Pursue High Yield Strategies for 2018

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Yield Champions Weigh in on Six Secrets of Soybean Success

Illinois Field & Bean connected with ISA Yield Challenge participants to learn their approaches to maximizing yields and profitability and about the Six Secrets of Soybean Success. Learn how leading growers say increased attention to basic agronomics and better management can and will make more soybean bushels. Then delve into specifics in the accompanying special section.

Watch Those Beans in the Bin
Farmers most commonly make one of two mistakes between harvest and delivery of soybeans from on-farm storage. Find out what they are and how you can avoid them in 2018.

Take Time to Answer Ag Census
USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Census provides a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and their operators. It also provides information that is used to make decisions about farm programs and more. See what kind of stats the Census generates.

International Relationships Grow Illinois Soy Markets
Sending shipping containers full of soybean meal to overseas customers signifies return on long-term investments made by Illinois soybean farmers in international relationships. ISA checkoff program-supported trade team visits are a critical link to building these markets.

Soy in the City Brings Chicago Influencers to the Table
Soy in the City, a unique project developed by the ISA checkoff program, began as a way to share with Chicago-area influencers, legislators, consumers, businesses and organizations the positive impact soybeans have on everyday life in the city. Through dinner events, social media and collaborative projects, ISA highlights how the small bean has a big impact.

GETTING TO KNOW:
Jenny Mennenga
Jenny Mennenga is an at-large director for ISA from LeRoy, Ill. As the chairwoman of the ISA Production and Outreach Committee, she believes U.S. agriculture will continue to implement more technology for even greater use of time and resources. Read more of her thoughts.
Put More Emphasis on Profitability in 2018

If there is one common theme I hope you will remember from reading Illinois Field & Bean in 2018, it is profitability. The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff and membership programs target activities and investments that ultimately help put more money in our pockets.

One of those top activities is to find ways for farmers to increase soybean yield potential. Our cover story this issue talks with some of the 100-plus bushel per acre growers from 2017, and shares some of the tips that work for these farmers in boosting yields. In addition, we have a special eight-page section in the magazine covering the five years of research results known as the Six Secrets of Soybean Success. Led by University of Illinois professor Fred Below, the research identifies and prioritizes those six factors that have the greatest influence on yield.

This coming year will continue to be a good time to focus on potential profitability, which includes yield, but also managing operating costs. USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS) reported last fall that after three consecutive years of decline, farm sector profits were forecast to finish higher in 2017. Net cash farm income for 2017 was forecast at $100.4 billion, up 12.6 percent from 2016. Net farm income, a broader measure of profits, was forecast at $63.4 billion, up 3.1 percent relative to 2016. However, despite the forecast upturn in these profit measures relative to 2016, profit levels were below all other years since 2010 for net farm income and since 2011 for net cash farm income.

Given relatively unimpressive harvest prices, many farmers elected to put soybeans in the bin until spring. We have included in this issue some advice for managing bin bushels to maintain the highest quality for the highest value. You also will find information about how the ISA checkoff program is working with customers and consumers to increase demand for Illinois soy.

As you resolve to have a solid soybean production season in 2018, I hope you also will resolve to make a commitment to serve our industry. ISA has several director positions that will open up this summer on the board, and we will be looking for applicants beginning next month.

As always, I encourage you to contact me or any ISA director to discuss your profitable ideas for improving the soybean production landscape. Happy New Year. ■

LYNN ROHRSCHIEB
ISA Chairwoman
Plan for Top Yields in 2018

BY MIKE SCHEER

Soybean yields continue to trend up across Illinois. So how do you plan for top yields in 2018?

My top suggestion is to plant early. In working with soybean growers for a number of years, I have seen that early planting enables the soybean to grow a larger plant or “factory” before it begins to flower and produce grain. A larger plant produces more nodes, flowers and pods.

In fact, many growers are planting earlier and earlier and finding improved yields. Changes in spring weather patterns also have allowed them to plant earlier.

Early-planted beans respond to seed treatments, which helps establish a uniform population stand that can provide a foundation for the best yields. Select varieties with the best defensive package and chose the most effective seed treatment to prevent Phytophthora, sudden death syndrome (SDS) or soybean cyst nematodes (SCN) that all put your crop at risk.

We don’t know what environmental challenges will come in 2018. So, work with your seed advisor to select the best-yielding variety for your fields. Consider yield potential and maturity first, then early- and late-season disease resistance ratings, and then ability to handle weather challenges and standability. The variety with the best defensive package and the variety with the best yield may not be the same variety, so select the one that fits your field needs and challenges.

Decide on a field-by-field basis where you should place a racehorse variety and provide plant protection or plant a defensive variety. You can select a top yielder and add crop protection to boost that variety’s defensive performance. Your seed salesperson can advise on what seed treatments or postemergence crop protection products to apply. Be certain to scout before application and evaluate the effectiveness of any applications during the season and at harvest.

Many growers run their own trials each year testing biologicals, plant growth regulators, foliar feeding, plant protection and more. The number of companies offering these products has grown dramatically in the past few years and includes both large and small manufacturers and marketing organizations. Some growers can realize a yield advantage with the addition of two or three of these types of products. However, adding six or eight products or applying two or three at the maximum rate doesn’t always add enough bushels to generate a return on your investment (ROI).

Now is a great time to review those products you have tested and others you have been offered before you make your selections for 2018. Keep ROI in mind.

Finally, as part of your planning, be certain you have enough fertility. Soil tests that include micronutrients are important. Your pH needs to be 6.3 or higher. Higher yields are achieved by applying P (phosphorus) and K (potassium) prior to the soybean production year.

Many growers have adjusted their fertility applications from a single application once every two years in a corn-soybean rotation to applying every year. Potash has had the most attention the last couple of years because of the soybean demand for this nutrient. However, early growth is dependent on having sufficient levels of phosphate. Many growers have been adding P in the fall or placing it in-furrow at planting as the best option.

Whatever strategy you choose for fertility and other crop inputs, remember, great planning now can bring your best soybean yields in 2018.

“...so select the one that fits your field needs and challenges.”

MIKE SCHEER
Certified Crop Adviser (CCA)

Mike Scheer is a Certified Crop Adviser (CCA), independent crop consultant and the current Illinois Soybean Association checkoff program Yield Challenge coordinator.
Illinois soybean farmers had another bin-buster year in 2017; total acres, total bushels and state-average yields all look on track to set new records. This year’s ILSoyAdvisor.com Yield Challenge contest also produced record results, with more growers than ever making 80-, 90- and even 100-plus bushels per acre. The Yield Challenge is supported by the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program. Illinois Field & Bean connected with participants to learn their approaches to maximizing yields and profitability and about the Six Secrets of Soybean Success. Although they have yet to find a magic answer, secret formula or short cut to success, leading growers say increased attention to basic soybean agronomics and better management can and will make more soybean bushels.

2015
- Highest yield 108.36 bu/a
- Average of all district winners = 88.8 bu/a
- State average = 56.0 bu/a

2016
- Highest yield 106.29 bu/a
- Average of all district winners = 87.57 bu/a
- Side-by-side winners average yield increase of 8.56 bu/a; highest increase of 19.07 bu/a
- State average = 59.0 bu/a

2017
- Highest yield 110.03 bu/a

YIELD CHALLENGE
Farmers continue to push yields and drive success. Check out these results.
Greg McClure and his son, Cameron, who farm near St. Francisville, have pursued high-yield corn for years, but 2017 was their first year in the soybean Yield Challenge. They’re convinced high yields are all about a back-to-the-basics approach focused on fundamental agronomics.

“Even at harvest, we’re thinking about how to make a better crop next year. As we looked at what we were able to do with corn, we felt like we were leaving a lot more bushels on the table with soybeans,” says the elder McClure.

They take an all-of-the-above approach to off-season learning. “We read a lot, we talk to our seed reps and agronomists and we attend lots of meetings. We spend a lot of time looking at different varieties, comparing yields, trial results and defensive packages to choose the right variety for each field,” he adds.

Grant Strom, who farms near Brimfield, is a Yield Challenge veteran who takes a practical approach to high yields. “We’re definitely pushing for 100 bushels, but we look at things that would be practical across our whole farm. We focus on the basic agronomics—planting early, selecting the best varieties and aiming for good, consistent emergence, establishment and stand.

“The best part of the Yield Challenge is connecting with others to learn their insights. We attend conferences and talk to experts, including other growers. It’s important to have trusted advisors who are there to help you succeed, not just get a quick sale,” he says.

For Kevin Burrus, farmer and production manager with Burrus Seed near Arenzville, participating in his first Yield Challenge competition helped change his mindset. “The Yield Challenge crowded me into thinking about my soybeans more regularly. I spent more time in the fields, looking at the beans and asking questions about how to get more in that plot,” he says. “I learned we don’t have it all figured out yet. We got the basics, right, mostly—it’s the ‘what’s next?’ that gets more complicated.

“No one person is smart enough to figure it all out, so we work with our retailers to look at what’s new and what might work for us. We look closely at field conditions, fertility, disease pressure and field history before choosing the right variety for each field,” he says.

ISA Takes Comprehensive Look at Profitability

Profitability involves more than high yields. Through price swings, weather concerns and everything else, some farmers achieve better profits than average. The ISA checkoff program, with University of Illinois professor Gary Schnitkey and other financial experts, will conduct the “Resilient Farmer Roadshow—Building Habits to Be a Successful Risk Manager,” in February at various stops across the state. Watch ilsoy.org for details.


**WEATHER**

WHILE THE MOST IMPORTANT YIELD CONSIDERATION IS OUT OF THEIR HANDS, YIELD CHALLENGE GROWERS DO WHAT THEY CAN TO MAXIMIZE YIELD POTENTIAL FROM THE START.

“We’re firm believers in early planting, so we added a second planter eight to 10 years ago,” says Strom. “The first five to seven days after planting are critical to get consistent emergence and a good stand.”

“Looking back over the last three to four years, we knew that early planting had a real advantage,” says McClure. “We invested in a second planter to go as early as we can on both crops—being able to capture more sunlight makes the difference in yield.”

Burrus also believes in early planting, provided the forecast looks good. “It’s less about the weather on the planting date and more about the next 10 days or so—will there be enough sunlight and heat units for good, uniform emergence and stand?”

**FERTILITY**

PROPER FERTILITY, BASED ON REGULAR SOIL TESTS, HELPS PROTECT GENETIC YIELD POTENTIAL, ACCORDING TO YIELD CHALLENGE GROWERS.

“We believe in fertilizing before each crop,” says Strom. “This gives each crop the nutrition it needs, and it helps us follow the 4Rs of right source, right rate, right time and right place.”

McClure fertilizes before each crop and does regular tissue testing. “It’s important to understand the removal rates of the previous crop as well as the fertility needs of your next crop.”

“Fertility and soil health are critical for better yields, so we fertilize ahead of both corn and soybeans to give both crops what they need,” says Burrus.

**FOLIAR PROTECTION**

YIELD CHALLENGE GROWERS REMAIN SKEPTICAL OF FOLIAR NUTRITION.

Strom has started regular tissue testing, but didn’t make many adjustments this season. “We’ve seen some limited, but inconsistent results with foliars. We’re looking more closely at micros, but get better results by feeding from the roots in most cases. We still have a lot to learn.”

“We’ve tried a lot of things over the last three years,” says McClure. “Sometimes the foliars help, but we have a lot more to learn there. We’re convinced that good, basic agronomics pay off, so that’s what we focus on.”

“It’s such a crowded space and hard to know which materials will deliver,” says Burrus. “We look at some new materials, but tend to stick with things we know are effective.”

**GENETICS**

SOLID GENETICS AND GOOD DEFENSIVE PACKAGES INCREASE YIELDS.

Strom grows dicamba beans, which has helped with his weed control issues. “We’ve had good luck with the dicamba system, but we continue to tweak our residual program to try and keep the weeds guessing,” he says.

McClure also spends a lot of time looking at new varieties. “We compare trial data and yield results, as well as defensive packages to find the right variety for each field.”

Like many farmers, Burrus farms land that consistently provide “above-the-rim” yields and other ground that’s not as productive. Although he looks at new technologies, Burrus most often sticks with proven varieties. “Proven varieties are proven varieties,” he says.

**ROW SPACING**

NARROWER ROWS AND LOWER POPULATIONS HAVE LED TO YIELD INCREASES FOR YIELD CHALLENGE GROWERS.

Strom plants on 20-inch rows, dropping between 125,000 and 150,000 seeds for a minimum 110,000 population. “We’re probably planting 10,000 fewer plants per acre now with no yield hit.”

McClure runs his 15-inch soybean planter at a slower speed similar to corn to help ensure consistent seed spacing and planting depth. “Going a little deeper gets seeds down to a more consistent soil temperature, which leads to more consistent emergence and growth. Narrower spacing encourages shorter nodes and better branching, and that leads to more pods and beans per plant.”

McClure planted at 145,000 seeds per acre, and had a stand of 115,000 to 130,000.

Burrus recently switched to 20-inch rows and feels this is an ideal approach for faster canopy close to reduce weed and disease pressure without losing stands. “We tend to plant a little thinner than many farmers, dropping between 110,000 and 120,000 seeds per acre looking for an established stand around 85,000 to 90,000 plants.”

**SEED TREATMENT**

YIELD CHALLENGE PARTICIPANTS BELIEVE IN SEED TREATMENT VALUE TO INCREASE YIELDS.

“We use a full, premium seed treatment package including fungicide, insecticide and inoculant,” says Strom. “The seed treatments can be maybe one-third of your total seed cost. But it’s worth it more often than not. We see better, more consistent emergence and healthier plants, especially on early plantings.”

An ideal seed bed, good genetics and early planting will benefit from the right protection, according to McClure. “We use a maximum seed treatment package to help ensure consistent emergence and stand.”

Burrus always selects a solid defensive package and uses a premium seed treatment package on all his bean acres. “Seed treatments can get really complex, but we find they provide more consistent results year in and year out. They’re a great way to ensure more uniform emergence and stand across the field,” he says.

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Hear Fred Below at Commodity Classic

Fred Below will present his research results on “The Six Secrets of Soybean Success,” a concept focused on identifying strategies for producing high-yield soybeans, during Commodity Classic, March 1, 2018, at 8:15 a.m. local time. The results come from research Below has conducted since 2012 with funding from the ISA checkoff program and other industry partners. Below also will share key insights on variety selection and supplemental nitrogen application on soybeans.

Commodity Classic will be held this year from Feb. 27 to March 1, in Anaheim, Calif.
Watch Those Beans in the Bin
Follow Steps to Maintain Quality until Delivery

> BY JOANIE STIERS

Just as farmers scouted soybeans during the growing season, beans in bins need a frequent health check.

Farmers most commonly make one of two mistakes between harvest and delivery of soybeans from on-farm storage: Not checking the bins often enough or attempting to cool soybeans too fast, says Eric Clements, operations manager for Topflight Grain Cooperative in Bement, Ill. He says farmers should check bins weekly and tackle the cooling process in stages to help ensure the crop comes out of the bin as good as it went in.

“Sometimes, farmers are running fans and trying to get too big of a temperature drop at one time,” says Clements, who teaches storage training classes at Topflight Grain. “They will have a sweat take place where there is condensation in the head space that forms a crust on the top surface.”

Rather, he recommends following the 10- to 15-degree rule and cooling down incrementally. Run fans to cool soybeans when the ambient temperature is 10 to 15 degrees lower than the crop’s temperature. Following this rule reduces the likelihood of sweating, as farmers work to attain an ideal soybean temperature of 35 to 40 degrees in storage. But, be wary of getting cooler than that, Clements says.

“One thing we don’t want to do is to freeze the soybeans,” he says. “We don’t want them to get 32 degrees or less. If you start to move those out on a warm spring day, you can start to get some condensation on the surface of the soybeans. Depending on how quickly they move to market, you can run into storage problems.”

If on-farm bins don’t have temperature cables, farmers should consider buying a grain temperature probe. Clements suggests checking the temperature a couple feet into the soybeans. If the soybeans haven’t cooled to 35 to 40 degrees and will be in storage a while longer, farmers should run another cooling cycle when the weather provides the opportunity, he says.

Keep in mind that fan air flow is most effective when fines are distributed throughout the bin, either with a spreader or by pulling some crop out of the core where the fines tend to collect. Meanwhile, Clements says give extra attention to soybeans that entered the bins at high moisture contents. Soybeans greater than 13 percent moisture at harvest need extra attention in storage compared to 10 percent.

Clements encourages keeping a log from the time soybeans drop into the bin until final delivery. Record in the log fan run times, outdoor temperatures when running the fan, and the initial moisture content of the soybeans. Maintaining a log allows farmers to reflect on the impact of their storage management practices, he explains, and simply give a reminder of the last time the fans ran.

And no matter what, Clements advises farmers keep a weekly bin observation schedule. “Check the top of the bin weekly. Look for signs of crusting, which can tell you if you have moisture migration in the bin,” he says. “These weekly checks can tell you a lot about the overall quality of soybeans in there.”

New Tech for Storage Success

An innovative idea from LUCAS FRYE, University of Illinois ag graduate, presents new storage quality sensing solutions for farmers. Frye is co-founder of Amber Agriculture, a startup that helps farmers monitor and manage the condition of their crops in storage through a system of wireless sensors communicating information connected to a phone app. Learn more at www.amber.ag.
For the first time ever, the Census of Agriculture, which is taken every five years, is determining the number of veteran farmers in the United States. No reliable facts exist as to how many veterans are in agriculture. USDA has previously been challenged to direct program resources to veterans who make the transition from defending the country to feeding the world.

“The Census is the only source of uniform, comprehensive ag data for every county,” says Brad Summa, Heartland Regional Field Office director. “It’s a critical tool that gives farmers a voice to influence decisions to shape the future of their community, industry and operation.”

USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Census provides a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and their operators. The Census highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income, expenditures and other topics. This information is used by those who serve farmers and rural communities, including federal, state and local governments, agribusinesses and trade groups, to provide input into farm programs.

More than three million 2017 Census of Agriculture surveys were mailed nationwide at the end of last year. For more information about the Census, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

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**BY the NUMBERS**

- **World's 4th largest producer**
  - Illinois is the fourth largest soybean producer behind the U.S. at 4.4 billion bushels, Brazil at 3.97 billion and Argentina at 2.1 billion bushels. USDA estimates Illinois produced about 600 million bushels in 2017.

- **IN 2012 CENSUS: 43 BU/ACRE**
  - IN 2016 CENSUS: 59 BU/ACRE
  - The 2012 Census showed soybean yield during the drought of 2012 was 43 bushels per acre. In 2016, Illinois set a yield record of 59 bushels per acre.

- **ILLINOIS WAS THE TOP PRODUCING STATE**
  - Illinois was the top soybean producing state for three of the last five years. In the 2012 Census, Illinois soybean production was down to 384 million bushels due to drought. In 2016, soybean production had grown to nearly 593 million bushels.

- **$5 billion in sales within the state**
  - The 2012 Census showed soybeans account for $5 billion in sales within the state. Illinois is the top soy exporting state with $3.2 billion in exports for 2016.

- **94% OF SOYBEANS herbicide resistant or used biotechnology**
  - In 2016, 94 percent of Illinois soybeans planted were herbicide resistant or used biotechnology and 97.8 percent of Illinois soybeans were non-irrigated.

- **2.3 percent DECREASE**
  - In 2012, Illinois farmers reported a total of 75,087 farms, spanning 26,937,721 acres – a 2.3 percent decrease from the 2007 Census.

- **34,725 soybean farms in Illinois**
  - The 2012 Census counted 34,725 soybean farms in Illinois. Of those farms, 24.7 percent had less than 50 acres, 16.6 percent had between 50-100 acres, 25.5 percent had 100-250 acres, 18.2 percent had 250-500 acres, and 15.1 percent had more than 500 acres.

- **organic soy**
  - USDA NASS’s 2016 Organic Survey showed 10,787 acres of organic soy were harvested in Illinois from 102 farms, for production of 398,594 bushels and $8.5 million in sales.
In 2012, your Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program established a goal of utilizing (producing and selling) 600 million bushels of Illinois soybeans by 2020 — a 25% increase over typical soybean levels of that time. While many felt soybean yields had plateaued, the ISA Board believed our farmers could increase yields and generate better profits with smarter, more intensive management and the latest technology.

To help accomplish that goal, ISA started funding a first-of-its-kind study to look more holistically at intensive soybean management — to identify if better management leads to better yields and determine which of those practices are most critical to success.

After five years of research, we’re pleased to share this summary of the Six Secrets of Soybean Success.

Fred E. Below, Ph.D., is a professor of crop physiology in the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois. His research is focused on understanding factors limiting crop productivity, particularly corn and soybeans. He is author or co-author on more than 85 peer-reviewed manuscripts, numerous abstracts, book and proceedings chapters, and he has advised more than 65 graduate and postdoctoral students. He developed the “Seven Wonders of The Corn Yield World” and the “Six Secrets of Soybean Success” as tools to teach farmers and agricultural professionals the value of their individual crop management decisions, and he has been actively using these concepts to develop cropping systems capable of sustainably producing high corn and soybean yields.
**Relearning Soybean’s Fertility Needs**

A grower’s typical fertilization practice was to fertilize corn and add in extra for soybeans or let soybean scavenge for leftover nutrients in the soil. When growers expected low yields of 40 to 60 bushels per acre, this practice was acceptable.

But today, growers are pushing yields to 60 to 80 bushels and even higher. That requires fertilizing soybeans separate from corn and following a program unique to soybeans. Most high-yield soybean producers are following a broad-ranging fertility program that includes all the macros and micros.

**Potassium (K) vs. Phosphorus (P) Paradox**

Growers are advised to pay attention to potassium (K). A 60-bushel soybean crop requires 170 lbs. of K₂O (equal to 280 lbs. of Muriate of Potash fertilizer). The plant takes up 3.5 lbs. of K₂O per day over a 50-day period beginning at pod set, and banks K in stems and petioles so it’s readily available to fill pods. However, only 40% is removed with the grain and the rest stays with the stover and is returned to the soil.

Phosphorus however, responds quite differently — uptake continues over a longer 70-day period beginning at pod set. The plant doesn’t store available P in the stem, and the majority of its supply must come directly from the soil. And 80% is removed with the grain with very little remaining in the stover.


Soybeans require ample amounts of nutrients and particularly nitrogen (N), potassium (K) and phosphorus (P). Soybeans need about 4 to 4.5 lbs. of N per bushel produced with about half coming from their own nitrogen fixing nodules and the rest from the soil. A 60-bushel crop removes significant amounts of nutrients with the grain, particularly N, P and sulfur (S).

**Based on University of Illinois field trials, extra fertility — especially P (not K as long thought) has the most significant impact on yield. This is because soybeans get most of the K needed from the residue of the previous corn crop. Today’s higher crop yields remove more nutrients while fertilizer rates are remaining relatively stable, so growers need to pay more attention to when and how much they apply.**
Do Soybeans Respond to Fertilizer N?

Soybeans need 4 to 5 lbs. of nitrogen (N) per bushel with about half coming from their nitrogen-fixing nodules and the rest from the soil. By R5/pod fill stage, N-fixation begins to slow and plants cannibalize internal N sources if the soil can't provide enough to meet demand.

Soybean needs more N than it can get from nodules. Research has shown that when yield potential exceeds 50 to 60 bushels, the crop increasingly relies on soil reserves of nitrate and mineralized N.

As growers push yields to 70 bushels or greater, the gap between how much N soybeans need and what can be provided by the nodules gets wider. As such, farmers may need to apply additional nitrogen to supplement what the soil can provide.

What N Sources, Rates and Timing are Optimal?

**TIMING:** Nitrogen can be applied pre-plant to supply the plant until N-fixation kicks in at V2-V3 (20 to 30 days after planting). An early pre-plant application also will compensate if nodule development is hindered by wet June weather.

By the R4 growth stage, soybeans increasingly begin to move N from vegetative tissues to the pods. The most recommended application timing is at R3 or beginning pod set.

**SOURCE:** There are many N sources available from organic to commercial. Organic forms like compost, litter and manure are slow release and are available later in the season as demand increases with pod fill.

University of Illinois studies evaluated ammonium nitrate (AN), ammonium sulfate (AMS), urea ammonium nitrate (UAN), urea, potassium nitrate (KN), Agrium’s Environmentally Smart Nitrogen (ESN) and the addition of stabilizers (BASF’s Limus) to urea.

However, nitrate containing and controlled release sources (ESN) were the most effective and consistent at all stages of application.

**RATE:** Nitrogen can be applied pre-plant or in-season
- Pre-plant at a rate of 30 to 50 lbs. per acre
- In-season at a rate of 50 to 100 lbs. per acre

Recent university research has shown that supplemental nitrogen, and particularly nitrate, doesn’t suppress N-fixation as long-believed.

Data from 2015 show that most supplemental N sources provide a positive yield response.

**RESPONSE TO N ON SOYBEANS - 2015**

<table>
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<th>Source</th>
<th>Pre-plant</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>R1</th>
<th>R3</th>
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<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>4.0*</td>
<td>4.2*</td>
<td>5.3*</td>
<td>5.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.7*</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.5*</td>
<td>3.2*</td>
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<td>2.9*</td>
<td>3.2*</td>
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<td>3.3*</td>
<td>3.7*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESN</td>
<td>3.2*</td>
<td>2.7*</td>
<td>4.3*</td>
<td>3.1*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Control = 71.7 bu acre⁻¹

* Significantly different than control
**Variety Selection**

Growers are constantly reminded that their first production decision is the variety they plant. Always select a variety that is high yielding, has the necessary agronomic and defensive package and is adapted to the field and soil where you will plant it. However, soybean varieties differ in their response to management. In 2016, the University of Illinois compared the yield response of 28 commercially available varieties to different management at Yorkville, Champaign and Harrisburg, Ill., with maturity ranging from 2.3 to 4.8. Champaign results are shown below.

The piano graphs above ranked the varieties from the lowest to highest performing in response to fertility, foliar protection or the combination of the two. Some varieties showed a negative response to adding technology. However, in most cases, there was a positive and additive yield response with the greatest response coming from fertility (2.6 bushels) and foliar protection (1.9 bushels). When applied together there was a 4.9-bushel increase. And when there was a positive response to management, it ranged by as much as 12 bushels.

**Variety matters**

- Variety makes a big difference in yield, and the fullest maturity usually produces the highest yield.
- In the Champaign trial, yield ranged from 76 to 93.6 bushels, so varieties aren’t created equal.
- Soybean varieties differ in their response to fertility and foliar protection, so if deploying a high management approach, plant an offensive variety that is known to respond.

**Row Spacing**

Since the introduction of Roundup Ready soybeans, many growers returned to planting soybeans in 30-inch rows. Today many growers have one or more planters that plant both corn and soybeans. But by doing so, have they given up yield?

The University of Illinois examined the effects of row spacing on yield with standard practices and high management techniques. Standard practices included fertilizer before corn only; no-, or minimal- seed treatment; and no foliar protection. High management included P, sulfur, and zinc banded below the row; K broadcast and incorporated; complete seed treatment with fungicide, insecticide and nematicide; and foliar fungicide and insecticide applied at R3.

Narrower rows (20- vs. 30-inch) can have a big impact on final yield, and narrow row soybeans are more responsive when adding more intensive management factors.

**EFFECT OF ROW SPACING ON YIELD WITH AND WITHOUT HIGH MANAGEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>row spacing</th>
<th>30-INCH</th>
<th>20-INCH</th>
<th>GAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>standard practice</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>+4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high technology</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>+8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Narrow rows increased yield by 4.2 bushels with standard management and 8.5 bushels under a high management system.
Seed Treatments

Your goal as a soybean grower is to produce a good stand that emerges evenly and is well distributed. That means getting as many seeds as possible to germinate and emerge without succumbing to cold and wet conditions or soil pathogens.

Many seed companies and growers have adopted seed treatments as a standard practice, and today you can’t buy some brands or varieties without treatment. The array of active ingredients you can apply to seed is mind-boggling, including fungicides, insecticides, nematicides and biological inoculants.

Treated seed is more vigorous in its early growth pattern, outgrowing untreated seedlings.

Make it a goal to add more pods. Adding one more pod to each soybean plant is worth two bushels per acre in final yield.

Foliar Protection

Soybean yield is influenced by pod number per plant. The difference between a 50- and 62-bushel yield is largely the number of pods in the middle portion of the plant.

About 60% of soybean yield comes from the middle nodes (nodes 7 to 13) of a plant. It is important to protect leaves at those nodes. The closest leaves provide most of the energy for pods at those nodes.

Research at the University of Illinois showed that a foliar fungicide plus insecticide applied at R3 adds on average 2.5 bushels per acre in a standard system and 3.5 bushels in a high management system.

Research at the University of Illinois showed that a complete seed treatment adds on average 1.5 bushels per acre in a standard system and 2.5 bushels in a high management system.
Below and his team conducted field research using an omission/addition plot design. With this approach you test each production factor either alone or in various combinations for one up to six treatments. Treatments included P, K, P and K combined, fungicide and insecticide combined, seed treatment and row spacing. The standard plot was a check to which individual practices were bumped up to the high-tech level for comparison. The high management plot included all six practices with individual practices set to the standard level for comparison.

The standard plot had a yield of 70 bushels per acre. The greatest yield increases (over 4 bushels) came from including P, P and K combined, or narrowing rows to 20-inches. Surprisingly, adding potassium didn’t show a response, which is contrary to popular belief. Seed treatments added 1.4 bushels alone and foliar protection added 2.6 bushels. As a grower, if you are conservative and want to limit your cost, phosphate application is your best investment. Row spacing is also an excellent investment if you already have a planter that can seed in 15 or 20-inch rows.

The high management plot had a yield of 84.2 bushels per acre, 14.2 more bushels than the standard plot. The greatest drop in yield, 8.5 bushels, occurred when soybeans were planted in 30-inch rows compared to 20-inch. Soybeans are more responsive to technology investments in a narrower row configuration. Removing P from the high management package had the second biggest impact on yield with a loss of 5 to 6 bushels followed by foliar protection and seed treatments at 3.2 and 2.4 bushels, respectively.

### STANDARD VS. HIGH-TECH SYSTEMS 2014-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>STANDARD SYSTEMS</th>
<th>HIGH-TECH SYSTEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHOSPHORUS</td>
<td>P applied the year before to corn</td>
<td>75 lbs. P_2O_5 as MicroEssentials-SZ (23 N 19 S, &amp; 1.9 Zn) Banded 4-6” under row planting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POTASSIUM</td>
<td>K applied the year before to corn</td>
<td>75 lbs. K_2O as Aspire (0.6 B) Broadcast Incorporated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P &amp; K</td>
<td>P &amp; K applied the year before to corn</td>
<td>MESZ and Aspire applied as to the left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOLIAR PROTECTION</td>
<td>No foliar protection</td>
<td>Fungicide and Insecticide applied at R3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEED TREATMENT</td>
<td>Untreated or Fungicide only</td>
<td>Fungicide, Insecticide, Nematicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROW SPACING</td>
<td>30-inch row spacing</td>
<td>20-inch row spacing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SOYBEAN OMISSION PLOTS - AVERAGE OF 2014 & 2015 TRIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>ADD FACTOR</th>
<th>HIGH-TECH</th>
<th>OMIT FACTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None or All</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>+4.7*</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phosphate</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>+4.7*</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>-5.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>+0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P &amp; K</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>+4.4*</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>-6.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fungicide + Insecticide</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>+2.6*</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>-3.2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed Treatment</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>+1.4</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>-2.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row Spacing</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>+4.2*</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>-8.5*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significantly different at P ≤ 0.05

Average of 10 trials over 2014 and 2015 with two varieties in each trial

Soil fertility, particularly phosphorus, and narrowing row spacing, are the two most important management factors for increasing soybean yields.
Conclusions

Soybean yield can be increased through better crop management and adoption of the right practices and technologies that optimize the system. The high management research produced nearly a 15-bushel acre yield gain. At $10 per bushel, that is a net increase of $150 per acre. Managing soybeans can pay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>HIGH-TECH</th>
<th>Δ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEKALB</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>+9.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAMPAIGN</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>+20.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARRISBURG</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>+9.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>+13.7*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>HIGH-TECH</th>
<th>Δ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEKALB</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>+17.1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAMPAIGN</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>+18.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARRISBURG</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>+8.1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>+14.7*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significantly different at P ≤ 0.05
Average of 10 trials over 2014 and 2015 with two varieties in each trial

Each of the six secrets independently can increase yield and when combined into a system they act synergistically. Identify the factors limiting your soybean yield and select the "secrets" and practices that work together to optimize yield and profitability.

**KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER**

1. Early planting and planting fuller maturities increases yield.
2. Phosphorus increasingly is becoming the limiting nutrient to yield.
3. Protect the foliage — about 60% of soybean yield comes from nodes 7 to 13, so protect leaves at or close to those nodes.
4. Adding one more pod to each soybean plant adds 2 bushels per acre to yield.
5. Planting in narrower rows increases yield, and the crop is more responsive to high yield management.
6. Soybean varieties greatly differ in their response to high management practices, so select wisely.

For more information, visit: http://cropphysiology.cropsci.illinois.edu.
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Rushville: Mike Dyche of Dyche Farms, Inc.
Champaign: UI Research Farms
Harrisburg: Scott Berry of Berry Farms

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Crop Production Services
Dawn Equipment
Fluid Fertilizer Foundation
Growmark
Helena Chemical Company
Illinois Soybean Association

A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THIS RESEARCH:

ISA is here for our soybean farmers
Six Secrets is just one way your checkoff works for you. From ILSoyAdvisor.com, our soybean management hub, to the ISA Yield Challenge, double-crop initiative, local events, profitability radio and much more, ISA has the tools and resources to help you break your yield barriers and boost your bottom line, sustainably. Visit us at ilsoy.org or ILSoyAdvisor.com – and be sure to sign up for the ILSoyAdvisor and Yield Challenge newsletters to stay informed.

Jenny Mennenga
Le Roy, Ill., farmer and ISA Production and Outreach Committee Chair
It’s easy to make more on your soybeans.

Find the connections you need to see your profits grow. Thankfully, SoybeanPremiums.org already did the hard work of finding them for you. Food-grade, identity-preserved and non-GMA, connect with premium programs and buyers in your area today.
International Relationships Grow Illinois Soy Markets

Every six or seven weeks, shipping containers of soybean meal journey from Illinois to Yangon, Myanmar, located in Southeast Asia. The meal becomes a key ingredient in high-quality poultry feed produced by Linnthit Animal Feed and Medicine Company, Ltd.

But more than a piece of the soybean export market, these containers signify return on long-term investments made by Illinois soybean farmers in international relationships.

Tein Sin Lee and his brother own and manage Linnthit. Through connections with the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program, their company recently became a new U.S. soybean meal customer.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
In 2014, Lee’s brother connected with Hailey Hui, State of Illinois Asia office trade director with IDOA, at a trade show in China. “The Lees indicated interest in U.S. soybean meal,” Hui says. “I invited his brother to participate in the annual Illinois Grain Industry Tour, but his schedule didn’t allow him to come. Finally, Tein Sin Lee was able to attend the 2016 tour.”

The Illinois Grain Industry Tour promotes Illinois exports. Hui and her counterparts in the State of Illinois Latin American office recruit and qualify potential international buyers to attend. As with the Lees, the IDOA trade directors meet buyers at trade shows or through industry associations, contacts and referrals.

The Springfield IDOA office organizes the tour to showcase the Illinois crop industry with stops at farms, specialty grain companies, grain terminals, the Chicago Board of Trade and more. The buyers also meet farmers and staff from ISA and the Illinois Corn Marketing Board.

“We wanted more options to buy soybean meal,” says Lee. “This tour provided access to U.S. soybean meal because it was in the heart of soybean cultivation.”

During the October 2016 tour, Lee expressed further interest in purchasing U.S. soybean meal. “I saw good quality soybean meal in Illinois,” he says. “We had purchased U.S. soybean meal from Singapore, but were disappointed because the dealer didn’t satisfy our requirements. We wanted to purchase directly from the U.S.”

BUILDING MARKETS
Both Hui and Eric Woodie, ISA trade analyst and facilitator, followed up with Lee after the tour. They provided price and specification information, answered questions and connected Lee to local exporters, guiding him through the process of importing from the U.S. By the spring of 2017, Lee’s first order of soybean meal shipped, and orders have since grown.

“The quality of U.S. soybean meal is good in every aspect,” he says.
“We share about working with Illinois as a great accomplishment in business and as we travel.”

U.S. soybean meal provides a more efficient amino acid profile, a more consistent supply, different texture and less foreign matter than soybean meal from India, according to Woodie.

“Myanmar is a growing market,” he says. “It’s getting easier to trade as sanctions change, the economy improves and they learn to feed more efficient products. We expect exports there to continue growing.”

Woodie helps Illinois export companies connect with new customers like Lee. He vets and qualifies potential customers, a process many companies don’t have time to manage.

2016 Illinois Grain Industry Tour participants, including Tein Sin Lee of Myanmar (second from the left), enjoyed a dinner hosted by the ISA checkoff program.

The Illinois Grain Industry Tour, organized by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, showcases Illinois soybean and corn products and garners new export customers.

The Illinois Grain Industry Tour, organized by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, showcases Illinois soybean and corn products and garners new export customers.
SOY IN THE CITY
Brings Chicago Influencers to the Table

Soy in the City, a unique project developed by the ISA checkoff program, began in 2016 as a way to share with Chicago-area influencers, legislators, consumers, businesses and organizations the positive impact soybeans have on everyday life in the city.

Through dinner events, social media and collaborative projects, ISA highlights how the small bean has a big impact. Follow along in the photos below.

Summer Farm-to-Table Dinner Expands ISA Influence

To engage with Chicago-area influencers, including food bloggers, dietitians and others in the food industry, ISA hosted a three-course dinner featuring soy-based ingredients, Aug. 16, 2017.

The dinner was hosted at the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago’s Smart House.

ISA Soy Ambassador Andrew Roselius (top left) talks with guests about the ways he employs on-farm sustainability practices. He was joined by ISA director John Hagenbuch and his wife, Kate, who shared what life is like on their farm.

Chef and farmer presentations throughout the night emphasized soybeans as a local, sustainable, versatile crop used to feed Illinois livestock and found in foods like vegetable oil and soy sauce.

Nineteen guests, including the #Foodiechats founders, food blogger Momma Cuisine, and representatives from McDonald’s, Sodexo, Bimbo Bread, The Wetlands Initiative and The Nature Conservancy tasted their way through different soy-inspired dishes while learning about sustainable food production.
Harvest Dinner Creates Deeper Connections

On Nov. 7, 2017, ISA hosted a Soy in the City harvest dinner in Chicago to connect with key stakeholders in and around the city who have the potential to impact how soybeans are used.

Guests visited different restaurant stations to sample dishes with a soy connection. At each table, farmers would share their farm story and the different ways soybeans are used. ISA director Sharon Covert talks with Phoenix Bean owner, Jenny Yang, about Illinois soybeans and farming.

Fifteen industry influencers, including the owner of tofu company Phoenix Bean, a Corvus Blue food scientist, Sodexo-employed dietitians, bloggers and food educators attended the event.

The dinner explored the many uses of soybeans, from food and livestock feed to household and industrial products.

Soy in the City Dinner Reaches Beyond the Table

Influencers sharing what they learned throughout the dinners amplified the experience to others. Between the two events, social media posts shared by guests generated 10,000+ impressions and 700+ engagements (likes, shares, comments).

For more on how Soy in the City is reaching decision makers, see page 26.
Registration Opens for Commodity Classic in Anaheim

Registration and housing for the 2018 Commodity Classic, Feb. 27-March 1, in Anaheim, Calif., has begun. The schedule includes a robust line-up of educational sessions, huge trade show, the latest in agricultural innovation and technology, inspiring speakers, an evening of entertainment and the opportunity to network with farmers from across the United States. There also are a number of optional tours to explore the culture, history and scenery of southern California.

A detailed schedule of events is available at commodityclassic.com, along with registration and housing reservation details. This year’s Commodity Classic will be held Tuesday-Thursday, providing opportunities for families to come in early or stay late to enjoy a weekend.

Illinois Dicamba Training Website Shares BMPs

The Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association (IFCA) and partners have prepared a Dicamba Best Management Practices (BMPs) document that lists additional considerations for farmers to help improve use of dicamba on soybeans. The BMPs are the result of feedback from IFCA members with assistance from Aaron Hager, University of Illinois weed scientist, and follow the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s issuance of new labels for the three, approved over-the-top dicamba herbicide formulations for soybeans: Engenia, XtendiMax and FeXapan. The new label requirements are extensive and seek to address the problems created with dicamba use in 2017. All of the information is available through the IFCA website at ifca.com/IllinoisDicambaTraining.

Soil Health Partnership Farmers “Keep the Stubble” in the Field

The Soil Health Partnership joined in on some fall fashion advice for farmers: keeping the stubble last fall. Stubble in the field looks great and is good for erosion control and overall soil health. During a month-long campaign called “No-Till November,” the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) encouraged farmers to “keep the stubble” on their harvested crop fields. The NRCS campaign was mirrored after the national cancer awareness “No Shave November” campaign. “No-Till November” encourages farmers to keep a different kind of stubble by parking tillage equipment and keeping crop stubble. More than half of the farms enrolled in the Soil Health Partnership practice some sort of no-till.

Ag in the Classroom Reaches Record Number of Students

More than 661,000 students received accurate agricultural messages during the last school year, thanks to the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program, the highest number ever. County coalition grants marked an all-time high with 77 coalitions serving 87 Illinois counties receiving $625,500 in grant dollars. Grants can be used for materials, training, educational lessons and activities. In the coming year, AITC will focus on environmental stewardship and agriculture and increased STEM programming with a focus on career development. Illinois AITC partners include the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program.

USDA Secretary Announces Illinois FSA and Rural Development Directors

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced Illinois Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Rural Development (RD) state directors late last year. FSA state directors help implement USDA policies in planning, organizing and administering FSA programs and are also responsible for running the day-to-day activities of the state FSA office. Former state director William Graff was appointed to the position. Graff is from Middletown, Ill. Similarly, Rural Development state directors help improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. Douglas Wilson, a third generation Illinois farmer and past state director in the previous Republican administration was appointed to fill the role again. Wilson is from Gridley, Ill.

Calendar of Events

- **Better Beans Series**
  > January 30-February 22 • 5 meeting locations

- **Illinois Soybean Growers Annual Meeting and Policy Session**
  > February 8 • Bloomington, Illinois

- **Resilient Farmer Road Show**
  > February

- **Commodity Classic**
  > February 27-March 1 • Anaheim, California
From the first sale of U.S. soy to China to the release of the first soybean oil-based tire, the soy checkoff has been behind the scenes, growing new opportunities and customers for the soybeans you produce. We’re looking inside the bean, beyond the bushel and around the world to keep preference for U.S. soy strong. And for U.S. soybean farmers like you, the impact is invaluable.

See more ways the soy checkoff brings value to farmers at unitedsoybean.org
Connecting Over Coffee

BY MIKE LEVIN, Illinois Soybean Growers director of issues management and analysis

Busy is a buzzword used rather often these days. It’s not unique to any group of individuals, whether it’s professionals, farmers or legislators.

Neeru Paharia, an assistant professor at Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business, recently wrote a Psychology Today article explaining how Americans consider busyness a status symbol, saying, “Americans tend to idolize those who are self-made. Being busy is a sign that one has the ambition and competence to move up the ladder.”

That certainly is the case for state legislators working in the Land of Lincoln.

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program works to build relationships with state legislators so they understand how soybeans are grown and raised, especially through the Soy in the City initiative. Given their busy nature, ISA decided to meet decisionmakers where they are – at the State Capitol Building – to offer a break from their daily activities and the chance to meet a soybean farmer. And what better way to do that than over a cup of coffee?

Thanks to support from the Illinois Soybean Growers, ISA directors Stan Born and Carrie Winkelmann handed out soy lattes to more than 125 legislators and staff during the veto session Nov. 8, 2017. Notable legislators from urban Chicago and rural downstate districts stopped by to ask questions about soy products, like the soy milk used in the lattes, and get a harvest update.

ISG Schedules Annual Policy Session and Meeting

Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) members are invited to attend the ISG Policy Session Feb. 8, 2018, at the ISA office in Bloomington from 8 a.m.–11 a.m. The purpose of the session is to allow ISG members and the board to review current ASA Resolutions for changes and amendments that will be presented at Commodity Classic in Anaheim, Calif., Feb. 27–March 1. The resolutions are available for viewing at www.ilsoygrowers.com. You also may contact Andrew Larson at 309-808-3612 and he will email you the file. The ISG annual meeting will be held following the resolutions. The purpose is to provide reports on association activities, approve the acts and deeds of the directors and staff, and to transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting. Contact Dustin Scott at 309-808-3603 or scottd@ilsoy.org by Feb. 1, if you plan to attend.
WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?

I love spending time with my husband, Eric, and our children Emily, who is 10; Ella, who is 8; and William, who is 6. They play softball, baseball, and basketball, and I enjoy taking them to practices and watching them play. My girls are old enough for 4-H, and they show cows and goats. That’s a project our whole family can do together.

I love reading an eclectic mix of books, from fiction to business analysis to decision-making. One of my favorite hobbies is loading up the Gator and crop scouting in the evening. Often I can snag one of my kids and have some one-on-one time teaching them about growing crops.

ISA will have five director positions open when the current fiscal year ends Aug. 31, 2018. The process for district director elections officially begins in April 2018. Districts with openings are District 10, representing Christian, Dewitt, Macon, Moultrie and Shelby counties; District 16, representing Clay, Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne and White counties; and District 17, representing Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, Randolph and Washington counties. The process for at-large director elections officially begins in February 2018. Two nominees from the application pool will be elected by a majority of soybean farmers in attendance at the annual meeting, Aug. 1, 2018, in Champaign, Ill. No write-in provision exists for at-large directors. If you are interested in serving, contact Angel Terrell at 309-663-7692 or terrella@ilsoy.org.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ASPECT OF FARMING?

I really enjoy the people that I work with as a farmer. Our whole team, from landowners to employees, is a great group of people. We really do think of all of them like family. With such a great team, it’s really fun to work with people who truly enjoy helping you succeed.

Also, at the end of the day in farming, there is a great feeling of accomplishment from raising a tangible product that is needed in our global economy. I especially enjoy growing crops and the management of them throughout the growing season.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO BE A DIRECTOR FOR THE ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION?

I started down the path of becoming a director by first participating in the ISA Soy Ambassador Program. Through the program, I learned about ISA and the important work the organization does for Illinois soybean farmers. The board and staff are made up of some of the best and brightest forward-thinking business minds I’ve ever known. I feel privileged to have been voted onto this board, and work for the benefit of more than 43,000 soybean growers in Illinois.

WHERE DO YOU SEE U.S. AGRICULTURE HEADED?

I think with the rapid rate of technology adoption in agriculture, a relatively good comfort level in implementing technology will lead to better efficiency of time and resources. I think we will be able to raise more yield and have clean water. Farmers are just that good.

Jenny Mennenga is an at-large director for ISA from LeRoy, Ill., and is the chairwoman of the ISA Production and Outreach Committee. She previously was an ISA Soy Ambassador. Mennenga holds a bachelor’s degree in agronomy and seed science from Iowa State University and is a Certified Crop Adviser. She and her husband, Eric, raise soybeans, corn and beef.

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Firm results.

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Grow Smart with BASF soybean solutions.

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