COVER STORY
Expanding Opportunities
After more than eight years, the Panama Canal expansion project is nearly complete. Once it opens in June, Illinois soybean farmers can expect to be one of the beneficiaries. Find out what the impact may be and what additional changes might further expand soybean transportation.

Study Makes the Case for Weight Limit Increase
A recent soybean checkoff-funded study by the Soy Transportation Coalition (STC) concluded that increasing truck weight limits to as much as 97,000 lbs. would not only help meet volume demands, it would result in substantial efficiency gains for moving soybeans and soy products. Learn more about the possibilities and how it may affect Illinois soybean farmers.

MANAGEMENT MATTERS MYTHBUSTER
Can you Effectively Scout at 60 MPH?
Not likely. Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) Soy Envoys share some of the most popular beliefs about crop scouting and their suggestions about how to best handle them.

Technology is Center Stage at 2016 Soybean Summit
Using the right technology to collect and analyze production data is just as important as choosing the right seed and field treatments. Get some of the top tips industry experts shared during the Illinois Soybean Summit held earlier this year in three different locations.

Foodie Focus: Farmers Must Meet Influential Consumers at the Table
Thanks to digital media, information sharing is easier. The power that information holds has shifted to millions of everyday consumers who influence peers with a simple post or tweet. Consider foodies. The influential group is having a serious effect on today’s consumers, and you can read how Illinois Farm Families is approaching the foodie movement.

New England may be Next Frontier for Illinois Biodiesel
You might expect biodiesel to be a popular product in Illinois, but in New England? Biodiesel enthusiasts say new markets are opening up in the Northeast, and Illinois’ significant soybean production and favorable biodiesel infrastructure may open doors for the state’s industry.
Where Can You Get Involved?

I consider myself fortunate to work in the agriculture industry. I would bet most farmers feel that way. Even Abraham Lincoln recognized that “no other human occupation opens so wide a field for the profitable and agreeable combination of labor with cultivated thought as agriculture.” Lincoln noted, “I know of nothing so pleasant to the mind, as the discovery of anything...and how vast and how varied a field is agriculture for such discovery.”

The Illinois Soybean Association’s (ISA) checkoff program is an initiative Illinois farmers successfully use to pursue profitable agricultural discovery. For decades, we have coordinated projects that led to measurable results for farmers at the state and national levels.

And while Illinois soybean farmers have served as leaders within the industry, we need more farmers to engage in our work for future effective programs to flourish. I invite all Illinois farmers to consider where you can get involved with advancing our livelihood and our industry.

Getting involved could be as simple as attending field days this summer that broaden your farm knowledge and allow you to be an example of progressive management practices in your community. You can spend time sharing farm facts with consumers in your local grocery store, or educate groups of school children who might visit your farm to learn about food production.

Getting involved can go much deeper, too. We always are interested in identifying soybean farmers who are willing to serve as ISA directors and help make decisions about soybean checkoff and membership investments. Other leadership opportunities include our Soy Ambassadors program, the American Soybean Association DuPont Young Leaders program and more.

On the advocacy front, Illinois Soybean Growers has developed the Voice for Soy Advocacy Champions program. Advocacy Champions share action alerts and key issues with other Voice for Soy users, so that more Illinois soybean farmers can make their opinions heard by legislators and regulators. Read about Stan Born’s decision to become a champion and engage others in advocacy in this issue of Illinois Field & Bean.

This issue contains articles about other critical areas where Illinois soybean farmers have taken the lead to pursue profitability. Be it transportation where ISA has connected private and public funding partnerships, cutting-edge production research, or new uses for biodiesel, we are involved with advancing Lincoln’s philosophy that the profitable, agreeable combination of labor with cultivated thought leads to discovery. Where can you get involved? •

DARYL CATES
ISA Chairman
The U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) strives to add the voices of farmers and ranchers to important and provocative conversations about food where their perspective would otherwise be missing. This often means joining events about tough issues or going to places that have a natural slant against conventional agriculture.

Almost always, when we empower farmers and ranchers to tell their stories about everything from sustainability to animal welfare, we succeed in changing the conversation or at least neutralizing attacks on modern production practices taking place in these forums.

I often make new contacts at these types of events. It is rare that I leave a modern food forum about issues critical to our industry with 27 new Facebook friends who genuinely can’t wait to spend more time with our farmers and ranchers. But this is the scenario that occurred at FoodFluence, an event that brought together the top 35 registered dietitians (RDs).

USFRA sponsored this event because we did our homework and realized the attendees were the RDs who national media contact as sources on their articles and who have huge consumer impact through their social media activities. The event took place in London, England, and we knew it was the type of commitment many of our affiliates and industry partners couldn’t attend. And, most importantly, farmers’ voices needed to be present.

As part of our sponsorship, we had a special panel discussion focused on USFRA’s sustainability research and a Q&A featuring USFRA Chairwoman and Wisconsin soybean farmer Nancy Kavazanjian and RD Charlotte Rommereim, a fifth-generation South Dakota family farmer and pork producer.

I was a bit nervous given some of the topics discussed and hoping farmers and ranchers would get a fair shake. But the format — basically sequestering these top influencers with speakers for four days in a location that made it impossible to check out — was really a great opportunity.

The experience left me inspired and hopeful because I learned that farmers and ranchers share something in common with RDs: a belief in real science when it comes to food choices. Unlike some of our other influencers and audiences, RDs turn to science first and emotion or fads second to get the information they need to make choices and guide others. And because of that, our presentation and conversations over the course of the conference resonated with them.

USFRA is right on track in working and partnering with the RD community. So here is our strategy moving forward — and activities we should think about:

1. Get registered dieticians (RDs) on the farm. We’ve got to bring leading RDs whose voices influence others onto conventional farms to see how things are done.
2. Create an ongoing connection to RDs. Social media opportunities can connect these key influencers with real farmers and ranchers in conversations and sharing content.
3. Celebrate their content. Farmers can curate and applaud RD content that gets it right and can help spread that information far and wide.
4. Include RDs as partners when possible. Let’s look for opportunities to make RDs advisors or leaders in conversations with farmers on key messages.
5. Share our science and research with them aggressively. This is one audience in which we can lead with science and be successful. They want to better communicate with consumers, too.

Farmers and ranchers are kindred spirits with registered dietitians. We all care deeply about science and healthy, nutritious food choices for everyone, not just hype.
EXPANDING Opportunities

Revamped Panama Canal Widens Illinois Soybean Reach

> BY SHANON LINDEROTH

The end is in sight for the $5 billion Panama Canal expansion project. On March 23, project authorities unequivocally proclaimed the new lane and locks connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans will open for business June 26, 2016. And that’s good news for Illinois soybean farmers.

Panama authorities say the expansion will double the capacity of the 102-year-old canal, adding a third lane of ship traffic that can accommodate vessels significantly larger than those previously able to navigate the 50-mile-long system. It has been under construction since 2007.

Completion is a big deal for the U.S., since 70 percent of total cargo passing through the canal originates in, or is destined for, the United States, according to Panama Canal Authority data. Furthermore, when ships use the canal to transport goods from the Gulf Coast to Asia, the trip is 16 days shorter than via the eastern route through the Suez Canal.

“The expanded canal will substantially increase the carrying capacity of this transportation route, as well as that of the vessels themselves,” confirms Jeff Lynn, soybean farmer from Oakford, Ill., and Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) director. Lynn toured the expansion project last fall, and was impressed by its size and scale. “It is massive. Since the canal will be able to handle much larger ships, we will be able to deliver more soybeans more quickly to our trading partners.”

The additional, higher-capacity lane and locks also potentially mean less waiting time for ships to pass through the system. Lynn notes increased traffic capabilities should reduce travel time by several days, which also lowers transportation costs and increases delivery efficiency.

“U.S. agriculture is positioned to be one of the immediate beneficiaries of the Panama Canal expansion, with 58 percent of U.S. soybean exports and 67 percent of corn exports shipped from ports along the Gulf Coast,” says Mike Steenhoek, executive director of the Soy Transportation Coalition, which is partially funded by the ISA checkoff program. “It’s good to finally see the light at the end of the tunnel for this project.”

When ships use the Panama Canal system to transport goods from the U.S. Gulf Coast to Asia, the trip is 16 days shorter than via the eastern route through the Suez Canal.

LOWER COSTS MAY INCREASE PRICES

Once operational, Illinois soybean farmers should see tangible influences to their bottom lines. Ocean freight costs have tremendous bearing on how grain handlers deliver goods to customers.

“The benefits stem from being able to load a greater cargo volume on ships for export,” explains Ken Eriksen, senior vice president at Informa Economics. “As you load more cargo on a single vessel, the freight rate drops because you spread your cost over a larger volume.”

In addition, Eriksen says changes in the canal toll rate structure will likely have an impact on overall freight cost, pushing it down in many cases. Depending on the market and other conditions, freight savings may range from a few pennies to as much as $0.25 per bushel.

Both scenarios likely mean more money in farmers’ wallets. “The ability to capitalize on more revenue-producing freight with costs spread over a larger volume has a positive impact for all growers,” says Steenhoek. “We operate in a commodity industry that — with a few notable exceptions — does not offer significant product differentiation. The ability to shave cost from the transaction goes a long way toward improving U.S. competitiveness.”
EFFICIENCY MEANS MORE OPPORTUNITY
Increased capacity and passage for larger ships mean U.S. merchandisers can draw soybeans from greater distances away from the Mississippi River than before the expansion. Instead of the direct-draw area encompassing about 70 miles from the river, the draw could increase to 120 or even 160 miles inland, giving more farmers more market opportunities.

"Ultimately, Illinois growers gain more marketing options with larger ships," says Eriksen.

Draw distance also is influenced by inland waterway, rail capacity and road system efficiency, adds Steenhoek, so prices farmers receive will still be tied to both distance and efficiency, not just benefits of ship size.

"For exported soybeans, farmers benefit when the transportation chain is efficient. They receive a higher percentage of market value for their product," he says.

U.S. ENHANCES INFRASTRUCTURE
Even with the perceived benefits of Panama Canal expansion, analysts warn U.S. infrastructure capacity and efficiency must not be taken for granted. When transportation is more cumbersome, shippers will still respond by offering farmers less for their soybeans. Aging roads, bridges and rail lines, unscheduled inland waterway lock closures, uncertain funding for regular maintenance and other factors mean Illinois soybean farmers potentially could face crop delivery challenges that could mar the positive momentum created by the expansion.

Lynn says the ISA checkoff program is leading efforts to facilitate transportation infrastructure improvements to head off problems. He encourages more farmers to get involved.

"The logistics chain is only as strong as its weakest link," says Steenhoek. "While the expanded Panama Canal strengthens the transportation link with international trading partners, we must make commensurate investments in corresponding domestic links. If we don’t, then we simply shift bottlenecks. Fortunately, the expansion lit a fire among some segments and policymakers to improve infrastructure. It has been a galvanizing factor in improvements to port facilities."

For instance, exporters have increased loading capacity and updated ports to accommodate the larger ships. A number of U.S. ports have enhanced access, increasing dredging depth for deeper-draft vessels. Many more are in the midst of upgrades or at least in the planning stages.

"The market is driving these changes," says Eriksen. "But keep in mind that the canal expansion opens the same doors for our competitors, like Brazil."

In the long run, Lynn believes the canal expansion project offers Illinois soybean farmers more marketing options and increased transportation efficiency and lends credence to the argument for devoting necessary resources to enhancing domestic transportation infrastructure. Doing so should allow U.S. farmers to reap greater benefits with improved global competitiveness.

FROM WHAT TO WHAT?
Prior to expansion, the Panama Canal had two sets of locks to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Each lock could accommodate cargo ships 965 feet long with a maximum draft of 39.5 feet (the depth of the ship below the waterline). Those dimensions allow for bulk cargo ships up to 75,000 deadweight tons (DWT), including the ship, crew, ship stores and cargo.

The new, third set of locks are much larger and can handle ships 1,200 feet long with 97,000 DWT and a maximum draft of 50 feet. That means about 84,000 tons of soybeans can be carried on a single ship instead of about 65,000 tons.

To create the new lane, the expansion program included:

- Construction of two new sets of locks — one on the Pacific side and one on the Atlantic side. Each has three chambers. Each chamber has three water-saving reutilization basins.
- Widening and deepening existing navigational channels in Gatun Lake.
- Deepening Culebra Cut, which is part of the canal connecting the lake to the oceans.

Visit http://micanaldepanama.com/expansion/ to track the project’s progress.
Study Makes the Case for Weight Limit Increase

The volume of demand for freight by truck is projected to rise substantially, increasing from 18.5 million tons in 2010 to 27.5 million tons in 2040, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. One proposal gaining traction as a viable solution to help meet those freight volume demands is increasing truck weight limits from 80,000 lbs. to 91,000 or as much as 97,000 lbs. in some areas, while moving semi-trailers from a five-axle configuration to six axles.

A recent soybean checkoff-funded study by the Soy Transportation Coalition (STC) concluded that increasing truck weight limits to as much as 97,000 lbs. would not only help meet volume demands, it would result in substantial efficiency gains for moving soybeans and soy products.

Reduced fuel consumption and costs, carbon dioxide emissions, miles traveled and overall number of trips all were cited among benefits that could be realized by an increased weight limit. The STC study also evaluated the potential impact six-axle trucks would have on motorist safety and infrastructure wear. Motorist safety would actually be enhanced and infrastructure wear would be reduced when compared to the use of today’s 80,000 lb. truck loads.

The study shows addition of a sixth axle provides trucks more braking capacity, enabling six-axle, 97,000 lb. trucks to achieve the same stopping distance as five-axle, 80,000 lb. capacity trucks. And the 5.9 million reduction in overall miles traveled by using trucks with increased cargo capacity serves to reduce the number of potential accidents and casualties involving semis.

“ISA supports the increase in weight limits because the action would significantly benefit Illinois farmers and create efficiencies within the Illinois economy,” says Paul Rasmussen, soybean farmer from Genoa, Ill., and ISA director. “Investing checkoff funds to ensure transportation systems are upgraded to effectively serve Illinois agriculture remains a priority issue for ISA.”

Rasmussen notes not all local or county roads and bridges could support truck weight limits as high as 97,000 lbs. Solutions are being explored that may include development of a specific truck corridor consisting of roads able to withstand the additional weight.

ISA HELPS COUNTIES ANALYZE PRIORITIES

Even with the perceived benefits of Panama Canal expansion, ISA supports rural infrastructure and transportation efficiencies through county prioritization studies. Several counties have participated in the program since its introduction in the fall of 2013, including Peoria, McLean, Jackson, Tazewell, Rock Island and Logan.

Kurt Bialobreski, professional engineer (PE) and professional traffic operations engineer (PTOE) with Hanson Professional Services, the firm conducting the analyses, says the prioritization studies provide counties the benefit of independent analysis and project benefit-cost ratios, as well as funding options to move bridge and roadway improvements forward.

“We run very detailed analyses to calculate the benefits of each individual project — from increased efficiencies, lack of adverse travel and improved safety, as measured against project costs, to determine our recommendations for prioritization,” he says.

The studies are proving beneficial for participating counties. Bialobreski says each county enters the effort with an established priority list for improvement projects. But insight gained has usually resulted in at least one or two shifts, based on insight from the assessments.

“Reprioritization of projects sometimes results from funding options we are able to identify,” he says. “Other times it’s a result of the precise benefit-cost ratios we develop for each project.”

ISA is investing in additional resources designed to help more counties analyze and prioritize roadway improvement projects. A new web-based software program is in development that will calculate benefit-cost ratios based on data inputs. That program is expected to be available to Illinois county transportation engineers by August 2016. ■

TRUCK WEIGHT LIMITS

= 183 bushels more soybeans per load

BY 2022 THAT COULD SAVE

602,000 TRUCK TRIPS

1.7 MILLION GALLONS FUEL

$4 – $8 MILLION IN FUEL COSTS

PLUS, the 6th axle helps distribute weight more equally, relieving stress on country roads & bridges*

ISA Recognizes 2015 Yield Challenge Award Winners

ISA recognized 2015 Yield Challenge winners prior to the Illinois Soybean Summit in Peoria, Ill. The Yield Challenge is funded by the ISA checkoff program. Honored were Crop District Contest, 100-Bushel Challenge and Side-By-Side Sponsor Plot winners.

100-BUSHEL SHOOTOUT
Champaign County farmers Robert and Jason Lakey produced 108.27 bushels per acre, a new Illinois state record yield and only the second independently verified 100-plus bushel-per-acre soybean yield in Illinois. The Lakeys were awarded $5,000.

CROP DISTRICT SHOOTOUT

- **DISTRICT 1**: First, Roger Cogdal with 92.13 bu./acre; and second, Alan Madison with 91.48 bu./acre.
- **DISTRICT 2**: First, Ralph and Don Walters with 85.54 bu./acre; and second, Dan Arkels with 85.41 bu./acre.
- **DISTRICT 3**: First, Grant Strom with 88.73 bu./acre; and second, Brad Hunt with 81.02 bu./acre.
- **DISTRICT 5**: First, Robert and Jason Lakey with 108.27 bu./acre; and second, Joe Klein with 95.26 bu./acre.
- **DISTRICT 6**: First, Randall Williamson with 85.76 bu./acre; and second, David Wessel with 81.4 bu./acre.
- **DISTRICT 7**: First, Mark Niebrugge with 87.02 bu./acre; and second, Chad and Kyle Kuenstler with 82.91 bu./acre.
- **DISTRICT 8**: First place, John Weberpal, Sycamore, 10.97 percent increase; and second, Chuck Diehl, Maple Park, 8.12 percent increase.
- **DISTRICT 4**: First place, John Breedlove, Manito, 9.22 percent increase.

SIDE-BY-SIDE SPONSOR PLOT

- **DISTRICT 2**: First place, John Weberpal, Sycamore, 10.97 percent increase;
  Second place, Chuck Diehl, Maple Park, 8.12 percent increase.
- **DISTRICT 4**: First place, John Breedlove, Manito, 9.22 percent increase.

To sign up for the 2016 Yield Challenge, contact Jim Nelson at 309-825-7542 or jnelson@ilsoy.org. Visit soyyieldchallenge.com for complete rules and information.

---

SOY TALK

Prepping soybean fields in a corn-soybean rotation

Soybeans offer many economic and agronomic benefits and complement corn production when used in a rotation.

“While each rotation is different and each field may have different needs, there are several reasons to consider a corn-soybean rotation,” says Justin Dillon, Mycogen Seeds commercial agronomist.

- **Reduce disease risk.** Crop rotation can decrease the risk of certain crop diseases by breaking the cycle of many overwintering, yield-limiting diseases.
- **Manage pest populations.** Corn-soybean rotations can break pest pressure and protect the efficacy of Bt traits.
- **Rotate weed control.** Using multiple modes of action reduces the risk of herbicide-resistant weeds and can decrease production costs.
- **Supply nitrogen (N).** Corn residue immobilizes higher concentrations of soil N than soybean residue. Corn following soybeans benefit from more available N.
- **Improve soil health.** Rotating corn and soybeans improves soil aggregation, especially in no-till systems, which can improve soil health and soil tilth.

Consider soil inoculants when rotating to soybeans. When a field comes out of a corn rotation, as a general rule of thumb an inoculant is not needed if soybeans have been grown in the field within the past three to five years.

“While an inoculant isn’t always necessary, it is never going to harm your yield. It’s just additional insurance,” Dillon says. Besides using inoculants, Dillon says, growers should consider how to manage crop residue in the field. Corn residue can be tricky when planting soybeans.

“When you plant into crop residue, there is concern about what we call ‘hair pinning’ — when bits of crop residue become trapped in the seedbed,” he says. “You need to have a good furrow opener to ensure proper seed-to-soil contact for germination.”

When it comes to seed treatments, Dillon says, the most important thing to understand is that treatments provide a protective coating for the soybean seed, potentially allowing growers to plant earlier and protecting seeds planted into cooler soils.

For more tips on successful soybean production and other agronomic topics, visit Mycogen.com/Agronomy.

Brought to you by:

Mycogen Seeds
YOU WERE MEANT FOR THIS.

When all the planting, feeding and protecting grow into more than just your yield. More than a job well done — it’s a realization. That this is what you were meant to do. We’re with you. It’s what Mycogen Seeds is all about. A shared passion for the life of your land. For the life that you love.

Visit Acres of Possibility.com to maximize the potential of your corn and soybeans.
Can You Effectively Scout at 60 MPH?

**ABSOLUTELY NOT:** Planting soybeans early is simply the first step in setting the stage for a good season, but your ultimate success hinges on how you manage your acres and protect yield potential. And that can’t be done with a drive-by in the pickup truck once a week. *Illinois Field & Bean* spoke with several CCA Soy Envoys (see page 11) to get their best recommendations to maximize 2016 soybean yields and profits.

**IT’S IMPORTANT TO ACTUALLY WALK YOUR FIELDS.**

**TRUE:** “Getting your boots in the dirt is the most important aspect to scouting and the only way to spot problems early,” says Adam Day, CCA Soy Envoy, Northern Partners Cooperative in Ottawa, Ill. “By the time you see damage or stress from the road, you have risked losing yield.”

Catching problems early is critical, agrees Harold Reetz, Ph.D., CCA Soy Envoy and owner of Reetz Agronomics in Monticello, Ill. “Get in the habit of scouting early and follow through all season. Everyone is busy, but you need to get out and watch what is going on in your fields. Get out there every week, if possible, to catch issues before they get out of control,” he says.

**SCOUTING ONE FIELD WILL REPRESENT ISSUES IN EVERY OTHER FIELD.**

**FALSE:** One field is one field. While a single field may serve as a sentinel for larger issues, it also may simply harbor a localized challenge. Don’t treat one field as though it holds the answers for your entire soybean acreage.

“Each field is its own unique environment and may have different rotational and management histories,” says Terry Wyciskalla, CCA Soy Envoy, soil fertility specialist and owner of Wyciskalla Consulting, LLC, Nashville, Ill. “This means growing environment, weed, insect and disease pressure. Monitor all fields to gain a true sense of upcoming management needs.”

**KNOWING WEEDS ISN’T CRITICAL AS LONG AS YOU CAN GET IN WITH A SPRAY.**

**FALSE:** It may be tempting to treat fields without identifying specific weeds, but that strategy fails over the long haul. Instead, “Select the proper herbicide chemistry and follow label instructions,” says Wyciskalla. “The days of non-selective herbicide use are gone due to the number of weed species that have or are presenting herbicide resistance.”

**AS A FARMER, YOU HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS.**

**FALSE:** You know more than anyone about your field history, but you can’t be everywhere or know everything. “Talk to your retailer or agronomist throughout the growing season. They are experts, and they talk to many farmers. They often have a better sense of what is happening in the area as well as what’s working and what’s not,” says Day.

Reetz also recommends farmers document what they see while scouting to help get the most from outside advice when needed. “We all walk around with smartphones. Take photos and note GPS coordinates to help diagnose problems,” he says. “Photos may help diagnose problems and GPS coordinates help you return to the same spot in the field later if follow-up is needed.”

“Get in the habit of scouting early and follow through all season. Everyone is busy, but you need to get out and watch what is going on in your fields,” says Harold Reetz, CCA Soy Envoy.

---

**YOU CAN ASK AN ENVOY**

Need additional help? If you have soybean management questions, let one of ISA’s CCA Soy Envoys help. Ask a question at ILSoyAdvisor.com any time, and someone will promptly respond with expert advice. CCA Soy Envoys is an ISA checkoff program.
To help Illinois soybean farmers throughout the state increase yields and profitability, the ISA checkoff program and Illinois Certified Crop Adviser (ILCCA) Program are working again this growing season to share timely, relevant, local information on the ILSoyAdvisor.com website.

“CCA expertise is an ideal complement to the information ISA strives to provide. The ILSoyAdvisor platform serves as an extension for the messages that CCAs already push out,” says John Longley, soybean farmer from Aledo, Ill., and ISA Production Committee chair.

**LOCAL FOCUS**

ISA and ILCCA last year recruited soybean experts, and dubbed them the CCA Soy Envoys. Several CCAs provided regular content for the ILSoyAdvisor.com website, and a new group of CCAs — including some returning envos — are slated to do the same during 2016. The goal is to target production challenges and opportunities as they present themselves in season.

In addition to written blog posts, some CCA Soy Envoys will develop audio and video posts based on what they see in their local areas and make specific recommendations for farmers. The focus on local comes from each one tracking developments every day.

**MANAGEMENT CONCENTRATION**

Longley notes that a key element of the ILSoyAdvisor platform’s evolution is a direct result of last year’s CCA Soy Envoy collaboration. To provide more value to not just the state’s farmers, but also CCAs, the ISA checkoff program initiated a series of webinars on soybean management topics, each offering one Continuing Education Unit (CEU).

“Illinois has more certified crop advisers than any other state,” says Tom Kelley, ILCCA chairman and agronomy service representative with Syngenta. “The webinars help CCAs maintain their licenses and progress professionally. Increased knowledge from the webinars helps our CCAs assist more farmers with the latest information from other respected experts.”

**2016 CCA SOY ENVOYS**

- LANCE TAROCHIONE  London Mills
- ADAM DAY  Ottawa
- STEPHANIE PORTER  Jacksonville
- MIKE WILSON  Allendale
- HAROLD REETZ  Monticello
- TERRY WYCISKALLA  Nashville

**“YOU’RE ALREADY CROSSING THE FIELD, SO GET THE MOST OUT OF IT.”**

DAN ARKELS, Yield Champion

It isn’t about hitting record yields—progressive growers like Dan achieve consistent high yields across their production acres with solutions from StollerUSA.

Farm Different™ like Dan at stollerusa.com/farmdifferent.  

- BIO-FORGE™ | STIMULATE™ YIELD ENHANCER
- SUGAR MOVER™ | X-CYTE™ | STOLLERUSA.COM

Always read and follow label instructions.
Using the right technology to collect and analyze production data is just as important as choosing the right seed and field treatments. More than 600 soybean producers attending the Illinois Soybean Summit held in three locations earlier this year learned these valuable insights and more. The event is hosted by the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) and funded in part by the Illinois soybean checkoff program.

“In today’s challenging markets, it’s more important than ever to know what strategies increase yield and profitability. With this year’s theme of ‘Mission: Yield,’ the Summit presented information to help farmers determine what strategies and inputs will pay off for them,” says John Longley, soybean farmer from Aledo, Ill., and ISA Production Committee chair.

Here are some of the top tips shared at the three locations Illinois farmers can use in 2016.

ACQUIRE GOOD RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLS
Given lower prices and tightened margins that are taking income back to 1998-2001 levels, Nick Paulsen, University of Illinois specialist in risk management, finance and policy affecting commercial agriculture, questions whether land and non-land costs will adjust. Farmers are exposed to significant financial risk and need to accurately determine their cost of production and cash flow needs.

Paulsen discussed soybean production budgets, non-land costs and rental arrangements during his session at the Summit. Now more than ever, he emphasizes farmers should focus on good risk management tools that include insurance and commodity programs.

CAPITALIZE ON OPPORTUNITY
The agriculture industry is going through a major economic transition now following the great commodity super cycle that fueled much of the income growth in the recent past, says David Kohl, Virginia Tech University ag economist. He discussed ways farmers can position during the shift.

“Your success will be positioning your business to capitalize on opportunity,” he says. For example, those who saved money in recent good years are well-positioned to capture used farm equipment deals.

Kohl encourages farmers to have solid business plans, cut living expenses and know, “success in repositioning is not doing one thing 1,000 percent better. It is in doing a thousand little things one percent better,” he advises.

CONSIDER THE VALUE OF DRONES
Chad Colby, of Colby Ag Tech and Central Illinois Ag, says it’s time for farmers to invest in the latest smartphones, tablets and drones. He recalls when computers were first considered cutting edge. He says his father thought he was crazy for suggesting they get one. Colby compares that time with today, when the conversation on many farms is whether it’s time to get a drone. And the answer, says Colby, is yes.

For example, in 2014, he thought one cornfield looked great. He determined at the end of the season that two treated areas yielded an extra 30 bushels per acre. “We really had no way to get quick data from drones then to determine whether we needed to do something differently. We can now,” he says.

MANAGE DATA MORE EFFICIENTLY
Kip Pendleton of The Pendleton Group agrees technology is valuable. His presentation included information about advanced technologies that make farming easier and more efficient. Although he says only about half of today’s farmers have auto-steer tractors, such systems will soon become standard.

Technology will continue to evolve far beyond the current level. Pendleton says there will be a, “system of systems,” with a number of components working together to provide data and analytics farmers need. Tractors and other equipment will “talk” to each other. Sensors in the field will send information to the main system, while satellites will shoot a daily picture of farms and send texts when something changes.

Pendleton predicts as technology grows increasingly complicated and good data becomes a requirement, more farmers will contract with companies offering high-tech information management systems.
UNDERSTAND THE GLOBAL MARKETS
In discussing the soybean market outlook, DTN’s analyst Darin Newsom indicated many of the conflicting signals in the marketplace will take awhile to resolve. Using numerous detailed charts, he explains the U.S. and South America are the top two soybean producers with production continuing to go higher. When other countries choose which country to buy from, Newsom says they have to consider the strength of the U.S. dollar and weakness of South American currencies. While many analysts are forecasting a gloomy 2016-2017 for soybean farmers, he believes there is a glimmer of hope.

PREPARE FOR A WARMER SUMMER
DTN’s Bryce Anderson discussed the 2016 crop weather outlook, along with the final stages of crop season and harvest in South America. Anderson predicts more typical summer temperatures in 2016. “This cool pattern that we had during the last two summers has likely come to an end,” he says.

EXPECT CONTINUED SUPPLY MARKET
Bryce Knorr, analyst with Penton/Farm Progress, focused on finding profits in 2016. He talked about factors that could drive rallies in the coming year, reasonable price expectations for soybeans and strategies for selling crops and buying inputs that should be considered. Knorr discussed key trends, such as more-than-adequate supplies, bearish fund positions in the market, China turmoil and global deflation, a waning El Niño, tighter margins, a tattered safety net and strong dollar. “We are in a supply market. We don’t have demand markets,” he says.

ONE PARTICIPANT’S TAKE ON TIPS
Kyle Winklemann, soybean farmer from Tallula, Ill., says he plans to implement many of the new ideas he learned during the Summit. He was glad the program included plenty of information about weed and pest control and other basics.

“I did get affirmation I am doing some of the right things. At the end of the day, you have to try it on your own farm. You come here and get ideas, and I think I’ll come again.”

KYLE WINKLEMANN
soybean farmer from Tallula, Ill.

CHECKOFF FACT: SUMMIT STRATEGIES STILL AVAILABLE
Illinois soybean farmers who missed the Summit may find videos of keynote presentations and breakout sessions at ilsoy.org/summit. The Illinois Soybean Summit is funded by the ISA checkoff program.
There’s not a best way to define “foodies,” other than by the interests and passions that connect them.

Some spend time in their kitchens creating classic meals with a new twist, perhaps using trendy ingredients promising this health benefit or that.

Others visit restaurants, ordering unique entrees to test rave reviews, ultimately wanting to share their opinions about the experience.

Or, maybe they’re young chefs. As they work on new recipes, they think through the best way to tastefully share the story behind what they’ve made.

But before foodies sit down at their kitchen tables, pick up their forks at restaurants or test new creations, they take pictures. They upload photos, write short statements to accompany them and then hit the share button. Photos receive hundreds, maybe thousands, of social media “likes.”

ANATOMY OF A FOODIE

Thanks to digital media, information sharing is easier. The power that information holds has shifted to millions of everyday consumers who influence peers with a simple post or tweet.

And so foodies have emerged. They are commonly identified as a subgroup of the millennials, a generation that’s expected to outspend boomers by 2017, according to a Berglass + Associates study. No hard and fast rules exist to identify these foodies, but a couple of key factors lead to success — a well-established social following and an eye for visual storytelling.

Foodies care more about where ingredients came from than their parents did at the same age, finds Center for Culinary Development research. They learn about food online, says a study from consumer research firm Hartman Group. Half of consumers surveyed said they use sites like Twitter and Facebook, while another 40 percent learn about food via websites, apps or blogs.
CONNECT FOODIES TO THE FARM

As a member of the Illinois Farm Families (IFF) coalition, the ISA checkoff program recognizes the foodie movement as an opportunity. ISA has learned foodies are hungry for information about where food comes from, and Illinois farmers can lead in that discussion. IFF enhances the highly sought-after food experience by telling the back story of how food gets to the table.

It’s a food-first, farm-second approach: Meet these influencers where their interests are, and remind them their meal began with an Illinois farmer.

CONNECT OUTSIDE THE BOX

Conversations start where influential consumers are: social media. Through Instagram, IFF connects with Chicago-area foodies by sharing interesting food photos and farm stories.

On Twitter last month, IFF sponsored #Foodiechats, which connects farmers to an online community of foodies, chefs, dieticians and nutritionists to answer questions about food and farming. During an hour-and-a-half online chat, #Foodiechats averages a reach of 1.2 million and engages hundreds of foodies in online conversations.

From there, conversations are extended to live events. IFF partnered with #Foodiechats for its April Sensory Overload event in Chicago. More than 500 food enthusiasts indulged their five senses as they explored Chicago’s culinary scene. IFF’s booth featured novelty food items, interactive displays and murals that inspired photo opportunities.

ENGAGEMENT IS CRITICAL

Farmers need to remember influential consumers, like foodies, sit at the other side of the table. They crave the story food tells, yet can only describe it based on what they believe to be true.

Through IFF, Illinois farm families develop touch points to interact with the foodie community, share stories and create an environment for deeper conversations about where food starts: on Illinois farms with people who care about delivering a product worthy of a shareable experience.
This season, Illinois farmers can plant the newly released Asgrow® brand Roundup Ready 2 Xtend™ soybeans. Built on Genuity® Roundup Ready 2 Yield® technology, farmers can expect the same exceptional yield performance with this new product lineup.

The Asgrow brand is offering the largest selection of Roundup Ready 2 Xtend soybean products for planting in 2016, with 25 products spanning all eight maturity groups. Included are 11 products for Illinois farmers.

Asgrow soybean products demonstrated strong performance last season and for 2016, the Asgrow lineup features the latest genetics that combine high yield potential with defensive traits to help farmers continue to maximize performance.

Erika Parker, technical agronomist for the Asgrow DEKALB® brands in Illinois, cited three key Asgrow soybean products designed to stand up to disease pressure:

- **AG25X6 Brand** – Offers strong yield potential with strong agronomics, including strong tolerance to white mold and brown stem rot
- **AG2632 Brand** – Outstanding yield potential over multiple years and environments with good overall agronomics
- **AG2933 Brand** – Yield performance that has earned sustained position in the lineup, with an exceptional Phytophthora package

“Our Asgrow soybean product lineup has proven products with good performance across various conditions,” said Parker. “They have a good track record of emergence and strong stand establishment in a wide range of environments.”

To learn more about the exciting lineup of new Asgrow Roundup Ready 2 Xtend products planned for introduction in Illinois this season, visit www.asgrowdekalb.com or contact your Asgrow DeKalb dealer.
NEW ENGLAND MAY BE NEXT FRONTIER FOR ILLINOIS BIODIESEL

> BY BARB BAYLOR ANDERSON

You might expect biodiesel to be a popular product in Illinois, where many soybeans are grown and much of the biodiesel is produced. But in New England? Biodiesel enthusiasts say states in the Northeast continue to expand their interest in the opportunities biodiesel presents.

"New England may be the next frontier for biodiesel made in Illinois," says Rob Shaffer, soybean farmer from El Paso, Ill., and Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) director. The ISA checkoff program invests in the promotion of biodiesel. "We have plants in Illinois that already send their biodiesel down the Illinois River and to the East Coast. These companies tell us the tax structure and abundance of feedstock in Illinois make it a great place to build production."

New York already has caught onto biodiesel's benefits. Tom Verry, National Biodiesel Board (NBB) director of outreach and development, coordinates the annual Big Apple Bioheat tour to New York City, which several Illinois farmers have attended. Hundreds of millions of gallons of biodiesel is blended with heating oil and vehicle diesel to accommodate the two percent biofuels blend standard that began in 2012. State lawmakers are considering upgrading the vehicle fuel standard to B5 and increasing the standard five percent every five years until it reaches B20.

"Biodiesel is big in the Northeast and growing each year," says Mike Cunningham, soybean farmer from Bismarck, Ill., and NBB representative. "Ferries in New York and other states are testing biodiesel and other states may follow suit. That is dollars in our pockets. Higher soybean prices result when we use more soybean oil, and livestock producers get cheaper soybean meal."

MARINE APPLICATIONS A GOOD FIT

Andrew Davison believes other states will follow New York’s lead. Davison is one of the owners of Cape Cod Biofuels based in Sandwich, Mass. Davison and his partners launched the company in 2008 after researching the process of creating biodiesel to run trucks more efficiently and economically. They collect some 450,000 gallons of cooking oil annually to recycle into biodiesel, and are the only ASTM-certified biodiesel producer in Massachusetts.

"We were in construction, and the economic downturn hit our business hard. At the time, biodiesel was cheaper than diesel so we began to produce it. Customers tell us it burns cleaner and requires less maintenance," says Davison. "Now we are fueling boats, on- and off-road equipment like excavators and logging outfits. We mostly do B20 blends."

Cape Cod Biofuels sells 3,000-4,000 gallons per week and serves up to 2,000 different customers each year, including Giant Bluefin Tuna fisherman Tyler Macallister, who is captain of the F/V Cynthia C featured on "Trev Gowdy’s Monster Fish" TV series. The custom-built Duffy boat is powered by a 3126, 420-HP Caterpillar diesel engine.

"I've got a pretty good working knowledge of biodiesel and do 90 percent of the maintenance on my boat myself. It provides benefits to the engine, especially for lubricity and cleaning my engine fuel system," says Macallister. "B20 blends are a good option for boats. I am a strong believer in its use, and I am working to convince other boaters to use it, too."

"I anticipate biodiesel will gain more widespread acceptance," adds Davison. "We have gone from 250,000 gallons per year capacity to a million gallons, and plan to grow our retail business and promote biodiesel use for home heating systems. We do source soybean oil in our production. Who knows? Someday maybe we will source our soybean oil from Illinois only."

----

B20 CLUB PROMOTES BENEFITS IN CHICAGO

The B20 Club recently initiated a sponsorship of the Chicago Area Clean Cities coalition (CACC) to help promote biodiesel’s environmental, economic and sustainable benefits. The coalition’s 150 members’ use of biodiesel last year had the same effect as removing 53,000 cars from the road. The B20 Club is a checkoff-funded program jointly sponsored by ISA and the American Lung Association in Illinois that recognizes Illinois-based fleets running on B20.
Voice for Soy Advocacy Champions
Multiply Farmer Voices

When legislation is on the floor or regulatory comment periods are open, Illinois soybean farmers can advocate for agricultural issues that affect their businesses. To multiply the voice in such efforts, Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) is taking its Voice for Soy initiative one step further with the Advocacy Champions program. When action alerts are distributed, these champions share the alerts and key issues with other Voice for Soy users so even more Illinois soybean farmers can make their opinions heard among legislators and regulators.

Who are these Champions? They are soybean growers who are passionate about advocating for their farms and industry issues. Stan Born, soybean farmer from Dunlap, Ill., is one of them.

**ISG: WHY DO YOU COMPLETE VOICE FOR SOY ACTION ALERTS?**
**BORN:** I’ve come to realize that we farmers are a small community. A lot of decisions are made in Springfield and Washington, D.C., and I want to ensure our voices are heard by the decision makers who impact our business.

**ISG: HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE DIFFERENCE ADVOCACY CAN MAKE?**
**BORN:** I have had the opportunity as an ISG director to engage with Illinois representatives on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. In one instance, I really felt like we stated our case. However, the representative came back and explained other constituent perspectives he was hearing. While he appreciated us sharing our opinions, he wasn’t going to move forward on our side.

Even though it didn’t end in our favor, it drove home for me that the representative was willing to have a conversation. That’s when you know you are beginning to develop a relationship, which can pay dividends down the line.

Advocacy isn’t a one-and-done action. Consistently engaging with those who represent us builds respect and credibility so that the next time around, the outcome may be in our favor.

**ISG: WHAT IS ONE REASON YOU’D TELL A FRIEND TO TAKE ACTION FOR VOICE FOR SOY?**
**BORN:** It is pretty simple: If you don’t speak up for your farm and on your own behalf, someone else will — and they might not get it right.

Learn more about Stan Born and other champions on www.voiceforsoy.org/champions.

---

“Advocacy isn’t a one-and-done action. Consistently engaging with those who represent us builds respect and credibility so that the next time around, the outcome may be in our favor.”

— Stan Born
Illinois Farmer, Soybean Checkoff Featured by Transport Group

The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) recently produced a video series titled, “The Role and Value of Transportation in America’s Economy.” The goal was to profile the logistics system of the U.S. soybean industry, and featured Phil Bradshaw, Illinois soybean farmer and former chairman of the United Soybean Board, and Mike Steenhoek, executive director of the Soy Transportation Coalition.

The series will be shared with state departments of transportation throughout the United States. The video can be viewed at http://202489b.trb.org/NCHRP20-24(89)B/.

USSEC Releases Non-GMO Soy Food Bean Acreage Study

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) has released a study on non-GMO soy food bean acreage, which reveals 3.5 million non-GMO soy food bean acres were grown in the U.S. in 2015. This was the second year for the study, conducted with soy food bean exporters and soybean farmers. The research provides overseas soy food target audiences with quantifiable annual information about the U.S. soy food bean crop.

The study found in 2015 that soybeans were used for a number of end use food purposes, including: 47 percent for tofu, 21 percent for soy milk, 16 percent for miso and 13 percent for natto. The study also shows 27 percent of non-GMO soy food beans produced in Illinois were contracted by exporters in 2015. USSEC encourages U.S. non-GMO soy food bean exporters to share the information with customers and use it in overseas marketing efforts.

European Feed Group Explores Sustainable Soy

The U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) was standardized with the European Feed Manufacturers’ Federation (FEFAC) Soy Sourcing Guidelines through the independent International Trade Centre (ITC) customized benchmark tool in March. The Soy Sourcing Guidelines facilitate mainstream market supplies of soybeans which are produced in accordance with baseline environmental and social criteria. They provide transparency to European Union feed associations and member companies that wish to transition to sustainably produced soy.

The SSAP was created in 2013 by U.S. soybean groups. The protocol helps ensure U.S. soy is produced following a strong set of conservation regulations combined with wide adoption of best management practices by a majority of U.S. farmers. The SSAP verifies that U.S. soy is sustainably produced and aims to meet growing consumer demand for environmentally, socially and economically produced commodities. More than 110 million bushels of U.S. soy have been exported and certified under the SSAP program during the last crop year.

Corn Growers Receive Conservation Grant

The Illinois Corn Growers Association has been awarded a grant to create a conservation program to engage farmers in best management practices. The Precision Conservation Management (PCM) program, a multi-million dollar grant funded by USDA, will work to protect water quality and prevent nutrient loss. Jeff Jardoe, who accepted the grant on behalf of corn growers, describes PCM as an “innovative public-private partnership service program created by farmers. The idea is simple: we believe the main reason farmers elect to not implement conservation practices on their farms is due to uncertainty about how it will affect their financial bottom line. The PCM program combines farmers’ financial goals with their conservation management interests,” he says. More information can be found at www.ilcorn.org/pcm. The program also is supported by the ISA checkoff program.

States in which non-GMO Soy Food Beans were Contracted by Exporter/Contractors in the 2015 Study and Percent Contracted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Contracted</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: USSEC 2015 STUDY

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ISA Board Meeting
> June 24 · Bloomington, Ill.

ASA Board Meeting and Soy Issues Forum
> July 7-15 · Washington, D.C.

USB Meeting
> July 19-22 · Minneapolis, Minn.

ISA Annual Meeting
> July 27-29 · Springfield, Ill.

ILSoyAdvisor Regional Field Days
> Aug. 2-4 · Hinckley, Seymour and Benton, Ill.
Kate Olson has been a registered dietitian (RD) for 15 years and also is a certified diabetes educator (CDE) based in Dekalb, Ill. She serves as assistant director of Northern Illinois University’s (NIU) Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) program in the Family, Consumer and Nutrition Department. Students in the program must complete an internship to develop skills in the areas of medical nutrition therapy, food service management, life-cycle nutrition and community nutrition before they can take their RD exams. She also works in the community as a nutrition educator.

Olson has a long-time interest in health and wellness, having experienced her own personal health issues and those of family members. She now works to educate students and consumers about nutrition issues based on her personal, school and work experiences.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN ILLINOIS FARM FAMILIES (IFF)?

A fellow dietitian told me about the IFF program, and it sounded very interesting. I attended my first farm tour in March at Alan Adams beef operation near Sandwich, Ill. The tour was great. I learned I know very little about farming, and enjoyed the cooking demonstration. It also was a good opportunity for me to determine if our dietetic interns would find such tours worthwhile in helping them further their food production knowledge.

WHAT DID YOU DETERMINE ABOUT INVOLVING YOUR INTERNS IN FARM TOURS?

It is very helpful for anyone who plans to work in the food industry to learn where food comes from, who produces it and how it is processed prior to reaching consumers. These tours are an opportunity to educate students firsthand and allow them to ask questions about agriculture.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE KEY ISSUES YOU LEARNED ABOUT ON THE TOUR?

We hear concerns from consumers all the time about the food they eat, including concerns about GMOs, antibiotics and hormones. Often, we do not have the answers to these questions. Participating in this tour allowed us to get much more information and understand it. It also provided the base for gaining more knowledge about farming issues, terminology, animal welfare and more. Often, we see only how the media reports on these issues. Actually visiting with farmers helped us see the other side of the story and prepare students for employment.

WHAT TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP SHOULD DIETITIANS HAVE WITH FARMERS?

It should be a partnership between the people who grow food and those who advise consumers on how and what to eat. Dietitians encourage consumers to choose fresh food over processed food, and this gives us a better understanding of how fresh food is grown so we can help consumers better understand it. With better understanding should come greater consumption.

WHAT ELSE CAN ILLINOIS SOYBEAN FARMERS DO TO CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE BASE?

Science-based education opportunities such as more tours can help increase our understanding of food production. Access to newsletters, webinars, magazines and other resources that we can share with consumers and students to answer questions would be helpful. Illinois Farm Families is a great program to reach out to all types of people and concerns. Farmers should continue to interact with the public any way they can to educate consumers about food issues. ■