market. U.S. biodiesel production has increased from 112 million gallons in 2005 to nearly 1.1 billion gallons in 2012.

Register for Commodity Classic

Commodity Classic will be held in San Antonio, Texas, Feb. 27-March 1, 2014. Visit www.commodityclassic.com for registration and housing details.

Poultry Exports Expand

The U.S.A. Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC), is successfully working in the United Arab Emirates’ processing and consumer sectors with activities funded by the Illinois soybean checkoff. Three technical seminars were held for processors featuring U.S. turkey breasts, turkey thighs, chicken thighs and mechanically separated turkey and chicken. As a result, two meat processors are now producing turkey sausage and turkey slices (similar to bacon) using U.S. turkey meat. In-store promotions also were conducted with well-known retailers, featuring U.S. whole turkey, processed turkey and chicken products. Retailers now are stocking new varieties of U.S. poultry products. Overall, retail sales of U.S. poultry products increased 70 percent during in-store promotions and 35 percent after promotions ended.

Illinois Farm Families Field Moms Make Donation

During the Field Moms’ Acre and Pen projects with Illinois Farm Families (IFF), Chicago-area Field Moms followed a pen of pigs to market and an acre of both soybeans and corn from planting to harvest. Throughout the season, pig farmer Jen Sturtevant and crop farmers Donna and Paul Jeschke shared photos, videos and updates.

The project, which is partly funded by the Illinois soybean checkoff, successfully showed the urban and suburban moms the planning, care, inputs, expertise and passion involved in farming. The profits purchased 780 pounds of ground pork for donation to the Northern Illinois Food Bank in Geneva, Ill., which was presented during the Field Moms final tour, Nov. 9.

Field Moms heard how farmers support additional hunger causes throughout the state and packed food for area families at the food bank. For more information, visit www.watchusgrow.org.
True: Manure Efficiently Fertilizes Crops

Livestock manure is a reliable source of crop nutrients. Today’s technology and efficiency negate historical challenges of manure application.

■ Manure can replace commercial fertilizer.
   TRUE: Manure contains plant-available nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium with the same value to crops as commercial fertilizer. Nutrient management plans ensure that manure supports target yields and soil fertility. They also help farmers keep adequate manure application records. Just as with anhydrous, urea, potash and other fertilizers, manure can be applied at rates to meet crop nitrogen needs, replace nutrients and maintain fertility. Visit www.immp.uiuc.edu to develop an Illinois manure management plan.

■ Manure is just for corn.
   FALSE: Manure can be used to fertilize ahead of corn, soybeans, wheat or other crops. Plants will use the most available source of nutrients first, which comes from fertilizer — either commercial or livestock. The only caution ahead of soybeans is that if applied annually, manure may need to be applied to the phosphorus limit, rather than the nitrogen limit, to prevent phosphorus buildup.

■ Nitrogen from manure will leach.
   FALSE: If applied according to best management practices, injecting liquid manure or incorporating broadcast liquids or solids within 24 hours decreases nitrogen loss due to volatilization. Similar to anhydrous ammonia, research shows that only five percent of nitrogen from manure is lost when injected in cool, dry soils. Manure contains a small amount of organic nitrogen that is mineralized and releases over a few years. Precision application technology ensures accurate rates are applied and that manure is not applied in environmental setback areas.

■ Manure provides more than nitrogen.
   TRUE: Manure also contains phosphorus, potassium, calcium, iron, zinc, sodium, manganese and other micronutrients, depending on livestock type. Plus, both liquid and solid manure add organic matter, improving soil quality. Micronutrients are expensive to measure, but a complete manure analysis shows available nutrients. Manure content has changed with advances in livestock nutrition. For example, current diets allow pigs to digest phosphorus more efficiently, so manure is less likely to cause phosphorus buildup compared to 20 or 30 years ago.

■ Manure factors into the bottom line.
   TRUE: A little figuring shows what manure is worth compared to commercial fertilizer. A manure sample provides nutrient availability per ton for solids or per 1,000 gallons for liquids. Base the value of that manure on the current local market value of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash. Subtracting application costs gives you the fertilizer value of manure. Illinois hog finishing manure typically is valued at $120 to $150 per acre. The Iowa State University calculator at www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/livestock/html/b1-65.html is one tool to figure manure value.

■ Odor from manure application is unavoidable.
   FALSE: Best management practices minimize manure application odor. Direct injecting or immediately incorporating manure into the soil diminishes odor. Observing setbacks from neighbors and applying during calm weather further reduce issues. Sources: Laura Pepple, University of Illinois Extension livestock specialist, and Patrick Maschhoff, environmental services manager, The Maschhoffs.
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 soybean checkoff.
ISG Addresses Key Legislative Issues

Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) continues to monitor activity on a number of issues, including waterways legislation, the farm bill and biodiesel’s role with the Renewable Fuel Standard. Both the Senate and House must pass the final version of the farm bill before it goes to the president for signature. A one-year extension of the 2008 Farm Bill expired Sept. 30, and farm programs will revert to permanent laws from the late 1930s and 1940s if a solution is not reached.

ISA Looks to New, Expanding Partnerships

ISA is committed to partnering with industry leaders and aligning interests in soybean value chain development, research and legislation. ISA’s corporate partnership program leads to increased collaboration and shared ideas. Through the program ISA has made great strides in realizing higher yields and soybean quality, increasing transportation funding awareness, and generating conversation about the need for a more synchronous regulatory system.

ISA thanks its current partners and looks forward to continuing partnerships. ISA also looks forward to new and expanding partnerships. If you would like to learn more about ISA, the corporate partnership program or share ideas for working together, email ilsoy@ilsoy.org.

Soybean Farmer Leaders Sought for ISA Board

ISA will have four director positions open when the current fiscal year ends Aug. 31, 2014; two for district directors and two for at-large directors.

While the process for district director elections officially begins in April 2014, interested farmers are encouraged to consider the application process now. The two districts with openings are District 5 representing Fulton, Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Putnam and Tazewell counties; and District 12, representing Calhoun, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Pike and Scott counties. District 5 director Dan Farney, Morton; and District 12 director Mark Sprague, Hull; are retiring.

Two current at-large directors are retiring as well, Ron Moore, Roseville; and Joe Murphy, Harrisburg. Farmers from across Illinois are urged to apply for those openings. The application process for at-large directors begins in February 2014.

Interested farmers are invited to attend the Feb. 11, 2014, ISA committee meeting and/or the March 2014 ISA board meeting. For more information, contact Dustin Scott at 309-808-3603.

Video Illustrates Soy’s Impact

ISA recently produced a new video, “Our World, Illinois Soybeans,” to reinforce the importance of soybeans to consumers. The goal is to show soybeans are in meat consumed, processed foods, biodiesel used to power cars and trucks and more. The video features a school bus driver, a livestock producer, a mom and a student, all speaking out about how Illinois soybeans are making a positive impact on their daily lives.

Five key ISA leaders: former ISA Chairman Bill Wykes, District Director Rob Schaffer, former At-large Director Ron Kindred, At-large Director Ron Moore and Vice Chairman Mike Marron, address how ISA works to ensure Illinois soy is the highest quality, most dependable, sustainable and competitive in the global marketplace. Watch the video at: www.youtube.com/ilsoybean.

ISA Corporate Partners

- **Executive**
  - Monsanto
  - Novozymes BioAg
- **Principal**
  - ADM
  - Dow AgroSciences
- **Core**
  - DuPont Pioneer
  - BASF
  - Cargill
  - Beck’s Hybrids
- **Associate**
  - Bunge North America
  - FS & GROWMARK

- **Affiliate**
  - Syngenta
  - StollerUSA
  - Consolidated Grain & Barge

- **Support**
  - Rumbold & Kuhn, Inc.
  - Bayer CropScience
  - The Andersons
  - Becker Underwood
  - Ursa Farmers Co-op
  - Crop Production Services
  - Bio Soil Enhancers
  - AgVenture Inc.
  - Valent U.S.A.
  - Akron Services

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Year in Review: ISA Efforts Cover Many Areas

ISA programs covered a lot of ground in 2013, including local, national and international efforts, to help soybean farmers increase profitability and achieve a goal of using 600 million bushels of Illinois soybeans by 2020. Here is a sampling of some of those activities.

ISA created an information brochure to help address questions and concerns grain farmers may have about incorporating livestock onto their own farms. The ISA website has tools available to download or use online to guide the decision-making process about raising livestock.

Soybean College is a one-day event coordinated by ISA and *Farm Journal*. The day is packed with practical production knowledge, including in-field breakouts and hands-on training.

ISA directors Mark Sprague (far left) and Bill Wykes (left) were part of an ISA mission to Cuba to explore opportunities to build trade. Illinois Soybean Growers favors immediate removal of ag trade and travel restrictions and supports Cuban eligibility for U.S. credit programs.

ISA kicked off its year-long 50th anniversary celebration and recognition of 100 years of soybean production at Farm Progress Show. ISA is embracing the past—the legacy of leadership, market development and soybean production in Illinois. And envisioning the future—a goal of using 600 million bushels of Illinois soybeans by 2020.

Photos submitted by ISA

December 2013
Not only do Beck’s LibertyLink® soybeans win the fight against weed resistance, but they win the yield battle too! In 1,977 head to head comparisons of Beck’s L4 class of LibertyLink soybeans vs. Genuity® Roundup Ready 2 Yield® (RR2Y) soybeans, Beck’s LibertyLink soybeans win with a 1.2 Bu/A. advantage. Experience the Difference. Plant Beck’s.

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