CHOOSE TECHNOLOGY THAT MAKES SENSE

WEIGH DRONE DECISIONS
GET TIPS AT 2017 SOYBEAN SUMMITS
BIGGER YIELDS. BETTER PROFITS.

February 3: EFFINGHAM | February 16: PEORIA

IF YOU GROW SOYBEANS, YOU NEED TO ATTEND THE 2017 ILSOYADVISOR.COM SOYBEAN SUMMITS

Friday, February 3, 2017
Keller Convention Center
EFFINGHAM

Thursday, February 16, 2017
Peoria Civic Center
PEORIA

Funded in part by the Illinois Soybean Association checkoff program, the ILSoyAdvisor.com Summits provide a great lineup of expert speakers sharing the latest tools and technology to boost your yields and improve your bottom line, while minimizing environmental impact.

These free events run from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a full slate of speakers, lunch, networking and a trade show. On-site registration opens at 7:00 a.m. with a light breakfast.

Seating at each location is limited, so register today!

Register online or call 888-826-4011

Learn more at ilsoy.org/summit

For more soybean management information visit ILSoyAdvisor.com.
Add Data to your To-Do List

Demand to collect and use good, accurate data is accelerating, whether to fine-tune soil health, model crop growth, make site-specific variety decisions or whittle nitrogen management to preciseness. Software programs, online tools and consultancy services turn data into dollars saved and dollars earned. Experts advise farmers to dive deeper into data utilization this year.

UAVs: Your Eye in the Sky

Scouting from the sky still ranks as a top use for UAVs, and image processing and controls will improve in 2017 models. But what are some other ways farmers can put these unmanned aerial vehicles to work? One specialist offers his tips on how to make the most of them this season.


Farmers seeking ways to create bigger soybean yields and better profits should attend one of the 2017 ILSoyAdvisor.com Soybean Summits next month. Illinois Field & Bean highlights some of the session speakers, along with a few of the tips they will provide attendees.

What do the 2016 Election Results Really Mean for Agriculture?

As the 115th U.S. Congress is called into session and the new president is sworn into office this month, Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) is taking a look at some of the key agricultural issues that will be affected by the new administration. Find out what policies and regulations may impact your farm.

A Look Down the Line

The federal GMO labeling law is bound to affect the food supply chain. Read about the Illinois Soybean Association’s work to determine the impact from farmer to consumer.

LEADER PROFILE:

Ken Crowley
B20 Club Member

Ken Crowley has spent nearly three decades with the Village of Oak Park Fleet Services Division. The municipal fleet is part of the B20 Club. Crowley has become an advocate for B20 as an economical and environmentally friendly fuel. Learn more about his passion.
What has Changed in Pursuit of Profitability?

It has been 165 years since Dr. Benjamin Edwards gave John Lea the soybeans he received from a quarantined Japanese ship crew in San Francisco. Lea planted them in his Alton, Ill., garden, and in just a few decades soybeans became a crop with many production and use options. The goal of the pioneer farmers planting the seed was to find ways to make money with a new crop.

Now fast forward to 2017. The tools and management strategies have changed, but the ultimate goal of increasing profitability from soybean production and use remains the same. As we look ahead to the upcoming growing season and beyond, how will we build on what we’re doing?

For starters, I think most farmers and ag professionals would agree technology will play a role. In this Illinois Field & Bean, our cover story looks at the technology that makes “cents” for 2017. You also can get a perspective on what those drones we hear and see really deliver.

Other production tips in this issue come from the speakers for our upcoming Soybean Summits scheduled for Feb. 3 in Effingham and Feb. 16 in Peoria. The one-day educational meetings, funded through the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program, will dive into such topics as sustaining high yields, pursuing the right nutrient management recommendations, accelerating soybean genetic gain and other cutting-edge ideas that might boost our bottom line.

And what about some of the factors that might affect our profitability that we cannot directly control? Issues such as GMO (genetically modified organism) labeling, and how that could alter the way we grow soybeans or even the varieties we grow. Or what about the 2016 state and national election results? What impact will new leadership have on our farm policies and regulations?

I hope Illinois Field & Bean will provide some of the answers you seek for the months ahead. I encourage you to take what you read in the magazine and supplement it with the timely production information you find at ILSoyAdvisor.com. ISA’s online management platform continues to grow, and will house 2017 tips and answers for many soybean challenges.

I welcome your input about the future of soybean farming in Illinois, and the tools you use to help you get to the next level of profitability. Drop me an email at ilsoy@ilsoy.org, and let me know what works on your farm. I would like to think as agriculture changes, we continue to rely on the knowledge that worked for earlier generations and supplement it with new technology.

Have a happy and productive new year.

DARYL CATES
ISA Chairman
The Next Generation of the Checkoff

> BY JARED HAGERT

U.S. soybean farmers came together a generation ago to create an organization to improve our industry. The idea in 1991 was if soybean farmers focused available resources, we could accomplish great things. This idea — thanks to an act of Congress — became the United Soybean Board (USB), which just recognized its 25th anniversary.

This occasion has allowed us, the volunteer farmer-leaders of the soy checkoff, the opportunity to step back, recognize our successes and take a focused look forward at where the greatest possibilities lie for U.S. soybean farmers.

USB’s mission remains the same — improving profit opportunities for all U.S. soybean farmers. Over the past 25 years we’ve seen a lot of changes in our market, and USB has identified the core areas for immediate opportunities for U.S. soybeans within that market and our value chain. We are challenging ourselves with a constant focus of innovation to improve meal and oil along with our sustainability. This type of forward thinking is going to give us a global market edge.

We’re also doubling down on our vision — driving soybean innovation beyond the bushel. This means we are looking beyond just bushel gains and into new ways to capture value on behalf of our fellow farmers. Because we understand that if we are going to improve soybeans and practices to grow them, we have to make sure that the market values our soybeans and the solutions that we are providing our end users.

It’s going to take calculated risk and bold thinking to evolve our value chain. We need to partner with the industry to provide varieties that yield, not only in terms of bushels per acre but in pounds of protein and pounds of oil per acre. Our end users want soybeans that are sustainably produced and provide high quality protein and oil. We need processors to clearly value these varieties and to be transparent in how they value them so farmers are motivated to grow what the end user desires. Through all of this, we need to be demonstrating to these value chain partners how they can win as well.

We believe that USB is well positioned to be a catalyst to spark these changes and push our industry forward. We can bring forward investments to accelerate programs that benefit the entire soybean industry, but always with the U.S. soybean farmer’s benefit top of mind.

It’s hard to know for sure exactly what we will be celebrating as the biggest and best accomplishments another 25 years from now, but we believe we are putting the U.S. soybean industry on a path for the next generation of greatness.

“We are challenging ourselves with a constant focus of innovation to improve meal and oil along with our sustainability.”

JARED HAGERT
Past chair of the United Soybean Board
and a farmer from Emerado, N.D

Jared Hagert is past chair of the United Soybean Board and a farmer from Emerado, N.D. The 73 farmer-directors of USB oversee checkoff investments to maximize profit opportunities for all U.S. soybean farmers. These volunteers invest and leverage checkoff funds to increase the value of U.S. soybean meal and oil, to ensure U.S. soybean farmers and their customers have the freedom and infrastructure to operate, and to meet the needs of U.S. soy’s customers.
Add Data to your To-Do List

5 TIPS for Better Data Use in 2017

> BY JOANIE STIERS

Today’s data management tools finally answer the big “what for?” question farmers have been asking. They also provide use for colorful field maps and USB sticks full of information farmers have collected.

In fact, the demand to collect and use good, accurate data is accelerating, whether to fine-tune soil health, model crop growth, make site-specific variety decisions or whittle nitrogen management to preciseness. Software programs, online tools and evolving consultancy services turn data into dollars saved and dollars earned, and experts are advising farmers to dive deeper into data utilization this year.

“Big data and information management are expanding very rapidly,” says Alan Hansen, University of Illinois Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering professor. “In terms of precision ag, farmers should consider the whole area of information technology and leverage that to make more informed decisions. It already is accelerating quite a lot, and I think it will be amplified in 2017.”

As trendy as data utilization tools seem, though, experts caution that farmers must keep the binoculars off “Farmer Jones.” Rather, take time to review data utilization options through an agronomic lens focused specifically on their own farms. Numerous companies and consultants stand ready to help.

“If they haven’t done so, a lot of companies and websites provide information management services and tools,” Hansen says. “I hope farmers are starting to tap into those. They can make a big difference.”

“I had one grower say, ‘this is what we’ve been asking for, for a long time.’ It almost drove him crazy he had all this information, and what for?”

DARIN KENNELLY
data consultant, Pioneer Encirca
Experts offer five tips for Illinois soybean farmers as they dive into data in 2017:

1. **Use yield maps for more than tile.** Agronomic data consultant Darin Kennelly encourages farmers to pull yield maps off the shelf for more than the tile machine.
   
   “A lot of times I run across a grower with 10 years of yield data, and it is sitting in a binder somewhere on a shelf,” says Kennelly, a certified service agent for Pioneer Encirca. “Let’s take all of those years of information and learn from those fields. I am stretching the data’s use beyond where we put tile and into where we put nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and other inputs.”
   
   Kennelly compares the concept to a home budget. At the end of the year, consumers can track where they spent their money. But unless they use it to set, implement and follow a budget, they never fully realize that information’s potential.
   
   “In today’s economy we do not want to spend over and above on inputs,” Kennelly says. “We are really trying to maximize the dollars on every acre.”

2. **Improve data accuracy for precise decisions.** With some extra calibration time and no extra cash, farmers can make their data more accurate and more useful in 2017. Too often, Kennelly witnesses even the most tech-adopting farmers step backwards. They ignored calibration settings or signal losses for sake of time because they weren’t using information they gathered. That mindset yields bad data.
   
   As a result, Kennelly tosses out half the data from most customer farms due to poor calibrations or lack of data because GPS stopped working.
   
   “Taking time to get that data right is important,” he says. “If we are going to utilize the data, the data becomes important to be accurate. If it is not accurate, we don’t need to use it at all.”

3. **Feed the accuracy addiction.** Accurate signals are addictive, and farmers who could spare a few inches of overlap should consider a higher accuracy signal in 2017 to reduce input costs and improve data collection.
   
   The newer concept of cellular-based delivery of correction offers sub-inch, repeatable application accuracy to more farmers, particularly those who have line-of-sight issues with radio-based correction on their farms, says Leo Bose, manager of AFS marketing for Case IH.
   
   “Looking at guidance correction with overlap control can have some of the biggest returns on investment in a short period of time,” he says.
   
   Sub-inch accuracy provides application and overlap control in the tightest situations, whether applying strip-till fertilizer or planting in narrow rows. Cellular signal also allows two-way wireless data transfer between equipment in the field and the farm office, agronomists or consultants.
   
   “Rather than a USB jump drive, services like AFS Connect two-way wireless transfer allow more efficiency and get yield data back in the home office quicker than done in the past,” Bose says.

4. **Look at big data with a small lens.** Big data may receive a lot of hype, but farmers should examine it carefully in the context of their own farming systems, resources and constraints, Alan Hansen, University of Illinois Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering professor, says.
   
   Kennelly agrees. Big data offer a mix of accurate and inaccurate data, or good and bad data, blended together from many farms, although he says the aggregate data still has its place.
   
   “Big data is good because it has so many data points,” Kennelly says. “On-farm, small data is good because we know whether or not it is good data and we know it is from our farm. Both can be used and both are important, but one without the other can lead to bad decisions.”

5. **Beware when technology trumps agronomy.** In some cases, the technology industry tries to massage agronomic purposes to reach a technology end. Kennelly urges farmers to make technology decisions with agronomy in mind to maximize profitability.
   
   “Technology can be used very efficiently. But sometimes I see technology trumping agronomy. We are in such a technological age that we forget that we really need to understand the basics of agronomy or plant science or how the soil works or how the plant works,” he says. “Just because we can do something doesn’t mean we should do something.”
   
   For instance, some fields perform better without variable-rate seeding. The variable-rate map may look pretty and exciting, but the end result may not make agronomic sense for that particular field.
   
   “Don’t lose the basics of agronomics,” Kennelly says. “When you hear about different technology that can accomplish different goals, make sure it makes sense agronomically for the crop.”
UAVs: Your Eye in the Sky
One Expert Answers the Questions on Farmers’ Minds

If you are yet to launch an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) on your farm, one expert recommends a start-up, scout-worthy model for 2017. Scouting from the sky still ranks as a top use for UAVs, and image processing and controls will improve in 2017 models, says Brett Haas, co-owner of Crop Copter, an Illinois-based UAV and imaging systems provider. He also predicts more agriculture-specific platforms in the future.

How can growers use UAVs on the farm in 2017?

The most basic and common use is scouting. A UAV gives you the ability to quickly and easily get a bird’s eye view of your fields and identify problem areas or patterns that you may not see from the ground. In addition, a number of sensors can be added to a UAV that give farmers the ability to see a plant health map of their fields.

The most popular type of sensor and imagery is Normalized Difference Vegetative Index (NDVI). NDVI imagery allows farmers to view crop health by utilizing near infrared and visual color spectrums of light to measure stress and photosynthetic activity. NDVI imagery has been used in production agriculture since the early 1980s and is primarily captured from satellites or manned aircraft. UAVs give us the ability to capture much higher resolution imagery at any time, as compared to satellites that can take weeks to be in place to capture an image.

What is the biggest misconception about UAVs?

People think they are difficult to operate. UAVs have come a long way in the past few years. We have seen the transition from hobby-grade home-built systems to ready-to-fly out-of-the-box platforms from many different manufacturers. Standard features now include automatic take-off and landing, low-battery return home, numerous automated flight features and even collision avoidance. Most people are good operators after some basic training and a little practice.

How much does a UAV cost?

UAVs range widely in cost. A reliable, ready-to-fly scouting UAV with picture and video capability, a premium case and extra batteries will cost about $1,500. When you add sensors and high-powered image processing software, the cost quickly escalates. Full systems can range from $8,000 to $30,000. The average full system cost in agriculture would be around $15,000.

What legal hurdles do farmers face with UAVs?

To legally fly a UAV, you need a Part 61 Pilot Certificate. During 2016, the FAA approved Part 107 regulations, which require a written test, not a flying test, to certify you can safely operate the UAV and follow FAA guidelines (faa.gov/uas). The process is pretty straightforward for commercial applications in agriculture, and the certification requires review every two years.

What does the future hold for UAV technology?

The possibilities are nearly endless. I think you will see the biggest improvements made in the sensors and software. As we continue to learn more about the information the sensors produce, we will see software and apps that have the ability to identify specific diseases, pests and even weed species. We also will start to see the data that is produced from UAVs become more actionable and integrate with other farm management and modeling software. ■
Don’t miss our DTN/The Progressive Farmer Seminar Series at the National Farm Machinery Show

Key information from the experts farmers trust the most.

Over the years, farmers have consistently turned to us for the information they need to make decisions that optimize success. Stop by our DTN/The Progressive Farmer Seminar Series at this year’s 51st National Farm Machinery Show (NFMS) in Louisville, Kentucky and you’ll see why.

DTN/The Progressive Farmer Business Seminar Series
2016 National Farm Machinery Show
Room 104 “C” South Wing Conference Center

Wednesday, February 15th:

2017 Market & Weather Strategies | 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 16th:

2016 Market & Weather Strategies | 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Grow World Record Corn & Soybean Yields | 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Friday, February 17th:

2016 Market & Weather Strategies | 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Grow World Record Corn & Soybean Yields | 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Get the Lowdown from ILSoyAdvisor.com Soybean Summits

Farmers seeking ways to create bigger soybean yields and better profits should attend one of the 2017 ILSoyAdvisor.com Soybean Summits next month. Funded in part by the ISA checkoff program, the one-day events are set up for agricultural experts to share tools and technology and practical recommendations for increasing yields and the bottom line.

*Illinois Field & Bean* spoke with some of this year’s key speakers to get a preview of the information soybean farmers can expect to learn during the Summits.

**Feb. 3: Effingham Summit Hits Economics, Production Pointers**

**Keller Convention Center • Effingham**

**HOW DO YOU WIN IN TOUGH TIMES?**

Mike Boehlje, distinguished professor of agricultural economics at Purdue University, says it is cliché, but the adage “tough times don’t last, but tough people do” holds more than a little truth. To make sure a farm endures, Boehlje suggests developing standard operating procedures for more precise management and honing business management skills, no matter what the economic future holds. Specifically, he says:

- Expect tight margins through much of this decade, unless soybean demand changes or issues occur with supply.
- Focus on what you can control and being a best-in-class, low-cost producer.
- Position yourself for the challenges and opportunities of this economy. Don’t try to predict the future, instead try to position yourself for success and stay resilient.

**ACCELERATING SOYBEAN GENETIC GAIN WITH CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGIES AND MANAGEMENT**

Kirk Reese, DuPont Pioneer agronomy research manager, outlines major components for accelerated genetic gain. For example, genetic gain grows the soybean oil market with varieties containing altered fatty acid profiles. When these components are combined, they can translate into success:

- Environment classification — remember the crucial role the growing environment plays in yield.
- Solar radiation captured throughout the growing season — you can’t change the amount of sunlight, but you can adjust crop management to take advantage of every ray.
- New technologies — they provide a way to accelerate genetic gain in soybeans.

**PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE HIGH-YIELD SOYBEANS WITH A FOCUS ON MOM**

Howard Brown, Illini FS director of nutrient management and environmental stewardship, says listen to MOM if you are interested in achieving sustainable, high-yielding soybeans. MOM is the foundation of nutrient stewardship and should play a leading role in soybean management:

- MOM stands for:
  - Maximizing nutrient utilization
  - Optimizing yield
  - Minimizing environmental impact
- MOM includes a variety of tools and practices that growers can use to enhance their nutrient stewardship skills and success.

**THE INFALLIBLE SOLUTION FOR HERBICIDE-RESISTANT WEEDS**

Aaron Hager, University of Illinois Department of Crop Sciences associate professor, notes farmers and researchers have been talking about herbicide-resistant weeds for years. But the challenges posed by these species are becoming more prevalent as weed species adapt:

- Herbicide resistance is no longer isolated. It affects additional weed species, more growers and weed management choices.
- Research results suggest growers have several management options, but they must be diligent and diverse in approaching weed management to ensure long-term effectiveness.
- Once the effectiveness of a herbicide tool is lost, it’s gone. Farmers can’t go back.
Feb. 16: Peoria Summit Tackles Markets, Management
Peoria Civic Center • Peoria

AG OUTLOOK 2020: SHORT-TERM BEARISH AND LONG-TERM BULLISH

Steve Johnson, Iowa State University Extension farm management specialist, says farmers should be proud of the tremendous yields achieved in 2016. Now, it’s time to do everything possible to leverage those bushels into dollars, including:

- Watching margins and paying attention to cash flow and cost-cutting opportunities.
- Knowing total cost of production for every field farmed.
- Not letting fear of loss or hope for higher profits later, stop you from taking a profit.
- Having a plan that includes time and price objectives and understanding of cash flow needs.

ACCELERATE AGRONOMIC GAIN WITH CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY AND HIGH-END MANAGEMENT

Kelli Bassett, DuPont Pioneer, field agronomist, says farmers can take advantage of accelerated genetic gain. It’s all about placing the right variety in the right environment to maximize genetic yield potential. She has specific ideas to improve soybean variety and management decisions:

- Environmental classification and influence on soybean yield; field conditions, including planting date and temperature must be part of the selection and management process.
- Managing solar radiation capture throughout the growing season for greater yield; how altered planting dates change future decisions while maximizing sunlight.
- New technologies that accelerate genetic gain in soybeans; compare new varieties against previous seed technology.
- Growing the soybean oil market with varieties containing altered fatty acid profiles.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM SIX SECRETS OF SOYBEAN SUCCESS?

Jason Haegele, crop physiologist at WinField United, says a multi-year, extensive research trial at the University Illinois lends further credence to the idea that tailoring soybean production to specific situations can have significant yield and productivity benefits: The project:

- Identified management practices that have the greatest influence, including soil fertility, variety selection and foliar protection.
- Confirmed while fertility had the biggest effect, practices and decisions tend to be additive.
- Learned what corn growers have already experienced; that advances in crop management practices drive greater yields.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFITABLE SOYBEAN PRODUCTION

Mike Staton, Michigan State University senior soybean educator, says feeding soybeans is usually the second largest production cost. In this era of tight margins, he says it is essential to keep a tight rein on input expenses. He will share insights, research and advice about how growers can cost-effectively nourish crops without sacrificing yield or productivity:

- Take care of soil first so it can support soybean growth and yield.
- Increase profits based on university and on-farm field trial results.

ATTENDANCE IS FREE, BUT REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Both Soybean Summits are free to Illinois soybean farmers, and are held from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a full slate of speakers, food, networking and an on-site trade show. To learn more about the presentations highlighted, ask questions or to register, visit http://www.ilsoy.org/summit. Or register by calling 888-826-4011. Seating at each location is limited. For Certified Crop Advisers, up to seven hours of continuing education credits are available at each summit.
From an early age, Taylor Wildermuth wanted to farm like his dad and grandpa. After earning an associate’s degree, he worked for an area farm for a couple years, earned his bachelor’s degree, and then returned to the same farm full-time.

Luke Crawford spent 12 years in ag recruiting, but missed getting his boots dirty. As a member of the fifth generation raised on the family farm, he wanted to raise his young family on the farm. And he felt responsible for carrying on the family heritage.

Darren Brown wanted to offer his six children, ages 19 to 6, the option to farm, the way his father provided that option to him and his brothers. He always has valued farm work as a way to bring the family together.

In each case, family farms were too small to support another family; a common challenge. Land and input costs coupled with cyclical commodity prices create tight margins.

After considering their options, Wildermuth, Crawford and Brown came to similar conclusions: Raising livestock would help them reach their goals. The process of diversifying with livestock was unique to each farm and situation, but it created labor and income opportunities.

WILDERMUTH: Building to Farm

“Grandpa started raising pigs in 1958, and Dad had his own sows, so I grew up around pigs,” says Taylor Wildermuth, who farms near Osco, Ill. “Dad migrated to contract pig production before I started high school, so I was familiar with those options, as well.”

During a college internship with a pig farm, Wildermuth also learned about different types of barns. In late 2014 and early 2015, he got serious about building his own barn.

“I had been thinking about building a barn for years, given all my experience, but I finally reached the point that I needed to either do it or let it go,” he says.

He talked to farmers with livestock. He met with a couple different banks familiar with financing barns. He attended a county meeting and a session at the Illinois Farm Bureau Young Leaders Conference about diversification, both sponsored by the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program.

“I heard much of the same information over and over, and the idea of a barn kept growing on me,” says Wildermuth. “I appreciated knowing that resources were available to help me. By spring 2015, I decided to move forward with my own barn.”

Because of his understanding of contract opportunities, he chose to partner with an integrator. Experts helped him site the barn and file his Notice of Intent to Construct (NOITC) with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

“I talked to all the neighbors, who were very supportive, in part because I already had good relationships with them,” he says. “The barn was sited in a convenient location for me at a relative’s farm, who understands the value of the manure coming out of it.”

Wildermuth broke ground for his barn in early September 2015, and hosted an open house in November of that year.

“The siting and building process went more smoothly than expected,” he says. “We had no issues with compliance, neighbors or anything else.”

He recently put up a windbreak around the barn with help from consultant Ted Funk, a resource available from the Illinois Pork Producers Association (IPPA) via support from the ISA checkoff program.

Wildermuth continues to work full-time for an area farm, but this barn offers supplemental income.

“I like seeing the pigs every day, and taking care of issues as they arise, with help from my family as needed,” he says. “I don’t know what the future holds, but I am farming and raising pigs, like I’ve always wanted to do.”

“Diversification gave me a spot to make my mark on our farm and it's legacy for our family and community.”

TAYLOR WILDERMUTH, farmer near Osco, Ill.
"I enjoyed helping people find opportunities to grow as a recruiter in the ag industry, but I also wanted to build my family legacy and raise my kids on the farm," says Luke Crawford, who now farms with his father near Arenzville, Ill., and is a member of the current ISA Soy Ambassador class.

"I was working in an office, and farming seemed like a pipe dream," he continues. "I started working as a sales agronomist for a seed company, and we explored many options to expand the family farm, from berries and grapes to chickens."

Crawford acknowledges that he had to be willing to accept risk to join the farm and set it up for the next generation. But diversification with livestock was more affordable than he realized, and the risks were known and understood.

"Dad had an established barn, experience and acres to support more manure, and I grew up with pigs," he says. "We decided to build on what we know we can do well."

Two years ago, Crawford returned to the farm. He immediately invested in their 40-head cow/calf herd and got involved in their 1,800-head wean-to-market pig barn. They recently constructed a 2,400-head pig barn that was first filled in January. With current commodity prices, the livestock sustain the farm and position it for long-term stability.

Partnerships help manage risk. As independent pig farmers, the Crawfords join with several other area independents for collective farrowing, feed, marketing and veterinary support. With the addition of another pig barn, Crawford emphasizes their desire to do their best for their livestock, their land and their neighbors.

"Animal husbandry is a priority for us," he says. "We created a manual to cover all aspects of animal care and do things right.

"We also work closely with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect water quality," explains Crawford. "We regularly test the water coming off our barn site and send it in for testing. If there is a problem, we want to know so we can fix it."

He believes farm expansion offers opportunities for himself, the farm’s full-time employee and others in the community wanting to work in agriculture. He sees the new barn as the first step in diversification, and may revisit other options in the future.

"I didn’t know how I would make farming work. It’s not easy, and the risk is real, but we found a way with livestock," he says. "Diversification gave me a spot to make my mark on our farm and it’s legacy for our family and community."

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LUKE CRAWFORD

Raising livestock allows Luke Crawford to build his family’s farming legacy and prepare for the next generation, including one-year-old Meyer Jane.

"I enjoyed helping people find opportunities to grow as a recruiter in the ag industry, but I also wanted to build my family legacy and raise my kids on the farm."

LUKE CRAWFORD,
farmer near Arenzville, Ill.

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*Fall 2016 comparative nitrogen costs; Dr. Richard Gates, University of Illinois Extension, estimating cash value of applying 3,500-4,500 gal/acre of manure, less application cost.

Learn how you can capitalize on the benefits of livestock production at ILSOY.ORG/ANIMALAG.

Funded by the Illinois soybean checkoff
Diversification Increases Soybean Meal Demand

New barns house livestock and poultry that consume high-quality protein, provided by soybean meal.

**BROWN: Building for the Family**

“As Madison, our oldest daughter, neared high school graduation, we wanted her and all the kids to be able to work on the farm if they wanted,” says Darren Brown, from Magnolia, Ill. “Acquiring more ground was not really possible, but we all love livestock.”

Brown runs a 50-head cow/calf herd. But to create a place for his children to join the farm, he built two pig finishing barns over two years.

“The hog buildings can become their division of the farm, and their livelihood,” he says. “Madison immediately started working when we built our first barn. The second barn was up as she graduated and was ready to work full-time.”

During the siting, permitting and building process, the Browns chose to share their plans with the Putnam County Board, who expressed appreciation for their openness and gave their full support.

“We didn’t want to do anything that wouldn’t add to our community,” Brown says. “We explained our plans and the board was comfortable because they met state guidelines.”

The selected barn site sits far from other houses but near fields that can use manure as fertilizer. The high field location doesn’t allow injected nutrients to runoff or leach, protecting water quality.

The Browns use an additive in the pit to minimize odor. Last summer, they also added trees around both barns with help from Ted Funk and IPPA to cut dust, protect the buildings from the elements and improve aesthetics.

“Because pork production has changed significantly in the past 20 to 30 years, we decided to contract with an integrator,” Brown says. “We have great support to ensure we continue to farm the right way, as we’ve done all our lives.”

The contract relationship provides support and training to manage the technology in their barns and get updated on animal care and treatment. Brown and his daughter both earned Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) certification.

“Our barns have been good for our family, and we are very happy we diversified,” he says. “We enjoy the pigs and cattle. They keep us working together every day, no matter what.”

Two pig barns created a way for Darren Brown to offer his children the option to farm. Oldest daughter Madison, 19, works with him full-time.

“We didn’t want to do anything that wouldn’t add to our community.”

DARREN BROWN,
farmer near Magnolia, Ill.
Building Barons in Illinois: Navigate the Requirements

Building a new barn diversifies a farm, supports the local economy and increases soybean meal demand. The Illinois Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA) ensures that in addition to these benefits, farmers protect natural resources.

“The LMFA is a very good tool for farmers,” says Nic Anderson, livestock business developer, Illinois Livestock Development Group. “It provides a clear path for diversifying a farm with livestock.”

The LMFA sets requirements for how Illinois farmers design and operate livestock barns and manage animal nutrients. It protects the rights of farmers and communities, ensuring that farmers can expand while keeping the neighborhood and community safe and clean.

“Illinois is a large, diverse state, and county zoning and development regulations are not uniform,” Anderson explains. “The LMFA clearly defines barn construction standards for all animal species throughout Illinois. Unless a county has specific regulations, barns planned to meet LMFA requirements can move forward.”

The LMFA includes the option for county boards or commissions to request a public informational meeting to learn more about the project and how farmers will protect water and air quality. However, counties don’t often exercise that option.

“Less than 10 percent of eligible sites hold a public information meeting,” says Anderson. “When meetings are held and barns explained, county board members and commissioners tend to be very supportive, voting in favor of recommending the project move forward.”

For example, 117 Notices of Intent to Construct (NOITCs) were filed in 2016. Of those, 17 percent were eligible for a public informational meeting, and just four meetings were held. Anderson says all those barns were built.

“I recommend farmers planning to build a barn allow plenty of time to plan and cover all details related to the LMFA,” says Anderson. “The process of submitting a NOITC and building the barn is straightforward for projects that show how they follow the LMFA.”

Public Informational Meeting Process

1. **Submission:** Submit Notice of Intent to Construct (NOITC) to Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) for review, describing the project location, size, type and setback requirements.

2. **Filing and notification:** NOITC is filed. With the farmer planning to hold 1,000 or more animal units or use a lagoon as a nutrient management area, IDOA notifies the county board or commission they have 30 days to request a public informational meeting if they want to learn more about the project.

3. **Informational meeting (if requested):** IDOA holds an informational meeting within 15 days of the board’s request. The meeting’s purpose is to ensure that county board members receive accurate information about the barn and help make a recommendation to IDOA concerning its construction and nutrient management area.

4. **County recommendation:** The county board or commission submits a recommendation to IDOA within 30 days of the meeting.

Illinois Livestock Facilities Management Act Criteria

The Illinois LFMA establishes eight criteria that every new barn must meet:

1. Farmers meet any barn or nutrient management certification requirements.
2. The design, location and operation of the barn and nutrient management area take measures to protect the environment.
3. If the county has zoning, the barn location is in an area zoned for agriculture. If the county is not zoned, the farmer follows setback requirements established by the act.
4. Construction plans for the barn or nutrient management area protect any nearby environmentally sensitive areas.
5. Operation of the barn and nutrient management area will minimize the likelihood of any environmental damage to the surrounding area from spills, runoff and leaching.
6. Odor control plans are reasonable.
7. Any change in traffic to and from the farm won’t disrupt existing area traffic flow.
8. Construction or modification to a barn or nutrient management area is compatible with existing community growth (e.g. tourism, recreation or economic development).
Transport Project Grant a Win for State’s Soybean Farmers

An Illinois Container on Barge shuttle service demonstration is in the works, thanks to a $713,000 grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Maritime Administration. The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) predicts the 18-month project will be a big win for Illinois soybean farmers.

“The project will provide container availability for ag customers moving exports between southern and northern Illinois to access the Union Pacific and BNSF rail ramps in Joliet, Ill.,” says Scott Sigman, ISA transportation and export infrastructure lead. “The most likely commodity to move in this corridor is soybeans. ISA celebrates this accomplishment following its long-term commitment to improvements in transportation, logistics and competitive access to markets for farmers all across the state.”

Sigman says the shuttle service will be established to operate on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers between the Will County-Channahon, Ill. area, and Madison County-Granite City, Ill. area, with an option to extend container on barge service to the Gulf of Mexico ports. The project will provide increased access to the container system, especially with the enhanced economic and service opportunities the Panama Canal expansion provides for export of U.S. soybeans and other commodities.

The grant for the project was submitted through sponsorship by America’s Central Port in Granite City, Ill., and underwritten through support of the ISA checkoff program for research and execution in writing the grant. It is one of six marine highway projects awarded grants by the USDOT Maritime Administration. Altogether, the projects will be implemented along waterways of 17 states and the District of Columbia, expanding use of navigable waterways across the country.

Terminal Directory a Playbook of Marketing Options

The ISA checkoff program is funding and producing a new terminal directory — a playbook of sorts describing terminals beyond just grain elevators to include rail and water facilities, which outlines the specifications and capabilities of each location. Once complete, the directory will give Illinois soybean farmers a resource describing different facilities that offer options for selling and marketing soybeans.

ISA Investments Support Soy Water Transport

Approximately 47 percent of U.S. soybeans are exported. Projects like the Illinois Container on Barge Shuttle, with the grant process partly funded through the ISA checkoff program, are crucial to ensuring Illinois farmers can efficiently and sustainably move soybeans from Illinois into export positions. Doing so, allows Illinois soybeans to remain competitive in international markets.

Checkoff COLLABORATION

Calculator Estimates Roadway Costs and Benefits

The beta version of the new Roadway and Bridge Improvement Calculator at www.ilsoy.org/ImprovementCalc is designed to help estimate costs and benefits of constructing or improving roadways or bridges. Created with county engineers, town officials and anyone who prioritizes road and bridge projects in mind, this tool:

• Determines the benefit of making safety improvements by estimating how many crashes investment in improvements will help to avoid.

• Characterizes what the adverse detour impacts would be if the road or bridge was not there.

• Generates a benefit-cost ratio that takes safety benefits, travel efficiency and cost into account.
American voters last fall elected Donald Trump, the Republican candidate, as their 45th President. The Republican Party also maintained control of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. As the 115th U.S. Congress is called into session and the president is sworn into office this month, ISG is taking a look at some of the key agricultural issues that will be affected by the new administration.

TRADE POLICY
Trade agreements are uncertain under a Trump administration. U.S. soybean exports account for 47 percent of U.S. soybean production, so any changes to U.S. agricultural trade agreements will affect global prices and Illinois soybean farmer margins. President-elect Trump opposes the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which is likely to fail without U.S. support. He also has called for fundamental changes to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada. Other trade agreements are still in the works, including the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). ISG continues to follow these discussions and the impact they will have on Illinois soybean farmers.

REGULATION
Illinois soybean farmers could benefit from President-elect Trump’s position against overregulation. Expect fewer new proposed regulations and elimination of many Obama-proposed regulations. In addition, the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule will be either significantly modified or eliminated.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION
President-elect Trump has called for rebuilding highways, bridges and tunnels. This is welcomed relief for the Illinois transportation system, which is aging and in need of repairs to remain competitive for domestic and international markets. ISG long has been advocating for more infrastructure funding and will continue pursuing Congress to approve spending.

RENEWABLE FUEL STANDARD
The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) program, which will be up for debate by energy panels in both houses of Congress in 2017, is likely to be supported by the Trump administration. President-elect Trump is a proponent of energy independence and will support a strong role for biofuels — including soy-based biodiesel — which creates an additional market for Illinois soybeans.

Changes Coming to Illinois General Assembly
Expect some changes in the General Assembly this month. ISG will have the opportunity to work with many newly elected legislators, while saying goodbye to some members who served on the Illinois Senate Agriculture Committee and the Illinois House Agriculture & Conservation Committee. It will be important to help educate these new faces about agriculture in Illinois as we work with them on critical issues, such as extending the Illinois biodiesel tax incentive.

2018 Farm Bill Preview
Discussions about farm bill issues are underway with the new administration, and the focus could shift more toward business sustainability and away from conservation. Trump has been supportive of crop insurance, so indications are that he would focus on improving safety nets for crop producers.

In November, Illinois farmers had the opportunity to participate in three different farm bill input sessions led by Illinois agriculture groups. Ideas taken from these sessions will be critical when talking with legislators this year to ensure farmer voices are represented in farm bill decisions.
ASA Elects Illinois’ Ron Moore to Lead in 2017

RON MOORE, farmer from Roseville, Ill., was elected last month to lead the American Soybean Association (ASA) as president. He is the first president from Illinois since the late Dwain Ford in 2003. Moore previously served as ASA vice president and secretary, and is a past chairman of ISA. He also served on the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) board and is a past chairman of Illinois Council on Best Management Practices (CBMP).

Moore began farming in 1977 after earning his bachelor’s of science degree in business administration and economics from Culver-Stockton College. He raises corn and soybeans, along with feeder cattle grazed on pasture. He and his wife, Deb, have three sons. As Moore begins his term, here are his thoughts about ASA and the issues facing soybean farmers.

Q: What issues are critical to U.S. soybean farmers in the next year?

A: We will have a new administration in 2017, and trade will be a big issue. We will stress how trade is vital to the soybean industry, along with tariff relief for livestock and meat exports. We don’t want a trade war with any Pacific Rim countries or China. We need free and fair trade to maintain our profitability as U.S. farmers, and we don’t want to see any disruptions in trade now that we have seen some strength come back into our soybean prices. In addition, we will pursue asynchronous biotech approval in China and biotech approvals in the European Union.

In Cuba, we will continue to be part of a U.S. ag coalition to support greater ag trade. Cuba is a great country with great people who need our food. We want a two-way street for trade.

Domestically, the farm bill is front and center. We want to start the discussion in 2017 with the goal of having a bill for the 2018 crop year. We want to correct some issues from the last farm bill. ASA is talking with other commodity groups and groups outside of agriculture so we can go to the House and Senate with a united voice. In the regulatory arena, we will monitor Renewable Fuel Standard volumes and push for Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) to be suspended.

Q: How will ASA address some of these challenges and opportunities?

A: ASA has always done a good job advocating about issues that affect soybean farmers. Now we see more regulatory challenges. We will remain up to date and add personnel in our Washington D.C. office to manage the load. We also implemented a new strategic plan in August. We will equip farmer directors to advocate effectively about specific issues.

Q: What is your primary goal as ASA president?

A: My goal is to follow our strategic plan and make sure we have enough resources to do what we need to do in Washington, D.C. Our work takes dollars, and I want to be sure those stakeholders who invest in ASA see value in that investment and we all share mutual benefits.

Q: How can Illinois farmers help you advance the industry through ASA and ISG?

A: Farm bill hearings were sponsored in Illinois by commodity groups last fall. I encourage Illinois farmers to complete any surveys and call their Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) directors this month and share their feedback. ISG will draft policies from that grassroots input to share in March during the ASA resolutions process. It is beneficial for us all to work together.
A Look Down the Line

How the Federal GMO Labeling Law Will Impact the Food Supply Chain

Biotechnology is a divisive topic. On one side are many scientific and health agencies, farmers and food companies who recognize genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as safe. On the other are consumers who want transparency in the food supply chain, which includes GMOs.

To help bridge this gap, a compromise in the form of a federal GMO labeling law passed July 29, 2016. Consumers will soon know whether a product contains GMO ingredients through on-package label texts, symbols, QR codes or through a website. By July 2018, USDA is tasked with setting the standards and compliance. In the meantime, ISA is looking at how the new law will impact the food supply chain – from one end to the other.

The Farmer

Farmers seem to be on the opposite end from consumers. But, that doesn’t mean they’re not critically connected. At least, that’s how Stan Born, soybean farmer from Dunlap, Ill., and ISA director, sees it. Says Born. “But most consumers don’t have that firsthand knowledge. A national labeling law is an opportunity to ensure consumers get the facts while not adding the unnecessary burden to farmers of a patchwork of state laws.”

“I see the direct benefits of biotechnology on my farm.”

Until the final standards come out in 2018, farmers can only speculate on the impact. Depending on the end market, farmers will be required to comply with whatever policies customers create.

The Manufacturer

A lot of decision making will fall on individual food and beverage companies in how they communicate about GMO ingredients. It is something they already are working on, says Roger Lowe, executive vice president of strategic communications for the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA).

“Our SmartLabel (smartlabel.org) technology puts detailed information about thousands of products right at the fingertips of consumers.”

“Food and beverage companies fully embrace the importance of making available to consumers the information they want about their products, including GMOs,” says Lowe. “Our SmartLabel (smartlabel.org) technology puts detailed information about thousands of products right at the fingertips of consumers. We estimate that by the end of 2017, more than 34,000 products will use the technology.”

As manufacturers wait for specifics, each is working through how to comply with the new law. SmartLabel is just one example of how food and beverage companies are already responding to growing consumer demand for more ingredient information.

The Retailer

Food retailers like Jewel-Osco serve as direct lines to consumers, and will be there to help them with the transition, says Mary Frances Trucco, Jewel Osco communications manager.

“Jewel-Osco supports the national GMO labeling standards. We anticipate customers will have clear and consistent product ingredient information to help them make informed purchasing decisions,” she says. “For consumers who are unable to access GMO information via an electronic disclosure like a website or QR code, we will assist them in finding that information.”

“We anticipate customers will have clear and consistent product ingredient information to help them make informed purchasing decisions.”

The Consumer

Research shows consumers desire more transparency in knowing how their food is made. According to the Center for Food Integrity’s 2015 Consumer Trust Research, half said they want the information on the package and one-fourth said through a third-party website.

“I think it is great to be informed about where food comes from.”

Ellen Krasin, mother of three and former Illinois Farm Families (IFF) City Mom, has mixed feelings about the new law. “I think it is great to be informed about where food comes from,” she says. “However, I think consumers who have not had the experiences similar to those I had through IFF might use the informative label as a warning sign.”

Through the GMO labeling law, consumers will be getting information they have been seeking, but the potential for extra costs at the checkout line is still unclear.
Illinois Soybean Leaders Named to National Roles

Five past and current Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) board members have been elected to national ag positions in the past few months. ISA has found having such strong leadership is important to project success for increasing utilization of soy from Illinois.

Ron Moore, Roseville; past ISA chairman, was elected president of the American Soybean Association (ASA). Moore previously had served as vice-president. ASA works with the Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) to advocate for U.S. and Illinois soybean farmers on policy and trade.

Dan Farney, past ISA director from Morton, was elected to the United Soybean Board (USB) executive committee. The 73 farmer-directors of the USB oversee checkoff investments to maximize profit opportunities for all U.S. soybean farmers.

Current ISA director Roberta Simpson-Dolbeare, Nebo; was elected secretary of the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA). USFRA is an organization founded in 2010 to unite agriculture and earn consumer trust in today’s farming and ranching practices.

Past ISA board member Mike Cunningham, Bismarck; was elected vice president for the National Biodiesel Board (NBB). With nearly 200 member companies, NBB is the leading U.S. trade association representing biodiesel and renewable diesel.

Current ISA at-large director Jeff Lynn, Oakford; was elected to the National Biodiesel Foundation (NBF). NBF addresses issues such as cleaner air, greater economic development for rural communities, and enhanced national security through energy independence.

Six Secrets Findings Coming Soon

ISA historically has funded an array of soybean-oriented research projects conducted by universities and private contractors in Illinois. In 2016, two ongoing research projects were led by Fred Below at the University of Illinois — Six Secrets of Soybean’s Success and Evaluating the Application of Nitrogen on Soybeans. Below just completed five years of research evaluating key management practices on soybeans, and a summary of his results will be published in a booklet that will be distributed in Illinois Field & Bean this spring.

Below also completed the second year of looking at when to apply nitrogen on soybeans, and in what form, what time and at what rate. He will complete the third and final year of the research in 2017. Below already has discovered that soybeans will respond to supplemental nitrogen under certain circumstances while not necessarily shutting down the plant’s ability to fix its own nitrogen. Final recommendations will be released in 2018.

Double-Crop BMP Studies Underway

The ISA checkoff program, with supplemental funding from the United Soybean Board, supported field research on double-crop soybeans in 2015 and 2016. The objective of the research was to develop more up-to-date best management practices for double-crop soybeans. More current best management practice information should be released this year before double-crop planting. Current double-crop practices articles can be found at www.ilsoyadvisor.com.

ISA Wins Governor’s Export Award for Agriculture

ISA last month was awarded the 2016 Agricultural Business Exporter Award, presented by Illinois Lt. Gov. Evelyn Sanguinetti and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Office of Trade and Investment. The award is given for outstanding export achievement in the field of agricultural products, services and technology. ISA increases the volume of Illinois soy exports through hosting trade team visits, one-on-one consultations, trade missions, market research and development, and technical assistance. The award was voted on by a panel of experts and presented by the lieutenant governor at the Union League of Chicago. ISA previously won the Export Award for Agriculture in 2011.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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<th>Event</th>
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<td>ILSoyAdvisor Soybean Summit</td>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>Effingham, Ill.</td>
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<td>ISA Board Meeting and ISG Policy Session</td>
<td>Feb. 9-10</td>
<td>Bloomington, Ill.</td>
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<td>ILSoyAdvisor Soybean Summit</td>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
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<td>ISA Board Meeting</td>
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<td>Commodity Classic</td>
<td>March 2-4</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
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Attention Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) Members

ISG Policy Session

All ISG members are invited to attend the ISG Policy Session, Friday, Feb. 10, 2017, at the ISA office located at 1605 Commerce Parkway, Bloomington, IL 61704, from 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.

The purpose of this session is to allow ISG members and the ISG Board of Directors to review the current American Soybean Association (ASA) Resolutions for changes and amendments that will be presented at Commodity Classic in San Antonio, Texas, in March 2017.

The resolutions are available for viewing at www.ilsoygrowers.com by clicking on “Download 2016 ASA Resolutions” at the top of the home page. You also may contact Judy Smith at smithj@ilsoy.org or at 309-808-3612 and she will email you the file.

ISG Annual Meeting of Members

Pursuant to Article 3, Section 3, of the Bylaws of Illinois Soybean Growers, notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the members of the Illinois Soybean Growers will be held Friday, Feb. 10, 2017, from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Illinois Soybean Association office located at 1605 Commerce Parkway, Bloomington, IL 61704. All ISG members are invited to attend.

The purpose of the annual meeting 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.

ISG members are invited to attend lunch from 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. Contact Dustin Scott at scottd@ilsoy.org or 309-808-3603 by Feb. 1, 2017, if you plan to attend.

DATED THIS 13TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2016

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Illinois Soybean Growers Secretary

Corporation Partners

**EXECUTIVE**
- ADM
- DuPont Pioneer
- Monsanto BioAg

**PRINCIPAL**
- Cargill
- Monsanto/Asgrow

**CORE**
- Bunge
- Dow AgroSciences
- Syngenta

**ASSOCIATE**
- Beck’s Hybrids
- Consolidated Grain & Barge Co.
- StollerUSA

**AFFILIATE**
- Bayer CropScience/Credenz

**SUPPORT**
- Akron Services
- BASF
- FarmServer
- Rabo AgriFinance
- U.S. Borax
- Rumbold & Kuhn
- The Andersons Inc.
- URSA Farmers Co-op

To learn more information about ISA’s Corporate Partner’s Program visit ilsoygrowers.com

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Register in 3 easy steps:

1. Visit VoiceforSoy.org
2. Click “Join Us”
3. Complete the registration form


Funded by membership dollars.
ISA Honors Industry Leaders

The ISA checkoff and membership programs honored six industry leaders with awards of excellence last month. The winners were nominated and chosen by the ISA board in animal agriculture; transportation; yield, composition and profitability; freedom to operate and organizational excellence and leadership.

- **Thomas Titus**, pork producer from Elkhart Ill., was the ISA Excellence in Animal Agriculture winner. ISA presents the award to an individual who has helped ISA increase worldwide consumption of Illinois soybeans and soy products and who assists with retaining and growing Illinois’ animal agriculture industry.

- **John Greuling** was the ISA Excellence in Transportation winner for his efforts to help develop, expand and secure greater efficiencies and transportation opportunities for soybean products. Greuling is currently president and CEO of the Will County Center for Economic Development (CED) and Will County Economic Development Foundation.

- **Jason Bond** was the ISA Excellence in Yield, Composition and Profitability winner. The award recognizes an individual who identifies, develops and influences production solutions that provide farmers with a competitive edge. Bond is a plant health professor at Southern Illinois University Carbondale and director of the Illinois Soybean Center at SIU. His research and teaching focus on disease management in row crops.

- **The Council on Best Management Practices (CBMP)** received the Excellence in Freedom to Operate Award, acknowledging efforts that help Illinois soybean farmers protect and open markets and public policies that eliminate farming roadblocks. CBMP is a coalition of ag organizations and agribusinesses that assists and encourage adoption of best management practices to enhance the sustainability of Illinois agriculture.

- **Marcia Willhite**, formerly of Illinois EPA, and **Warren Goetsch**, **Illinois Department of Agriculture**, were the ISA Excellence in Leadership award winners for their efforts to develop and establish a global competitive position for Illinois soybeans and soybean products through the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy.

By the Numbers

- **5 PERCENT**
  - The amount of Illinois corn, wheat and soybean acres planted to cover crops. Farmers cite top reasons for planting cover crops as soil quality improvement, erosion control, nitrogen preservation, pest control and phosphorus preservation.

- **56%**
  - The percent of Illinois cropland where soil tests were conducted prior to fertilizer applications.

- **2 MORE LAND**
  - The percent of Illinois farmers who do not currently plant cover crops.

- **600,000 ACRES**
  - Total Illinois cover crop acres nearly doubled between 2011 and 2015; with a 223 percent increase in cover crops on tile-drained and 166 percent increase on non-tile-drained acres.

  - The number of Illinois corn acres using the maximum rate to nitrogen strategy to determine application rates that were added between 2011 and 2015. Use increased from 70 percent of acres in 2011 to 81 percent of corn acres in 2015.
Ken Crowley has lived in the same house in Oak Park, Ill., since he was four years old. Deeply rooted in his community, Crowley has spent nearly three decades as an employee of the Village of Oak Park Fleet Services Division. The municipal fleet is part of the B20 Club, sponsored by the ISA checkoff program in partnership with the American Lung Association in Illinois, to recognize fleets running on biodiesel blends of 20 percent or greater. Crowley brings true passion and a desire to improve the community to his position as superintendent of fleet services. He has become an advocate for B20 as an economical and environmentally friendly fuel.

**HOW DID THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK DECIDE TO MAKE THE SWITCH TO BIODIESEL?**

Oak Park always has been at the forefront as a green community. We place a high priority on environmental stewardship. We have a compressed natural gas station; we run many hybrid vehicles; and everything from street sweepers to snow plows run on B20. Ten years ago, a fire destroyed the storage building that housed a large portion of our vehicles. We were forced to rebuild our entire fleet. We knew environmentally conscious fuels like B20 were the way the industry was moving, so it was a natural decision to power our new fleet with biodiesel fuel.

**WHAT DOES YOUR BIODIESEL FLEET LOOK LIKE TODAY?**

We run 64 fleet vehicles on biodiesel and use about 33,000 gallons of B20 annually. Our fleet includes emergency and first-response vehicles like fire engines, so it is critical for us to have a reliable fuel source. B20 meets that need. We’ve had no trouble finding B20 at a lower cost than straight diesel, and the reduction in emissions is clear. But it is not just about the tangible benefits. It is about protecting the environment for the younger generations in our community.

**HOW DO YOU SHARE YOUR B20 EXPERIENCE WITH OTHERS IN YOUR FIELD?**

I am a member of the Municipal Fleet Management Association and speak to members about our biodiesel use. I work to disprove misconceptions, such as issues running older vehicles on B20 or fuel coagulating in winter. I want people to know biodiesel performs year-round.

**HOW HAVE YOU INFORMED OAK PARK CITIZENS ABOUT THE USE OF BIODIESEL?**

Before we made the switch to biodiesel, there was little knowledge about alternative fuels. From the start, we prioritized educating the community. Open houses at our facilities allow us to introduce our biodiesel commitment, tout the low-emission vehicles in our fleet, and let people know how biodiesel directly benefits them. Education is our best asset. We need to keep informing the public about what biodiesel is and how it benefits environment and community.

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHERS CONSIDERING BIODIESEL?**

Talk to others and get your questions answered. The B20 Club has a lot of great resources and information, so it is a good place to start. Contact operators who currently use biodiesel and ask about what has worked for them. If you have a question or problem, there’s probably someone out there who has already encountered it. It is better to learn from somebody else’s experience.
It pays to have the right connections.

SoybeanPremiums.org

Want to make more profit off your soybeans? Have your people connect with our people! SoybeanPremiums.org makes it easy for soybean growers to find premium programs and buyers. So take a look at the latest program opportunities in your area – food-grade, identity-preserved, non-GMO and watch your profits grow.
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