MITIGATE RISK IN 2018

UP YOUR GAME WITH APPS

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COVER STORY:
Mitigate Risk in Uncertain Times
With lower crop prices and greater associated risks heading into the 2018 growing season, there are some steps Illinois soybean farmers can take to mitigate marketing, financial and production concerns. Find out what the experts recommend for the upcoming season.

Apps to Up Your Management Game
Farming applications, or apps, for smartphones and tablets have become valuable tools to help manage crops, apply data and troubleshoot in the office and the field. Here are a few ways to find and choose the best apps for your operation, along with some possible apps to try.

Soybeans Find More Life Fueling Chicago Park District
The Chicago Park District is working to improve the city’s air quality by using biodiesel in blends up to B55 in its refuse trucks, beach maintenance vehicles and lawn mowers. The district tracks the performance of its unique blend and has plans for growth in the future.

Farmers Keep Progress with Water Quality Flowing
According to the first status report regarding the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, Illinois farmers indeed are helping improve water quality through best management practices. Learn what’s working and what may lie ahead.

More Than Meal
Soybean meal provides a consistent source of protein for livestock, poultry and even companion animals. But soybeans supply other feed ingredients that help bolster demand from the animal sector even more. Read about the other components commonly used in feed.

GETTING TO KNOW:
Rick Rubenacker
Rick Rubenacker is a newer board member from southern Illinois. He is a director from McLeansboro, Ill., where he lives with his wife, Emily. His family raises corn, soybeans and wheat. Rubenacker has a degree in ag and biological engineering from the University of Illinois. Get his perspective on leadership and farming.
Consider ISA One of Your Risk Management Tools

When you deposit checks from the elevator after harvest, you assume the bank will protect your balance. It’s their job to manage the risk of holding your money. Similarly, when that small percentage of your elevator check is deducted and sent to the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program, you assume the farmers on the board will manage risk within the industry.

As an ISA director and this year’s chairwoman, I take seriously the job of smartly and efficiently managing checkoff funds to maximize the return we get from investing them. Risk management from the ISA checkoff program involves not only helping the state’s farmers do their jobs more profitably, but assuring a diverse customer base to get all of our soybeans into buyers’ hands.

On our family farm with my sister and parents, we grow soybeans, corn, wheat, oats and alfalfa. A broad lineup of crops helps spread production risk. We also run a custom application business, and sell crop inputs to area farmers. At any given time of the year, we may have more than a dozen employees helping service customers, which requires our family to stay up-to-date with pesticide applicator licenses, regulations, human resource needs and more.

That is a lot of risk management in a day. And I know every soybean farmer in Illinois deals with similar responsibilities and decisions. This issue of Illinois Field & Bean is dedicated to risk management and contains stories I hope help you be a better farmer in 2018.

We farm in uncertain times; from questions about dicamba, to seed trait approvals pending overseas, to tight production margins and a tough lending environment. ISA monitors these challenges, as we try to achieve our goal of maximum profitability and global competitive positioning for soy from Illinois and to utilize 600 million bushels of Illinois soybeans by 2020.

You will find tips in this issue about mitigating risk, whether on the production front, the financial front or marketing front. You can evaluate how you might best market your crops in the new year. And you can consider conservation strategies to improve your environmental impact, as well as review phone apps that might put better decision-making at your fingertips.

Finally, as you weigh the challenges of risk management headed into 2018, it is a good time to be thankful we farm in America. I hope you enjoy the holidays with friends and family. •
Take Steps to Better Risk Management

> BY CHRIS OLSON

Risk management is essential in every farming operation. Perhaps now more than ever, it is vital for farmers to spend time looking for efficiencies in their operation. It also is vital for farmers to know their costs of production, and work with professionals that can help manage that risk.

First, consider what it takes to run the farming operation each month. Assumptions will have to be made regarding the timing of when certain inputs are paid, for example. If farmers break the cost down by month, they may get a clearer picture of total costs.

In addition, farmers must identify all of the costs outside of the operation that the farm is responsible for, and make sure that includes family living needs for each month. Maybe this is included as a wage to the owners or as a withdrawal, but the important thing is to account for it. Once the true cost of production is known, look at pricing opportunities to lock in a profit.

I don’t think we can sit back and wait on a major economic or environmental event for a price rally; consider locking in profits when they are available. I encourage farmers to sit down with their lenders and review numbers thoroughly. Sometimes, that second set of eyes can help farmers make subtle changes within their operations that could lower their costs.

Just as good yields demonstrate production skills, providing good financial information is reflective of each farmer’s strength in business management. Quality and type of information is key. There is a major difference between providing shoebox, back-of-the-napkin data versus certified public accountant (CPA)-prepared, compiled, reviewed and audited information.

Every operation is different and every relationship between lender and customer is different. Providing detailed financial records from the past, as well as reasonable forecasts for the future, should serve as the foundation for developing a strategy and positive working relationship in any situation. Risk management is critical, and farmer relationships with their lenders should be viewed as another partner in managing the farming operation. ■

“Just as good yields demonstrate production skills, providing good financial information is reflective of each farmer’s strength in business management.”

CHRIS OLSON
managing director–business development manager for Rabo AgriFinance

Chris Olson is managing director–business development manager for Rabo AgriFinance. He is based in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and oversees loan origination, relationship management and loan servicing operations in Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and Wisconsin. Rabo AgriFinance offers a portfolio of services, including loans, insurance, input finance and effective risk management. Rabo AgriFinance is a subsidiary of Rabobank. For more information, visit www.RaboAg.com.

Article is not intended for direct financial or legal advice.
Mitigate Risk in Uncertain Times

> BY JOANIE STIERS

**Cost of production.** If this “COP” hasn’t pulled you over to your desk yet, it should soon. Financial and marketing experts agree that farmers should know their COP to stay out of trouble in 2018.

Crop prices and profits of yesteryear made profitability a near guarantee with every sale. Now, with lower crop prices and greater risks moving into the new growing season, experts share their perspectives on mitigating marketing, financial and production risks in the near term.

**MARKETING RISK**

**Set Your Sights on Survival**

Surviving tight margins, in part, lies in knowledge: Knowing cost of production and knowing when to pull the trigger on crop sales.

“We’re in an environment now that knowing those costs of production and surviving next year is a good goal,” says Gary Schnitkey, professor of farm management at the University of Illinois. “Be realistic about what the market is saying those prices are. Any time you get a price above your cost of production, that’s a good marketing opportunity. It’s unexciting, but the market isn’t giving us a lot of upside hope right now.”

Fertilizer, seed and chemicals — with their known units and costs per acre — give farmers a starting point for costs of production. Most often, farms struggle with variable costs, such as how to allocate machinery depreciation to soybean and corn acres.

Schnitkey suggests plucking data from the Illinois Farm Business Farm Management Association (FBFM), or enrolling in the service. The cooperative-based records management service uses formulas to give its clients their farm’s specific costs of production, with variables like depreciation included.

Once you know your cost of production, set realistic marketing goals, Schnitkey says.

“In the environment we are in, if you see $4 corn and high-$9 soybeans, you’re probably in a place where you shouldn’t expect a lot more and make some sales at those levels,” he says.

Farmers also manage risk more effectively when they market throughout the year. He says farmers generally market too late. Rather, set goals to sell a certain amount of grain by a certain date.

“Farmers don’t price enough of their crop early,” Schnitkey says. “I would also say that you should have some goals to have ‘X’ amount of your grain sold by certain dates. Having scheduled sales is good from a risk management standpoint.”
**FINANCIAL RISK**

*Know Costs and Protect Working Capital*

Before you wrap up the 2017 season’s record books, Narlyn Nelson says know costs of production for the next one. “Cost of production. That’s where it really needs to start,” says Nelson, vice president of core markets for Compeer Financial. “You would be surprised how many people, until things got tight, knew what that was.”

Compeer Financial offers spreadsheets to help figure those costs, estimate cash flow and even determine working capital. Healthy working capital keeps farmers in control of decision making. Tight working capital comes with requirements on loans and reduced flexibility.

“If you have adequate working capital, you can use yourself until you get into lending arrangements,” Nelson says, “and you are much more in control of your operation, your destiny and your future.”

Family living expenses may come into play for 2018, depending on availability of off-farm income. When farm income flourished, it was easier to spend and live better, Nelson says. Where reduced farm income also provides for family living, discipline and personal budget must prevail to apply the brakes.

In terms of equipment, Nelson recommends farmers look at what they have and what their cash flow allows. Replace only what needs replaced. And then consider replenishing that working capital with an intermediate-type equipment loan for three to seven years to reposition the balance sheet.

He also advises to renegotiate cash rents when eligible and share cost of production information with landlords, if warranted. Nelson says it’s worth watching for opportunities to reduce input costs, but only from credible suppliers who will deliver long after cashing the check.

Lastly, establish a marketing plan. “When times are easy, farmers weren’t paying as much attention to marketing,” Nelson says. “With $5 corn, anybody could make money. When we have $3.50 corn, they have to look at land costs, cash rents, input costs and how many times they are running over the field.

“If you know you can make money at $3.75, why not market some of that corn and not rely on the markets to go the way you need them to?”

**PRODUCTION RISK**

*Start Clean, Finish Well*

Agronomist Brien Fell marks his calendar: Remind farmers to start spring with clean soybean fields.

“It’s going to be tougher to do burndown this fall with the delayed harvest this year,” says Fell, product agronomist for Pioneer, “but keep fields clean and clean often.”

For Fell, reducing production risk is synonymous with preserving yield. Starting clean will help protect and preserve potential soybean productivity in 2018, a fact fresh in mind after weeds thrived through the last mild winter and haunted farmers by spring. Clean fields also encourage earlier planting, another potential yield booster. And Fell wouldn’t skimp on the seed treatments, whether to curb phytophthora, cyst nematodes and sudden death syndrome or improve stand establishment.

“The return on investment is there,” Fell says. “The data have shown that year over year. If you start cutting seed treatment, there’s potential yield loss and potential replant because of infestation or infection.”

Fell recommends planting the highest-yielding germplasm that best fits a farm’s soil types and field histories of disease or weed pressure, whether the bag says Liberty, Roundup,Dicamba or non-GMO. Before those seed purchases, though, Schnitkey advises that farmers use cost of production figures to help make planting decisions.

“I tell farmers to look at their crop mix,” Schnitkey says. “Soybeans have been more profitable than corn in the past several years. Farmers should look at whether or not they should be changing their crop mix to more soybeans and, in particular, looking if they have corn-after-corn land to switch to soybeans.”
Market Information or Advisory Service?

Are you happy with the way you market your soybeans? Or is a new year a good time to take a different approach? Do you need someone to take complete control of your marketing or just need good information to do your own marketing? Here are a few tips to consider:

**MARKET INFORMATION SERVICE**

Do you enjoy marketing and consistently and confidently lock in a profit above your cost of production? If so, market information may be all you need to guide decisions.

Explore both free and subscription market information services. Much information is available publicly, but a service can summarize and prioritize the details you need.

Check to see whether any of your input suppliers, buyers or association memberships include a newsletter or electronic delivery of information.

Be sure you have a solid understanding of marketing strategies, such as hedging, cash forward contracts, use of futures and options and other tools. Some understanding of commodity charting and technical analysis may help you interpret market information.

Evaluate market advisory services to learn who has a solid track record and an approach to marketing that fits with your risk tolerance and cash flow needs.

Check into fee structures. Third-party educators encourage farmers to look at a per-acre fee, which may range $3-5 per acre, rather than a commission-based fee.

Confirm the service is attentive to markets all the time to make pricing decisions. No service will hit market highs every time but should lock in profits for your farm.

Understand basic market trends and the tools your advisor may use to price soybeans. You should review the strategies used, the pricing objectives and the risk associated with the plan. Do you prefer in-person, over-the-phone or electronic communications?

**MARKET ADVISORY SERVICE**

Do you not understand or not have the time or interest in marketing your soybeans? Do you use the same sales strategies year in and year out, regardless of price?

Evaluate market advisory services to learn who has a solid track record and an approach to marketing that fits with your risk tolerance and cash flow needs.

Sources: Compilation from various Extension publications and market advisers.
The tools, the resources and the information you need to shatter your soybean yield barriers are in one place. Join us January 11 at the Wyndham Springfield City Centre in Springfield, Illinois, and learn all about the latest technologies and management techniques for reaching your full yield potential and maximizing profitability. Because it pays to lead your field in yield.

Register for free today at ILSoy.org/summit.
Apps to UP Your Management Game

Is your smartphone or tablet ready to help you improve your farm management in 2018?

Farming applications, or apps, for smartphones and tablets have become valuable tools to help manage crops, apply data and troubleshoot in the office and the field. Apps exist to address most any farm-related task, from planning or marketing, to soil sampling and scouting.

However, finding and selecting those apps can be a challenge. Farmers, Extension specialists and others offer below the insight and recommendations to help.

FIND APPS
A general search for “farm apps” at your app store, either iTunes or Google Play, tends to find more games than practical apps. Instead, look for apps like you do other information:

• **Ask** other farmers and advisors what apps they use and like.
• **Pay** attention for recommendations from online communities, like Twitter.
• **Try** more specific searches in the app store, such as “farm planning” or “soil sampling.”

CHOOSE APPS
Once you find apps, you will see many choices. How do you select apps that work best for you? Ignacio Ciampitti, cropping systems specialist with Kansas State Research and Extension, evaluates ag-related apps regularly. He encourages considering these factors:

• **Intuitive:** Look for user-friendly, simple apps. If you try one for a few minutes and can’t figure it out, delete it and try another option.
• **Free:** Many apps are free, and those that do cost often offer a free trial period. Start free to see if you use an app before upgrading, because they rarely offer your money back.
• **Multi-functional:** Integrated apps able to do multiple tasks help keep data organized and in one place. These apps are becoming more common.
• **Connectivity:** Some apps need online access, either via Wi-Fi or mobile data, to update information, like weather and markets. Others simply store information like pest photos to provide immediate access, without data connectivity. Think about what information you need where, because connectivity can be an issue in the field or on the road.
• **Personal preference:** Choose apps you like. Many have similar information, so select an interface that makes sense to you. Just remember to delete apps you decide not you use, since a full memory slows the entire device.

Illinois farmer Scott Wessel checks weather data from his phone to help make crop management decisions.

Is your smartphone or tablet ready to help you improve your farm management in 2018?

Apps to UP Your Management Game

Illinois farmer Scott Wessel checks weather data from his phone to help make crop management decisions.
As you prepare for next season, check out apps such as the sampling on the next page to help manage your farm. And, be sure you accept updates to the apps you already rely on, like identification guides, scouting tools and equipment support. These are a representation of types of apps available, and are not endorsements.

If you have apps you like, please share them at ilsoy@ilsoy.org.
Soybeans Find More Life Fueling Chicago Park District

> BY MIKAELA WIELAND

As the largest city in the Midwest and a longstanding transportation hub for the heartland, Chicago hosts millions of vehicles each day. Unfortunately, the city also has the second highest asthma rate in the country, largely due to emissions from all those vehicles on the road.

Relief is on the way. The Chicago Park District is working to improve the city’s air quality by using biodiesel in blends up to B55 in its refuse trucks, beach maintenance vehicles and lawn mowers. Already for most of the year, the district runs 55 vehicles on biodiesel blends of 20 percent or higher, using almost 23,000 gallons of B20 annually. And in 2017, the district joined ISA’s B20 Club, which underlines its commitment.

The district’s carbon emission reductions from using biodiesel are estimated to be equivalent to planting more than 1,700 trees. “This really is the highest level of green energy. Not only does biodiesel help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but using recycled cooking oil adds in an extra layer of responsible resource use,” Probst adds.

**TRACKING BIODIESEL’S PERFORMANCE**

The park district also is able to track and measure how well biodiesel blends perform.

“When we started, there were preconceptions among supervisors that biodiesel wouldn’t perform as well as petroleum diesel, or would gunk up the engines and cause excessive maintenance,” says Probst. “All park district vehicles have tracking numbers to monitor where the vehicles fuel up and track engine maintenance.”

“By tracking our vehicles, we show that we have not had one maintenance issue related to our fuel,” says Dimitroff. “We’ve shown that using biodiesel contributes to increased efficiency.”

**PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

The Chicago Park District is hoping success of the biodiesel program will lead the City of Chicago municipal fleet to use biodiesel blends of B20 or higher.

“This program and future expansion is great for the health of the state,” says John DeRosa, clean air director, American Lung Association in Illinois. “Biodiesel significantly reduces particulate matter and hydrocarbon emissions from diesel vehicles, which affects lung health of employees and community members, especially those with asthma and other respiratory diseases.”

Expanding the biodiesel program in Chicago is great for soybean farmers as well. “Biodiesel already adds 63 cents per bushel to soybean prices. Increasing demand will help,” says Probst.
HOW CAN YOU GET GAME-CHANGING SOYBEAN YIELDS?

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Since 2015, Illinois agriculture and conservation groups have been working together to help farmers meet goals that were set with the release of the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRS) that summer. Those efforts seem to be paying off, according to the first biennial report on the NLRS, released Aug. 31, 2017, at the Farm Progress Show by the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

“Illinois agriculture has a positive story to tell,” says IDOA Director Raymond Poe. “We have seen a significant increase in the adoption of various best management practices. Our partners and stakeholders have done a tremendous job getting the word out about what we are doing in Illinois with the NLRS. Farmers understand the consequences of nutrient loss, and they support our quest to minimize losses.”

Illinois soybean farmer and ISA chairwoman Lynn Rohrscheib, says, “I am proud to be part of partnerships and outreach efforts that help farmers adopt sustainable production practices that improve water quality. I encourage farmers to keep implementing practices that work on their farms, that benefit the environment, that meet customer needs and that address NLRS goals.”

The biennial report describes actions taken to achieve goals since the document’s 2015 release. The NLRS lays out a plan to leverage existing programs to optimize nutrient loss reduction while promoting collaboration, research and innovation among the private sector, academia, non-profits, wastewater treatment agencies, the ag sector, state and local government.

“In just two years, we already see the impacts of Illinois’ strategy on water quality,” says Illinois EPA Director Alec Messina. “The collaborative efforts of our stakeholders are resulting in real improvements in Illinois’ waters and we look forward to future improvements that will be gained as additional practices are implemented.”

The report demonstrates that significant progress has been made towards reducing nutrient loads in Illinois rivers and streams in two years. Many farmers are implementing best management practices (BMPs) and technologies for more efficient nutrient use. The large number of BMPs installed is an indication that the effort is making progress, according to the report summary.

Highlights include a move toward split spring/fall nitrogen applications and an increased number of acres dedicated to conservation practices, such as cover crops.

“Illinois has made significant progress despite no new funding,” says Warren Goetsch, IDOA deputy director. While efforts farmers and others have made have not gone unnoticed, there is more work to be done. Goetsch hopes releasing the report at the Farm Progress Show introduces successes to farmers who may be apprehensive about trying new management practices.

The biennial report will be updated again in 2019.
Checkoff collaboration

ISA Helps Implement BMPs
The ISA checkoff program is committed to helping farmers implement best management practices to meet Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy goals. ISA supports local watershed projects, partners with Illinois ag and conservation groups and provides education resources on ilsoyadvisor.com and ilsoy.org.
Voice for Soy Advocacy Champions 
Engage and Empower Peer Action 

ADVOCACY CHAMPION SHERRY FLACK

The Voice for Soy Advocacy Champions program increases engagement with the legislative action network. Advocacy Champions have been sharing action alerts and key issues with their peers, encouraging other Illinois soybean farmers to advocate for the agricultural issues that affect their businesses.

Responses from a recent action alert show almost half—46 percent—of actions taken were a result of Advocacy Champions and their peer engagement. There was a 65 percent increase in action taken compared to a previous alert on the same topic. Those numbers represent more farmer voices being heard by lawmakers, and every voice can make a difference in legislators’ decisions.

Who are these Champions? They are soybean growers who know how important it is to advocate for their farms. Sherry Flack, a farmer from Shannon, Ill., is one of them.

ISG: WHY DO YOU COMPLETE VOICE FOR SOY ACTION ALERTS?
FLACK: When you have a system like the Voice for Soy legislative action network, sharing your side of the story becomes so much easier. The action alerts provide information that is written in an understandable manner. I read the letters and think, “Wow, that’s what I would say.” But I appreciate that Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) encourages farmers to customize the letters with their personal stories, too, because using your own voice has a greater impact on legislators and regulators.

ISG: WHAT DO YOU WANT LEGISLATORS TO KNOW ABOUT HOW YOU FARM?
FLACK: I have seen how starting a dialogue helps so much, especially with current issues such as Waters of the United States (WOTUS). It is still in limbo, but the farmers who actively advocate against it have helped bring our perspectives to light.

ISG: WHAT IS ONE REASON YOU WOULD TELL A FRIEND TO TAKE ACTION FOR VOICE FOR SOY?
FLACK: Advocates who are experts in their field are critical regardless of the industry, and we, as farmers, are experts of ours. If we don’t tell our story and share our point of view, then people with no firsthand experience will make decisions on our behalf. Personally, that really scares me. We need to have the courage to stand up and speak out. That is why I advocate.

“I’d rather be proactively having a conversation with lawmakers before rules and regulations are set in motion. At the very least, I’ve taken the time to stand up for my farm and family to say what I think.”

-Sherry Flack

Hometown: Shannon, IL

Issues I’ve Acted on:
GMO Labeling, WOTUS, Renewable Fuel Standards

Learn more about Sherry Flack and other champions on www.voiceforsoy.org/champions.
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Soybeans Supply Multitude of Feed Products

> BY LAURA TEMPLE

Animal feed is the top market for Illinois soybeans. Animals get required amino acids from protein. And soybean meal provides a consistent protein source for pigs, poultry, beef and dairy cattle, companion animals and more.

“Our feed mills use soybean meal in almost every ration we create, regardless of species,” says Joel Prestegaard, livestock specialist, Hueber Feed, Creston, Ill.

Jeannine van der Veen, equine and specialty nutritionist with Kent Nutrition Group, agrees. “Soybean meal provides a good amino acid balance, including high levels of lysine,” she says. “Lysine is the first limiting amino acid for most animals.”

But soybeans supply other ingredients — hulls, oil and protein concentrates or isolates — that add value to specific animal feed formulations. Demand for soy components besides meal bolsters animal agriculture as the top soybean customer.

**HIGH-FIBER HULLS**

Soybean hulls, or the hard, outer shells of soybeans, contain fiber and protein. Crushing processes that de-hull soybeans create a valuable feed ingredient.

“We consider soybean hulls a super fiber,” van der Veen says. “Herbivores get more energy from fermented soybean hulls than hay or other grain hulls.”

The fiber in hulls supports digestion when grain rations supplement forage diets for cattle, horses, rabbits, sheep, goats and other herbivores. Their high energy value benefits active animals like show and race horses.

“We pellet hulls for young cattle,” Prestegaard says. “They are lower in starch than corn, fitting well in calf starter rations. They are easy on developing ruminant guts.”

Soybean hulls also help older cattle maintain rate of gain and supply energy for older horses unable to graze or chew forages well.

Fiber from hulls also benefits omnivores. “We grind soybean hulls for fiber in sow feed,” Prestegaard says. “Fiber ensures their internal systems function well, similar to how fiber works in humans.”

High-fiber hulls provide similar value to pets like dogs, hamsters and gerbils, according to van der Veen.

**FLUID FAT**

Soybean oil fulfills needs for fats and calories in liquid form.

“We use soybean oil to reach fat content and calorie requirements in most of our feeds with minimal volume,” van der Veen explains. “It contains a preferred balance of omega fatty acids compared to corn oil and delivers more concentrated calories than grain.”

With these qualities, soybean oil benefits animals needing high calories but limited grain, such as performance horses.

“Some niche markets for hogs require all-vegetable diets or non-animal-protein diets,” Prestegaard says. “Soybean oil replaces animal fats as an energy source in those rations.”

Cattle farmers use sweet, sticky feeds to ease the transition to dry feed in young cattle and to stimulate appetite in calves. Show cattle feed also falls into this category.

“We coat feeds that include molasses with soybean oil to lock everything together, add energy and prevent drying,” Prestegaard says. “Soybean oil also cuts dust in cattle feed.”

Demand for soy components besides meal bolsters animal agriculture as the top soybean customer. Pigs and poultry both are significant markets for soy.
Protein concentrate and isolates can be extracted from dehulled, defatted soybean flakes. Though more expensive, resulting products allow specialty feeds to meet specific amino acid profiles and protein levels. Soy protein concentrates and isolates can be used in milk replacer for dairy calves, high-end pig starter diets, poultry pre-starter rations and fish feeds in place of fishmeal.

“Soybeans provide high-quality, digestible protein, fiber and fat ingredients that contribute to nutritious animal feeds,” says van der Veen.

**WHAT IS FIRST LIMITING?**

**ANSWER:** The amino acid in shortest supply relative to the animal’s daily requirement. A pig will only grow as fast as the availability of the first limiting amino acid.

Soybean meal is considered the “gold standard” of many feed rations. Meal provides a good balance of key amino acids for livestock and poultry.

Three Farm Credit cooperatives united to serve rural America like never before.
Win back the 4 billion pounds of annual oil demand you lost to canola and other crops. High oleic soybeans produce oil with zero trans fat and less saturated fat. That’s why the food industry wants it, and processors and elevators are willing to pay a premium for it. Grow it now and grow your bottom line. New delivery locations are being added every year, and current programs are expanding their offerings. Ask your seed rep for the best varieties in your area. — SOYINNOVATION.COM
Consumers can be Winter-Ready with New Soy Tires

Goodyear introduced this fall for passenger vehicles its Assurance WeatherReady tires made from soybeans. The all-season line of tires was made possible, in part, by the United Soybean Board (USB), which includes funding from the ISA checkoff program. The tires feature a rubber compound made from soybean oil. The use of soybean oil allows the rubber to remain soft at lower temperatures, leading to enhanced traction in dry, wet and winter conditions. The tires are offered in a wide range of sizes, covering 77 percent of passenger vehicles on the road today.

Illinois Pig Farmers Create Tree Buffers

Pig farmers in Illinois have the opportunity to take part in a tree buffer cost share program. The Illinois Pork Producers Association (IPPA) and Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) are offering this incentive for farmers to implement fresh landscaping on their pig farms. The cost share program is offered on a first-come first-served basis for assistance in purchasing of trees and shrubs, as well as design and tree placement. Ted Funk, environmental engineer for IPPA funded in part by the ISA checkoff program, provides his assistance to buffer research and planning. Pig farmers interested in applying for cost share funds can download the application at www.ilpork.com.

Academic Study: Biodiesel Benefits Under-Valued for Years

An academic paper published in Biotechnology for Biofuels shows biodiesel’s benefits are even better than previous models suggest. Updated modeling from Purdue University calculated the advantage of using biodiesel has been underestimated by 10 percent. Research has long supported the benefits of biodiesel in reducing wastes, supporting domestic jobs and reducing harmful emissions. For nearly a decade, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and a handful of scientific institutions have been trying to determine how major biofuel policies might impact land use around the world.

Industry Offers Dicamba Resources

Everyone involved with production agriculture in Illinois has a critical role to play in the proper stewardship of new products, such as dicamba-based herbicides, including strict adherence to all label guidelines. Working with other groups, ISA has developed key learnings to help farmers make best use of new dicamba technologies. For more information, visit http://www.ilsoy.org/Dicamba_Resources.

Biennial Transect Survey Results Reflect Farmers Adaptation to Change

The Illinois biennial Soil Erosion and Cropland Tillage Transect Survey was completed this past spring and summer by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with Illinois’ 97 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Data show the trend toward more crop tillage continued in 2017, while increased farmer interest in, and adoption of cover crops shows promise as an additional conservation management tool on Illinois farms. Illinois farmers cite many reasons for increases in tillage over the past few years; among those is control of herbicide resistant weeds, early planting and harvest dates and weather. Other possible factors include lower commodity prices, land values, reduced access to technical assistance, and reductions in funding for conservation practice installation. For more information, visit https://www.agr.state.il.us/illinois-soil-conservation-transect-survey-reports.

Calendar of Events

Greater Peoria Farm Show
> Nov 28-30 • Peoria, Illinois

2017 Executive Women in Ag Conference
> Nov 29-Dec 1 • Chicago, Illinois

Soy Transportation Coalition Annual Meeting
> Dec 8 • St. Louis, Missouri

Soybean Summit
> Jan 11 • Springfield, Illinois

Commodity Classic
> Feb 27-Mar 1 • Anaheim, California
ISG Takes Action on Transportation, Farm Bill, State Issues

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

We quickly are coming to the end of a year marked with a new political climate that saw tumultuous changes nationally and statewide. Some great wins were recorded, including rescinding the 2015 Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule, which will be rewritten to provide more clarity. Transportation infrastructure is top of mind for the administration, and the state biodiesel tax credit remains intact.

Advocacy is an ongoing effort that contributes to these wins. Here are some of the issues Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) is watching as we round out 2017.

**TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

While the Trump Administration started the year strong with its promise of a $1 trillion infrastructure package funded by the government and local and private funds — the main subject at an early summer Infrastructure Week Rally in Cincinnati — moving the initiative forward has taken a backseat to other agenda items like the federal budget and tax reform. ISG will continue to monitor whether infrastructure action stays on the docket for 2017, or gets pushed into next year.

**2018 FARM BILL**

The House Agriculture Committee is hoping to report a new farm bill out of committee by Thanksgiving, while voting would take place in the first quarter of 2018. No major changes to crop insurance are anticipated once lawmakers finish bill specifics. ISG is watching for any adjustments that could impact farmers, especially considering other commodities are looking to be added to the crop protection title.

**SHAKE UP AT THE STATE HOUSE**

A state budget was passed in July, but unrest still remains in the Illinois General Assembly. Dozens of legislators and public officials have said they will not run for reelection, are choosing to take other seats or have resigned. With a gubernatorial election approaching in 2018, leadership is uncertain. ISG will continue working with key legislators and welcoming new ones to ensure farmers' livelihoods aren't affected.
WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?
When I get time, I like to travel with my wife. I like to hunt turkey and deer. On the farm, my hobby is learning how drones can be useful in terms of making decisions on the farm.

WHERE DO YOU SEE U.S. AGRICULTURE HEADED?
U.S. agriculture has a great opportunity to meet the challenges that face U.S. farmers and the world’s consumers. Being able to grow and maintain our markets for soybeans in China, India, Mexico and Taiwan, among other nations, will play a major role in Illinois soybean farmer success.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR FARM IN THE FUTURE?
The plan for our farm is to continue improving ways we can maximize our profitability per acre while successfully managing the generational transition that is underway.

If you are interested in serving on the ISA board of directors, please contact Angel Terrell at 309-663-7692 or terrella@ilsoy.org.
The board will have openings beginning July 2018.

Rick Rubenacker is a director from McLeansboro, Ill., which is in Hamilton County, where he lives with his wife, Emily. His family raises corn, soybeans and wheat. Rubenacker has a degree in agricultural and biological engineering from the University of Illinois and is a member of the ISA Marketing Committee. He also is an active participant in the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District Board and Wayne White Electric Cooperative.
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