

NOVEMBER 2020

Illinois **Field & Bean**

A PUBLICATION OF THE ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION



**Driving Soy
Demand,
Literally**



Say CONGRATULATIONS

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF ASA

ASA PRESIDENTS FROM ILLINOIS

W. E. Riegel
Tolono, 1920-21

W. L. Burlison
Urbana, 1929-30

J. C. Hackleman
Urbana, 1936-37

Joe Johnson
Champaign, 1943-44

Walter W. McLaughlin
Decatur, 1946-47

Albert Dimond
Lovington, 1955-57

Carl G. Simcox
Assumption, 1959-60

Harold Kuehn
Du Quoin, 1971-73

Allan Aves
Kirkland, 1979-80

George Fluegel
Leroy, 1985-86

David Erickson
Altona, 1996-97

Dwain Ford
Kinmundy, 2002-03

Ron Moore
Roseville, 2016-17

From a strong beginning with a visionary group of farmers, to a global leader in the advancement of the soybean industry, the Illinois Soybean Association applauds the American Soybean Association on 100 years of farmer-focused success. The long list of Illinois leaders that have served as ASA presidents over this past century shows the clear commitment that our state has to this vital national organization. ASA has been at the forefront of a century of incredible growth for soy and we look forward to creating a bright future together!





CONTENTS

NOVEMBER 2020 Volume 1 Issue 1

6 Finding your voice for soy

Working together to make lawmakers into educated agriculture advocates.

10 Every farmer has a story

Get to know Mike Marron, a fifth-generation farmer, state representative, and Illinois Soybean Growers member.

12 1,000 customer touchpoints in four days

How the U.S. Global Trade Exchange used virtual connection to keep buyers engaged and meet global demand.

14 Driving soy demand, literally

Why the case for biodiesel advantages must begin at home with soy growers.



18 Cover crop goals

A closer look at how some farmers are customizing cover crops for their production systems.

22 The show must go on

Despite pandemic challenges, the Agribusiness Management Program (AMP) Summer Webinar Series sees record number of participants.

25 Partner perspective

IL Corn's, Rodney Weinzierl, tells us why corn and soy are more than just a great crop rotation.

26 New board member

Join us in welcoming new ISA board member, Buck Hill.

DEPARTMENTS

4 CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

5 CEO'S MESSAGE

8 VOICE FOR SOY

9 EDITOR'S MESSAGE



COVER: Elliott Uphoff, ISA District 10 Director and Secretary, fuels his farm vehicles with higher biodiesel blends.
Photo credit Illinois Farm Families.



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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Grow it, make it, use it



DOUG SCHROEDER | ISA Chairman

Are you familiar with the game, *Bop It*? It is a toy you hold in your hands that gives you varied commands to immediately pull, twist, or hit it. If you don't do it quickly, the game is over.

Soy-based biodiesel is no game. But like *Bop It*, you have to grow it, make it and use it to win.

Illinois farmers grow the soybeans. Illinois biodiesel plants make the fuel. But how many farmers join state fleets, school buses and others in performing the last command, to use it?

Our farm started using biodiesel in our grain trucks about 10 years ago. We were fueling the trucks at a local convenience store. I had no idea the fuel was a biodiesel blend until the fuel driver, who delivers diesel to our farm, told me. Once I knew we were already using it with no problems, we started having biodiesel delivered to the farm. I never questioned that decision.

I am not the only soybean farmer who has made the switch. The cover story in this issue of Illinois Field & Bean is about using biodiesel on the farm. It shares perspectives from other farmers who fuel their trucks and machinery with biodiesel. You can learn not only why they are proud to use a product made from the crop they grow, you'll also get tips for being able to use it yourself.

We use B11 in all our trucks and farm equipment and are looking to keep increasing our biodiesel blend.. Like the farmers featured, I save money using the state biodiesel tax credit and support our industry.

If that doesn't convince you to use it, think about the impact of climate change we have seen during the last several months – fires in the West, hurricanes in the Gulf, and the destruction of the Derecho in Iowa and Midwest farm fields. Switching to renewable fuels with a better health and environmental profile than diesel can be part of a larger carbon reduction strategy and address climate change. We are still a long way from having electric vehicles as part of the solution.

One of ISA's signature checkoff-funded initiatives this fiscal year is to increase the use of B20 (diesel fuel blended with at least 20-percent biodiesel) in Illinois. ISA wants to be a market leader in not only sustainable soybean production and profitability, but also in finding ways to increase Illinois soybean use. Biodiesel helps fuel our economy.

Soybeans are grown in Illinois, made into biodiesel here and used with a state tax credit. The Illinois biodiesel industry has grown from less than 20 million gallons per year in 2003 to more than 200 million today, supporting more than 2,000 Illinois jobs. It creates \$145 million in household income and \$3.4 million in farm income, and has increased the price of soybeans by 63 cents per bushel.

I mentioned Illinois Field & Bean. As you can see, we are relaunching the magazine with a new look. It's a "back to our roots" approach in content, too, and we look forward to tackling issues farmers face every day. Send me your feedback at ilsoy@ilsoy.org.

Back to our roots

Harvest is always a busy, exciting time on the farm, and the same goes for those of us working on the association side of things, too. Seeing a full-growing season come to completion and the bounty of a good soybean crop remind us all of the reasons why we do what we do.

For me, personally, this harvest season has felt like a time for reflection. As I've traveled the length of the state this year visiting farms, I've had the opportunity to watch soybeans changing from week to week. And as I've watched those rows of soybeans grow and head into the harvest season, it's not lost on me that the Illinois Soybean Association is changing and growing, too.

For the past nine months, I have had the fortunate opportunity to be your new CEO. During this time, I have forged new partnerships with our counterparts at Illinois Corn, renewed relationships with the Illinois and national ag family, a new strategic plan and mission and vision statements, and a slate of new fiscal year projects that have once again put the farmer and their interests back at the heart of all that we do – it's been nine very busy, but very rewarding months. All of this goes without saying that it happened during a global pandemic and challenges to our world, our communities, and our industry in ways we never could have imagined even just a year ago.

When I first came on the job, I committed to our board ISA would get back to our roots. We would focus on the Illinois soybean farmer – all 43,000 of them – and we felt so strongly about a farmer-centric approach we made it our new mission statement:

The Illinois Soybean Association upholds the interests of Illinois soybean producers through promotion, advocacy, and education.

The pages of this magazine, our relaunch of the Illinois Field & Bean brand, is just one way we will uphold those interests. This publication in your hands is a magazine for Illinois soybean farmers. You'll see Illinois soybean farmers on the pages, and in the stories, along with information and resources designed to make sure we are the market leader in sustainable soybean production and profitability.

This publication and brand relaunch is just one of the many changes we've been working on since I started. It's the Illinois soybean farmer audience that's driven us to create a magazine and resource; but it's you that reminds us all why we're here and what we're working for.

As you read these pages, I hope you see the changes ISA has embraced, and I hope you join in on our excitement as we get back to our roots as a soybean association.

Thank you, Illinois soybean farmers, for the opportunity to work with you and for you. Let's continue to grow and evolve together!



JOHN LUMPE | CEO | Illinois Soybean Association



Finding your voice for soy

Working together to make lawmakers into educated ag advocates

Illinois Soybean Association Government Relations Committee Chair, Ron Kindred, takes stock of Illinois soybean farmers' opportunities despite pandemic challenges.

By DeAnna Thomas

COVID-19 has brought a myriad of challenges and opportunities for Illinois soybean farmers and the agriculture industry. From social distancing to sheltering in place and more, the last eight months have made Illinoisans pause, and forced farmers to adapt when it comes to connecting, communicating, and educating both constituents and consumers. Without exception, annual in-person visits with legislators to discuss agriculture policy on the Hill and in Springfield has halted. Still, the voice of Illinois soybean farmers is heard loud and clear.

"Serving the Illinois Soybean Association since 1999, I have

really enjoyed being involved and being in the know when it comes to agriculture policy," said Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) Government Relations Committee Chair Ron Kindred. "I have witnessed how much of a difference it makes when we lobby in Springfield and Washington D.C. It is vitally important, now more than ever, we let our legislators know how policies and regulations impact farmers and our industry, and cannot be underestimated."

ISA's Voice for Soy action center is the advocacy arm for Illinois soybean farmers and supporters of agriculture which puts subscribers into direct contact with lawmakers. It allows constituents a voice in the legislative and regulatory process to ensure the

needs of Illinois soybean farmers are met.

"One thing that has never gone away, and hopefully never will, is the importance of constituent voices in Washington and Springfield," said Andrew Larson, ISA's Director of Public Policy and Market Development. "Legislators always want to hear from people affected by the legislation they are voting on. They appreciate that feedback and want to know the impact of the public policy and laws they are being asked to create and how it is perceived by the people."

Advocating Starts with You

While the changing landscape has brought about uncertainty, Voice for Soy remains a constant and efficient way for farmers to

contact elected officials. By registering with Voice for Soy, farmers are armed with information on the most current legislative issues and equipped to take immediate action.

"We know, in a situation like putting together a farm bill in Washington, it is critically important to share the vision and needs of Illinois soybean farmers with our elected officials through our advocacy system – not just when the vote happens, but beforehand so they can take that information to their colleagues and committee meetings to advocate and say, 'Here is what Illinois farmers would like to see changed or added to this piece of legislation,'" Larson said. "We know many of our legislators are ready and willing to advocate on our behalf

and having our Voice for Soy network, which is full of constituents ready to share their thoughts and feedback in a massive way in response to our calls for action, is that much more important."

Something to Be Proud Of

"Over the years, I have witnessed China being accepted into the World Trade Organization, and collaborate with the Illinois Corn Growers to help unanimously pass a biodiesel and ethanol tax incentive and more," said ISA Director Kindred. "It is amazing for the small percentage of the population farmers are, how much of an impact we truly have in Springfield and in Washington D.C. We can be extremely successful, but we can't just sit around and expect somebody else to do it for us. We have to advocate for ourselves, and Voice for Soy has proven to be a very successful resource tool for us to do so."

Larson feels there are specifically two areas of legislation on which Illinois farmers need to keep their eyes: biodiesel and the upcoming farm bill. Biodiesel is an issue which is continually important to soybean farmers because most of the biodiesel made in the United States is made from soybean oil. By supporting the biodiesel industry, it creates a strong

marketplace, strengthening the price of soybean oil and overall soybean prices. The Voice for Soy network has been engaged in Springfield regarding the state sales tax exemption for biodiesel blends over 11-percent, and has kept the attention of legislators in Washington regarding the federal biodiesel tax credit.

Voice for Soy also gives farmers a leg-up when it comes to farm policy. According to Larson, it is critically important for legislators, who shape what the future of farm policy looks like to hear directly from farmers about how programs like crop insurance are impacting them in the countryside.

"Some farmers used crop insurance for the first time in 2019 and 2020," Larson said. "By sharing the story of how beneficial the crop insurance renewal act was for their operations, we have the opportunity to make a difference by preserving and protecting the crop insurance program for future generations."

After serving more than 20 years on the ISA board, Kindred said engaging with younger and new members within ISA is key to continuing the organization's tradition of successful outreach with elected officials.

"We are beginning to transition to the next generation on my own family farming operation, so I understand the dynamics and

importance of sharing my experiences and opportunities. They are good at a lot of things I am not good at, and I think I am good at some of the things they are not very good at yet. So, if we can get together and share those experiences, we will be a better organization and shape better policy for future generations. It is our role to serve as mentors to help our younger generations make an impact and be successful both on the farm and in serving the ISA members."

"By becoming involved in organizations like Illinois Soybean Association and the American Soybean Association, the experiences I have had have been extremely rewarding," Kindred said. "It is a humbling and tremendous experience to be able to speak to national and international audiences on behalf of Illinois and American soybean farmers. I hope people who knew me 20 years ago and still know me today have watched me grow as a person and as a leader. I hope our future generations start to become more involved and it can start by signing up for Voice for Soy."

Text SOY to 52886

How It Works

Signing up for the Voice for Soy advocacy network is simple. Using a smartphone, members should text 'SOY' to 52886. Members will then be prompted to complete their profile registration.

With a valid address, Voice for Soy can locate members' respective state and federal legislators. When an action request comes through the network, a pre-written email within the action center is ready for members to send. If it is a phone call action request, the action center provides the phone numbers to call respective legislators. It is an all-in-one, easy-to-use process which takes less than a minute.

Voice for Soy is not limited to ISA members. Working together with other farmers and farm groups on common issues amplifies agriculture's voice. Members may invite fellow farmers, family, and friends to join as advocates, too. Please reach out to ISA's Director of Public Policy and Market Development, Andrew Larson at larsona@ilsoy.org or call 309-808-3612 with questions about signing up or to become more involved in ISA's legislative outreach.



Illinois' eight American Soybean Association representatives are proud to advocate for soybean issues on the hill. Pictured from left are Jered Hooker, Rob Shaffer, Daryl Cates, Stan Born, Bill Wykes, Ron Moore, Bill Raben, and David Droste.



The Illinois biofuel movement

Championing for our environment, economy, and our health

Growing biofuels doesn't pose a singular win for Illinois. Rather it poses a triple-win for the state's environment, economic and social advantages, and the collective health of our families, neighbors, and citizens. That's why the Voice for Soy program is driving several important legislative conversations: our Illinois farmers represent homegrown solutions for today's global issues.

Here's some backstory on this powerhouse movement.

Biofuel is a greenhouse gas reducing, advanced resource that is not only sustainable, it's a more environmentally-friendly, cleaner-burning option that can be used without modification. Biofuels help to enhance and safeguard energy security by reducing the world's reliance on fossil energy sources.

As our global population continues to grow, with it will come substantially increasing energy consumption. Biofuel resources are the natural answer to growing demands. And this self-sustaining product is born, right here, in soybean fields across Illinois.

Environmentally speaking, biofuel decreases greenhouse gas emissions by up to 86 percent, and reduces smog, wastewater, and hazardous waste, all while boasting the highest energy balance of any U.S. fuel. Since 2007, the use of biodiesel prevented 24.3 million metric tons of carbon emissions, which is the equivalent of removing 5.3 million cars from Illinois' roadways. And because biofuels reduce greenhouse emissions, new research suggests this fast-evolving resource will positively impact climate change.

But its benefits don't end with the environment. Enter big-time economic advantage.

The total economic impact of the Illinois ethanol industry teeters around \$10.2 billion, giving way to more than 32,200 Illinois jobs represented by the ethanol and corn industries. The biodiesel industry alone accounts for 7,200 jobs and \$3 billion to the Illinois gross domestic product (GDP).

Additionally, biofuels provide affordable vehicle purchase options and minimize fuel cost, all bolstering the standard of living for Illinois families of every socio-economic status.

But to be considered a meaningful resource, biofuels cannot only offer superior environmental benefits, economic advantage, and social leverage, they must deliver sustainable solutions that positively impact



human health. In the wake of COVID-19, our country is waking up to a new appreciation for respiratory health and lung capacity. We know healthy respiratory function is our best defense against COVID-19 and many other illnesses including asthma and certain cancers.

Biofuels discharge fewer toxins into the air, reducing the risk of respiratory disease in children and adults. A healthy environment and healthy economy sit pale beside a healthy humanity.

Illinois Soybean Association and our ag industry counterparts are leading the conversation about increasing Illinois use of biofuels through a clean energy strategy, policy changes that will impact our statewide production capability, and the development of education and job placement opportunities in communities disproportionately affected by pollutants from vehicle emissions.

Reducing waste where we can, making the most of our valuable natural resources, and ensuring the health and safety of future generations are goals we're all called to care about.

Join the conversation! Email us at ilsoy@ilsoy.org and visit VoiceforSoy.org for additional information.



MIKE LEVIN | Senior Director of Government Affairs |
Illinois Soybean Association

Telling our stories



RACHEL PEABODY | Editor | Illinois Soybean Association

Back in 2005, a young, ambitious Taylorville High School graduate picked Ag Communications as her intended career path. She knew not a person in the field. She just knew she liked to write and speak, and she was inspired by the farmers she knew and their stories. She was born and raised in FFA's national blue and corn gold colors, and her roots and passion for agriculture ran deep. Fast forward 15 years, and that girl is the Editor of the relaunched Illinois Field & Bean – a publication you hold in your hands today.

That's my story, and I know you have one, too.

This is the first issue of the new Illinois Field & Bean. We've turned the page of our association so to speak, so it only made sense our publication evolved with our approach, too.

What is that new approach? It's a refocus of our organization's priorities, putting the Illinois soybean farmer back in the bullseye of all we do. Think of it as our opportunity to rewrite the farmer back into the story – and in the pages of this issue and every Illinois Field & Bean to follow – that's just what we intend to do.

We know every Illinois farmer has a story, and we plan to tell those stories. With each issue, we hope to meet our farmers where they are with information that makes you feel more informed, knowledgeable and competitive in the current soybean market. Through checkoff and non-checkoff topics, we'll share stories that matter. We encourage you to send us story ideas of your own to ilsoy@ilsoy.org.

When planning this issue, we picked topics that get back to the heart of it all. I think you will enjoy reading about Illinois farmer leader Mike Marron, a Vermillion Co. native, and how his day job helps soybean farmers around the state (page 10). There's a feature on the latest cover crops, and how farmers can customize blends for their production systems (page 18). And, I think you will enjoy our cover story on homegrown biodiesel, talking about a soybean farmer and his journey with soy-based biodiesel blends on his farm in a true "I grow it, I use it" kind of fashion (page 14).

Here's to the first issue of the new Illinois Field & Bean. This magazine is for every soybean farmer in this state that contributes to Illinois being the No. 1 soybean producing state in the country. It's for every

single person from the researcher, to the processor, to the educator that makes the soybean industry go round. It's for the Mt. Auburn, Ill., farmers who contributed in my upbringing and who gave me so many great stories and a desire to tell them.

Please enjoy this first issue of the relaunched Illinois Field & Bean, and join us in eager anticipation of every one that follows.

Now let's tell some stories.



Every farmer has a story

Get to know Mike Marron, a fifth-generation farmer, state representative, and Illinois Soybean Growers member

By Rachel Peabody

Mike Marron recalls one of the most humbling moments of his life:

"I'll never forget the first time walking into the Illinois Capitol Building as a newly-seated representative. I get to my chair and I'm seated right under a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. I remember thinking, how did this happen to me?"

But happen it did. And today, Mike Marron wears several different hats including State Representative for Illinois' 104th district, fifth-generation corn and soybean farmer, and father, husband, and son. He farms with his parents, Pat and Linda, his wife, Brandy and daughter, Ainsley.

Deeply rooted to rural Vermillion County

Marron's great-great-grandfather, Thomas Marron, first settled the family farm in Fithian in 1867.

"He came here to plow under undrained prairie," says Marron. "It was swamp ground and some of the cheapest land around. Today it's some of the most productive farm ground in the world. He really carved a good farm out of this area and it means a lot to me to be working on it more than 150 years later. We are deeply rooted here."

Marron has been on the farm most of his life, except for when he went away to college.

"I loved growing up on the farm, but I was ready to get out and see the world, he says with a laugh. "I spent the first two years of college in Kansas on a rodeo team scholarship trying to be a professional saddle bronc rider, but didn't have much luck with that. I finished out my degree in Agribusiness at

Murray State University, and from those experiences away from the farm, I realized just how special home was. That's when I knew I wanted to come home and farm."

Not always easy

When asked about his most special memory on the farm, interestingly enough, top of mind for Marron is actually a season of hardship. He remembers the struggle of the '80s farm crisis and what it meant for his parents to keep going.

"We lived in my great-grandfather's 100-year-old farmhouse and in the winter, snow would blow through the windows," he says. "Times were lean. It was a tough time for many farmers, my parents included. But what's special to me now is to see how my parents came through that and how they went on to build what they did."

He credits the struggle, and the under-the-gun, kind of pressure to stay afloat for giving his family tenacity and work ethic – skillsets that have served him well in his different roles in life.

To that end, he credits his dad, Pat Marron, as being the most influential person in his life.

"My dad's just a really good farmer and as I get older, I see more and more of him in me," he says. "That's a good thing. He's guided me in ways I probably don't even understand."

Bringing agriculture to the statehouse

Marron was sworn into his state representative seat in September 2018, and officially elected for the first time that November.

Ever since, he says he's been honored to represent the families of the 104th district in

eastern Illinois, and advocating for agricultural issues is one of the most rewarding parts of the job. And because he's also a full-time farmer, constituent work is something he handles these days from the cab of the combine, too.

"I caught the bug for agriculture advocacy during my time as a soy ambassador for the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA)," he says. "That opportunity got me more involved politically and inspired me to be an advocate for agriculture. It's really what got me

going and thinking about my own legislative career."

After serving as an ISA soy ambassador, Marron went on to serve as a director on the board from 2011-2015.

"Being on the ISA board and participating as an Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) member is one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had," he says. "It broadened my horizons and changed my perspective on things. It really added a level of knowledge and understanding to the job I have now."



Mike Marron is a current Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) member and a former district director for the Illinois Soybean Board.



Soybean Seed

A full-page background image shows a farmer in a plaid shirt and cap, bent over and examining a field of mature soybeans. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a low sun, creating a silhouette effect on the farmer and a soft glow across the field.

CREDIBILITY IS EARNED

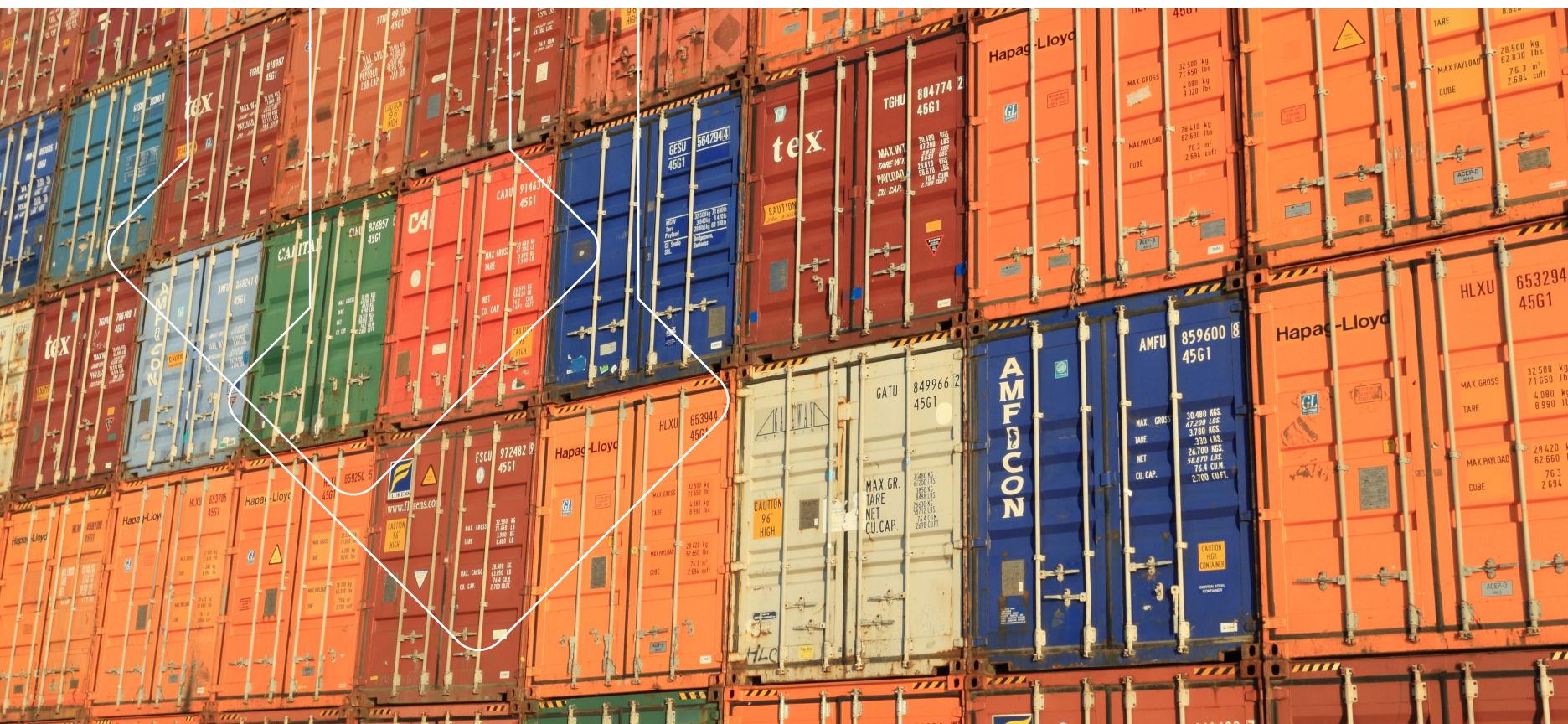
That's why we rigorously test our Credenz soybean seed varieties—for precision and quality across the full lineup.

So we can help you meet the agronomic challenges of your field. So we continue to prove ourselves through high-yielding performance. Because credibility isn't just a part of our name. It's our commitment.

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Illinois exports more than half of the soybean crop each year, and there is particular opportunity in container shipping of soy due to Illinois' unique logistics advantages.

1,000 customer touchpoints in four days

How the U.S. Global Trade Exchange used virtual connection to keep buyers engaged and meet global demand

By Barb Baylor Anderson

Scott Gaffner had two very different experiences participating in the U.S. Soy Global Trade Exchange in 2019 and 2020. He attended the conference in Chicago last year and participated virtually from his farm this year. But both times, he cultivated relationships with soybean buyers from around the world – many who have since made inquiries and signed purchase contracts.

"Illinois exports more than half of its soybean crop each year," says Gaffner, an ISA director who farms near Greenville, Illinois. "That's why it is critical for ISA as an organization and for Illinois farmers to participate in this event. We get to talk one-on-one with buyers about the benefits of purchasing Illinois soybeans. I have seen firsthand the value of that interaction."

The U.S. Soy Global Trade Exchange and Specialty Grains Conference (GTE) is an annual event hosted by the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and the Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance. The goal is to develop and strengthen relationships with international buyers with the goal of building a preference for U.S. soy.

Because of COVID-19, the conference held in August 2020 had to go virtual. ISA representatives participated in online networking, shared crop information with attendees, and sponsored a panel discussion about the value of container shipping soy from Illinois.

"GTE is an opportunity to connect the U.S. soy export supply chain to current and potential importers around the world," says Jim Sutter, USSEC CEO. "We had a virtual platform with an enhanced chat feature so exporters

and farmers could set up 'rooms' to talk with buyers and bring others into discussions as needed. It was a simple but effective format, and we had many robust discussions with a large number of attendees."

About 1,000 people, including 750 international attendees from nearly 70 countries participated, which was up from about 800 in-person in 2019. A post-event survey found 86-percent thought the virtual event provided effective interaction. About half said they were able to generate business, while 84-percent said they generated useful business partners. Eight of 10 say GTE increased their preference for U.S. soy and 30-percent negotiated sale contracts as a direct result.

"Even virtually, it was important to keep buyers engaged to get such results," says Gaffner. "Buyers needed to be assured Illinois

farmers are committed to meeting their needs. We established and reconnected relationships and let people know we are still open for business."

"By participating in events like this, I remain confident we are headed in the right direction," says Sutter. "We will continue to collaborate with industry as USSEC promotes the U.S. Soy Advantage – a superior nutrition bundle, sustainable production practices, and the reliability of the U.S. soy export supply chain from farm to dock. USSEC works to create a large, diverse customer base for current markets, but emphasizes development in new, emerging markets."

ISA trade team coordinator, David Headley, manned ISA's online booth to answer questions and connect ISA farmer directors and staff with those who came into the ISA chat area.

"Several countries came to the space, with many from Asia and Europe," he says. "Most were interested in learning how to secure soybean quantities and establish prices for sales."

The ISA-sponsored container shipping information session also was well attended and provided trade insights for container buyers. ISA trade analyst, Eric Woodie, says ISA made close to 70 contacts as a result of the session. He is now following up with them. Given improving container rates, container availability and capacity, he expects additional inquiries that ISA can foster.

"The container session was one of the better panels of the conference," Woodie says. "I interacted with different buyers and exporters. It was a healthy mix of both container and bulk customers," says Woodie. "Buyers from some of the more interesting emerging markets were actively engaging U.S. shippers and reached out to us for help with that. Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and several countries from South Asia used ISA to make connections with container shippers."

Gaffner found value in the connections as well.

"As a farmer, it was a great chance to hear directly from container shippers," he says. It's a different perspective than farmers generally get. We shared the possibilities of exporting Illinois soybeans in this way."

And while the virtual connections were effective, Illinois soybean leaders are hopeful it is only a segue to future on-location connections.

"Many international trade teams like to meet with Illinois soybean farmers and see the growing crop firsthand," says Headley. "They get the opportunity to share their management practices and what sets them apart from other U.S. farmers and other soybean production countries. We work to build a preference for Illinois soy."

Headley adds, when Illinois soybean farmers get to relate their

unique farm stories, it helps buyers better understand what goes into production.

"Relationships are what sells Illinois soybeans," he says. "Many buyers commented this year they were disappointed they could not personally visit the state or be here in-person."

Participation in GTE also ties in with ISA's new market development objectives. ISA is working to identify key existing global and domestic markets that show opportunity for substantial growth, and to increase the number of new global and domestic markets for Illinois soybeans.

"We can't be entirely invested in China like we have been in the past," says Gaffner. "With all of the COVID-19 issues this year and the ongoing trade war, it accentuates how much we need other markets. We must be more diversified and aggressively explore emerging markets."

Egypt is one country where Gaffner sees future potential. Already a major soybean buyer, he says ISA benefits by partnering with the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) to identify and nurture markets and then let USSEC take over to facilitate building demand.

"Intentional targeting will move more Illinois soybeans into diverse markets in the future," says Gaffner. "That complements ISA's new strategic plan and mission to uphold the interests of Illinois soybean producers through promotion, advocacy, and education."

"With ISA's trade facilitation program in place now for several years, we know there is additional work to be done following initial interactions," adds Woodie. "Since the virtual format is less connected, we must be even more interactive and find those good possible connections."

As for the future of the GTE, Gaffner is optimistic the 2020 conference will produce long-lasting relationships.

"I do think the great conference we had in 2019 laid a solid foundation for a successful virtual event in 2020, and 2020 prepared us to interact again in 2021," he says. "Buyers received great content to make great decisions."

And while getting people together online from across so many time zones is tough, it worked. The goal is to host the GTE in person in St. Louis in August 2021.

"There is great interest among global consumers of U.S. soy," says Sutter. "While virtual meetings are not what we are historically used to, they allow us to get information to lots of people in a timely, cost-efficient manner. Illinois farmers have touted their

advantage and benefitted from not only participating in the virtual GTE but in other virtual events USSEC has hosted this year."

"Doing this work has resulted in real success for Illinois farmers, ensuring we are leading the way in helping to generate more exports from Illinois," says Woodie. "It is up to us to turn these interactions into added value for Illinois soybean farmers. We had opportunities to build new relationships and now we can make good on them this year and beyond."

Gaffner concurs and believes Illinois soybean farmers see a return on their checkoff investment with market development events.

"It doesn't matter where you raise soybeans in the state," he says. "Illinois offers multiple transportation and price advantages that give the state a competitive advantage. Our leadership as the number one soybean producing state is an example for other states to follow. And in this fast-paced world, we need to continue to look way ahead to keep Illinois soybean production viable, working with partners inside and outside of agriculture."



International participation and trade team visits supports ISA's new market development objectives as we work to diversify global and domestic markets.



Despite virtual disadvantages, says Gaffner, "We established and reconnected relationships and let buyers know we are still open for business."



Biodiesel can improve soybean growers' resumes when it comes to sustainability for end use customers.

Driving soy demand, literally

Why the case for biodiesel advantages must begin at home with soy growers

By Kayla Hedrick

A customer walks into an established, yet popular restaurant and asks the owner to sit down with him and have a bite. The owner politely declines, remarking he doesn't eat the food there. Perplexing, right? Someone who promotes a product they refuse to use? "That's the same feeling diesel users get when they hear a farmer say they do not use biodiesel," remarks Jeff Lynn, a soybean grower from Oakford, Illinois.

Lynn has used biodiesel on his farm since it first became available

more than 20 years ago. Within the last decade, he bumped his use to B20, a blend of 80-percent petroleum diesel and 20-percent biodiesel, year-round.

"There are just a number of benefits to use biodiesel on your farm, ranging from economic to environmental," says Lynn. "It's time we champion a great product and something that adds to our bottom line."

Fifth-generation grower and Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) director Elliott Uphoff agrees.

"I think farmers should consider using a product we grow for our own farm use," says Uphoff. "I think it's time farmers take another look at biodiesel."

The use and promotion of biodiesel is felt throughout soy's value chain from the soybean farmers producing the raw materials to end use markets for soybeans like livestock and the food industry. Both Lynn and Uphoff mentioned there are a number of direct and indirect benefits for farmers when using biodiesel. The first is seen in the pocketbook.

Economic Returns

As the largest growing soybean oil market in the last decade, biodiesel has brought tangible returns to farmers. Biodiesel's demand for soybean oil grew more

than 300-percent in just 10 years, quickly rising as a significant user of soy.

"Biodiesel adds around 13-percent to the price we receive for our soybeans," Lynn explains. "Fleets across the country are using biodiesel year-round and that is driving this growth in income for us as soybean farmers."

Biodiesel is the second largest market for soybean oil, behind the food industry – a market that has declined in recent years because of health concerns around trans fats. Biodiesel's ability to absorb excess oil makes it an economic driver for soybean farmers now and into the future.

Outside of the return on soybean's price per bushel, biodiesel is often found cheaper than its



petroleum counterpart at on-road fueling stations.

"Several states have incentives that help biodiesel stay more affordable than petroleum diesel," says Lynn. "While I can't speak for prices for on-farm fuel, the price differential at the fueling stations can make a difference. You add in the better fuel mileage I've seen first-hand, it seems like a no brainer."

Quality Fuel

Filling up with on-road biodiesel while trucking corn is how Uphoff dipped his toes into using biodiesel on the farm. Unlike Lynn, he's a relatively new adopter of this renewable fuel, but still sings its praises.

"I noticed that I was already filling up with at least B5 at the stations I would frequent," says Uphoff. "I farm with my dad, so we sat down and discussed incorporating it on our farm."

His dad had tried biodiesel early on and backed away due to some unexpected hiccups in fuel quality. Lynn recalls the issues and has heard them from peers in the field, as well. Both Lynn and Uphoff note the past should not determine biodiesel use now, as the industry continues to grow and evolve and has become the gold standard in overseeing fuel quality.

"At the beginning, biodiesel was establishing a brand-new industry and working through all the details," explains Lynn. "Bad actors came in and took advantage, selling a product that wouldn't fly today. Biodiesel now must meet a number of specs and standards to be sold. I have 100 percent faith in the quality of the product I'm getting at each and every delivery."

Both Lynn and Uphoff often hear the challenge that breakdowns can be costly to farmers. However, those same breakdowns would be costly to other business owners that rely on heavy-duty diesel equipment to do their job. And yet, there are plenty of fleets using biodiesel in varying climates. That realization finally clicked with Lynn when he had



Farmer use of biodiesel in both on-road and off-road applications can help improve carbon emissions for future generations.

the opportunity to meet with biodiesel users on the East Coast.

"I believed the myth that I couldn't use B20 in the winter because of gelling," says Lynn. "But, that went out the window when I saw what the New York Port Authority does. If they can trust it to clear runways in the Northeast, putting thousands of people's lives on the line if there is a breakdown, there is no reason I can't use it in Illinois all-year round."

Knowing how to treat the fuel is an important aspect of any fuel management, adds Lynn. Additives are important for diesel fuel in the winter and biodiesel requires its own set of additives, but nothing to deter Lynn from continuing to use the product in his own vehicle and his wife's Volkswagen.

Biodiesel has been proven to run equal to or better in a number of on-road tests over the years. Lynn, when challenged on biodiesel's efficiencies, ran his own, controlled test.

"Biodiesel is often low hanging fruit for mechanics or fuel suppliers to attack and blame for problems," he says. "It's newer and they like to cast doubt. So, I ran my own test to see how B20 fared compared to standard diesel fuel for several months. Biodiesel edged out the competition, which was no shock to me."

Cleaner Burning

Biodiesel also brings some indirect benefits to farmers through



Illinois growers Jeff Lynn and Daryl Cates examine a filter during a trip to Brookhaven Labs as part of a biodiesel-industry-led program on the East Coast.

its clean-burning properties. Biodiesel's ability to reduce carbon emissions plays big into discussions across the country about climate and sustainability. Uphoff says this is a big opportunity for farmers to position themselves for the future.

Farm practices continue to put more and more under the microscope as customers push for corporate sustainability initiatives and terms like "carbon neutral" are being discussed on a broader scale. One quarter of the world's top corporations have climate commitments in place, a number that according to Fast Company has quadrupled in the last four years.

"It's an election year, so we're going to hear a lot about climate," says Uphoff. "However, climate change is going to be a huge topic for years

to come. Anything we can do to make the air cleaner, make ourselves less reliant on fossil fuels, and reduce our carbon footprint will make us more attractive to all end users. We want to put those tallies on our resume."

A Strong Future

The biodiesel industry itself has set some promising goals for the future. In fact, the industry announced a goal in early 2020 that it will reach 6 billion gallons of biodiesel and renewable diesel by 2030, which will more than double use.

"Carbon is driving policy decisions on the coasts and that will fare well for biodiesel demand moving forward," says Lynn. "We as soybean farmers need to be part of the solution, and we already have an 'in' on an industry paving the way."

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Farmers can select a cover crop termination timing and strategy that best fits their system, like spraying rye in spring before planting as shown here. Credit: Illinois NREC



Cover Crop Goals

A closer look at how some farmers are customizing cover crops for their production systems

By Laura Temple

Do cover crops work? That depends on the definition of “work,” according to Todd Steinacher, Illinois Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) and IL SoyAdvisor Content Coordinator. But that definition varies from farmer to farmer and even field to field.

“Cover crops can help farmers achieve a variety of goals, like stabilizing soil, suppressing weeds or reducing compaction,” says Steinacher. “But the cover crop

has to do what it was intended to be considered successful.”

Steinacher, based in central Illinois, fields questions about cover crops every year, especially as interest increases.

Survey data shows about two-thirds of Illinois farmers are aware and at least somewhat knowledgeable of cover crop management, according to Julie Armstrong, Executive Director of the Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council (NREC). She reports Illinois cover crop acreage nearly doubled from 710,000 acres in 2017 to 1,410,000 acres in 2019 based on USDA data.

For those trends to continue, Steinacher stresses the importance of understanding the reasons for a cover crop and then managing toward those goals.

“Why do you want to use a cover crop?” he asks. “The answers help farmers figure out where to get more information and how to customize cover crops for their production systems.”

What can cover crops do?

Steinacher describes several goals cover crops can address, but he stresses that management is critical.

“Given their cover crop goals, farmers can select and implement a seed mix and planting and termination management strategies to meet those goals,” Steinacher says. “That process may require a bit of trial and error, but stated goals help farmers figure out what does and doesn’t work for them.”

For example, he explains that cover crops can help stabilize soils. That goal requires use of grass crops like ryegrass, with a root system that holds soil in place, no winter kill and spring longevity of above-ground vegetation, rather than tuber crops like radishes and turnips. But if the goal is addressing soil compaction, scavenging nitrogen to store it for the next crop or providing winter grazing for cattle, including tubers in a mixture of species will be much more effective than grasses alone.

If the goal is weed suppression, Steinacher says a cover crop that produces significant organic

matter like ryegrass makes sense. Terminating it by crimping the ryegrass prior to or during planting lays down a mat of organic matter between crop rows to control weeds.

How do cover crop goals translate in the field?

“My initial reason for using cover crops was to protect fragile, sandy soils,” says Jeff O’Connor, who farms near Kankakee, Illinois. He has been incorporating cover crops into his production system for about a decade. “The concept was familiar to me, because my dad and grandfather both used cover crops for that reason.”

Steinacher notes that cover crops reduce all types of erosion common in Illinois. They minimize washouts and visible gully erosion from heavy rains. But cover crops also protect against hard-to-see or measure sheet erosion, which carries away a thin layer of organic matter even in flat fields.

“Once I felt I had success, fully protecting the soil from wind and water erosion, I noticed fields with cover crops had less weed pressure than others,” O’Connor says. That observation prompted him to use cover crops in more fields.

“I first chose to expand cover crops in a field that didn’t have road access,” he remembers. “Farming is very visual, and cover crops look different. That can be a hindrance to adoption. So, I started in a less noticeable field. Weed control improved there, so I continued to plant cover crops ahead of soybeans.”

His next discovery came when he looked at his soil through a microscope with a new employee from his local Soil and Water Conservation District in early spring.

“I was blown away by the activity in the soil,” O’Connor says. “I had no idea what was happening in the soil, but if I can keep my factory working through fall, winter and early spring, that’s better for soil productivity.”

Steinacher explains that soil microbes are active when soil

Examples of Cover Crop Goals

- Stabilize soil
- Reduce erosion
- Suppress weeds
- Store/scavenge nutrients
- Manage water issues
- Build organic matter
- Feed soil microbes
- Supplement winter grazing
- Increase crop yields
- Participate in sustainability programs

temperature is above 50°F, but they need roots to feed on. He adds that cover crops build organic matter in soil, which acts as the sponge that holds all the nutrients and microbial life that gives soil flexibility and resiliency.

O'Connor has discovered these benefits helped him achieve other goals for his fields, like increasing water filtration rates and reducing nutrient loss.

"Wetter fields consistently dry out better than they used to," he explains. "Year after year, I am finding that pattern drain fields have seedbeds that are ready to plant earlier in the spring. I believe that having cover crops as part of my system for years contributed to 2019 being my best year for soybeans despite the weather challenges."

He adds that when he looks at his emerged cover crops, he can see where his strip-tilled corn left unused nitrogen. The cover crop pulls it out of the soil, preventing leaching. Research shows that nutrients scavenged by cover crops is typically available to the following crop in June or July.

How do cover crops fit into a system?

"Using cover crops is a series of discoveries," O'Connor says. "The hardest part is the cultural shift they force, because they require more management."

He initially used cereal rye alone following corn. Before planting no-till soybeans in the spring, he terminated it with glyphosate.

"As I learned what worked on my farm, I also had lots of failures," he says. "I am ok with failing, as it helps me learn more."

With every discovery, he adjusted cover crop management to continue improving. For example, his cover crop mix now includes cereal rye and winter barley to provide quick growth for soil coverage in the fall and fibrous roots to keep soil in place. Radishes store nutrients in the tuber and help break up soil compaction. Rapeseed also addresses soil

compaction and adds variety to the mix.

"I don't fully understand interspecies interaction," O'Connor says. "Including rapeseed is an opportunity to discover more of what works – and doesn't – in my fields."

This fall, O'Connor is again expanding his cover crop system, planting them after soybeans and before corn for the first time.

Where can farmers learn more?

"Cover crops are a broad subject that can be somewhat complicated to understand," Steinacher says. "Farmers should research and ask lots of questions. I challenge them to talk with people outside their typical network to get different perspectives and to check out resources on ILSoyAdvisor.com."

Cover crop guides, like those developed by Illinois NREC or Purdue University can be good starting resources. Structured research provides reference points for farmers.

"Our research focuses on reducing nutrient losses while being economically viable," says Armstrong of Illinois NREC. "We fund cover crop research in Illinois that addresses specific questions or challenges shared by Illinois farmers."

For example, Illinois NREC recently funded development of the University of Illinois Cover Crop Analyzer, a practical, web-based decision support tool designed to help manage cover crops in the field. Illinois NREC also funds research on cover crop mixes, termination timing and insect control.

"We share data from our research on our website and with the Midwest Cover Crops tool," Armstrong adds.

Steinacher also points to online resources as valuable information sources. "Farmers using cover crops willingly share their experiences, successes, and failures with others," he says. "YouTube videos and Facebook groups provide information from around the



As a cover crop, radishes address soil compaction and can store leftover nutrients to be available for the following crop in the heart of the growing season. Credit: Illinois NREC

country, while local agronomists and consultants can help farmers figure out how to adapt practices on their farms."

O'Connor has turned to all these sources to learn more.

"I participate in Facebook groups focused on cover crops that foster open exchange of ideas and knowledge," he explains. "I often get quick answers to my questions there. But I also rely on local cover crop experts and partnerships with groups focused on soil health. Plus, research provides numbers that serve as a good baseline, even if done on different soil types."

So, do cover crops work?

"I have consistently seen incremental increases in crop yields over time and differences in my soil, though I've had to be willing to make mistakes to get there," says O'Connor. "Cover crops help me plant soybeans earlier and take advantage of yield potential. In fact, cover crops are part of the reason soybeans have become my favorite crop to grow and a reliable contributor to my bottom line."

Information Sources

- ILSoyAdvisor
- Illinois NREC Cover Crop Guide
- Illinois Cover Crop Analyzer
- Midwest Cover Crops Field Guide
- Facebook communities
- YouTube
- Research studies



Establishing cereal rye as a cover crop in corn stubble can help prevent erosion and aid weed control in the following crop. Credit: Illinois NREC

Illinois Cover Crop Premium Discount Program

For the second year, the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) is offering the Fall Covers for Spring Savings Program. It is designed for those with USDA Risk Management Agency (USDA-RMA) crop insurance. Eligible applicants could receive a \$5 per acre discount on 2021 crop insurance for acres of cover crop enrolled, verified, and not covered by other state or federal incentives. Applications will be available on the IDOA website in December.

Join ISG's Political Action Committee and Make a Difference

Illinois soybean farmers are called upon to support the Illinois Soybean Growers Political Action Committee (ISGPAC). ISGPAC invests in advancing initiatives that protect and increase market value and opportunities for soybean farmers ISGPAC helps nurture legislative relationships and keeps key contacts in office where they work for the industry's best interests. To get involved, visit <https://www.ilsoygrowers.com/isgpac>.



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In 2019, the market value of pork exports to

ILLINOIS SOYBEANS

\$113 million

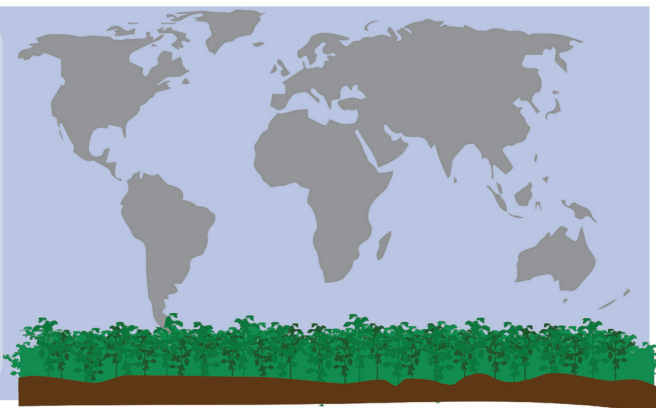
(soybeans consumed by pork exports * annual avg soybean price)

In 2019 pork exports added **9%** of bushel value



\$1.714 billion

The projected market value of pork exports to Illinois soybeans from 2020-2029



For more information, please visit usmef.org.

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Agribusiness Management Program

Funded by the Illinois soybean checkoff

The show must go on

Despite pandemic challenges, the Agribusiness Management Program (AMP) Summer Webinar Series sees record number of participants.

By DeAnna Thomas

2020 will no doubt be a year that academics, agribusiness stakeholders, and farmers talk about for years to come. COVID-19 has interrupted and challenged daily lives in every way, from disrupting regular routines and support systems of family and friends, to procurement of goods and services. The pandemic also has forced changes in how the organization communicates, informs, and educates.

"What a year to be chairman of ISA," said Doug Schroeder, Chairman of the Illinois Soybean

Association (ISA) and soybean farmer near Mahomet. "It doesn't matter what organization you were a part of this year, we have all had to retool and rethink the way we do a lot of things, and that includes how we create and maintain relationships during the pandemic. I'm proud to be a part of an organization that has done just that this year."

Amid a long list of events that had to pivot from in-person to virtual due to the pandemic was the ISA soybean checkoff's Agribusiness Management Program (AMP) summer meeting.

The meeting transformed into a virtual webinar series, presented every Wednesday for five weeks. The webinars not only provided farmers with necessary information to improve management on their operations, but also illustrated how successful virtual meetings can be when executed correctly.

"I've always said if you're not learning and you think you've got it all figured out, that is when you will start falling behind," Schroeder said. "You should always have an open mind and be willing to learn and understand the latest

and greatest to not only improve yourself, but your farming operation. But how do you do that during a global pandemic? The days of having educational conferences, meetings and shows are over for a while."

"Our summer AMP series pivot to a virtual webinar series provided a powerful opportunity for farmers to tune in to learn how they could start taking steps towards a more secure future for their farms," Schroeder added. "It was a home run."

Over the course of the event, the AMP Summer Webinar Series

drew attendees from Colorado to Washington and Minnesota to Texas. But most notably, a high concentration of attendees came from Illinois spanning the state from Antioch to Enfield.

"People are spending a lot of time at their screens these days, so let's give them useful content when we can," said Linda Kull, ISA's Director of Ag Innovations. "We are doing things we have never done before – from Zooming all day every day to utilizing different digital platforms. We are figuring out how to effectively communicate with each other and are still able to accomplish our goals and objectives in a meaningful way. The success of pivoting ISA's AMP series to a digital platform is a testament to the adaptability of our farmers and our industry."

"This is the type of content farmers are looking for and are taking the time to educate themselves, ensuring they are doing everything they can for their operations using a business perspective," Kull said. "We are happy to see that this is something they are willing to spend some time on, and we are happy to help provide these educational experiences."

But farmers and attendees weren't the only ones learning during the virtual conference. Information gathered from participants will help ISA create and provide additional online and in-person programming in the future, as well as reach potential new members.

Information provided by attendees included 2020 planting information and how attendees will implement information gathered during the webinars. Registered farmers, who made up almost 50-percent of the participants, reported they planted 64,436 acres of soybeans in 2020. Other agriculture industry stakeholders registered for the series said they consulted on 220,000 acres of soybeans in 2020.

Kull added the participation numbers in the webinar series, and the fact participants have shared they will take this in-

formation and implement it on their own farming operations, is the most rewarding. Overall, the AMP Summer Webinar Series boasted more than 450 attendees which consisted of farmers, agribusiness professionals and other agricultural stakeholders.

Perhaps the most important realization, though, is that whether virtual or in person, the exchange of ideas and information is still vital to a successful farming operation.

Through a partnership with Illinois Farm Business Farm Management (FBFM) and the University of Illinois farmdoc team, ISA offered go-to advice from agribusiness experts on a variety of farm business management topics, including succession planning, grain marketing and more.

"The last in-person event I attended was the IL SoyAdvisor Soybean Summit in March where we introduced the new and improved AMP program," said Jessie Shoopman, Illinois FBFM Field Staff Accountant and ISA AMP advisor. "While we planned on rolling out our summer AMP series in-person, to be mindful of the safety and health of our attendees, and by utilizing social media and email, we were able to pivot to a very successful virtual webinar series that was able to educate farmers on the impor-

ance of strategic farm planning and management.

"It's important to remember strategic farm management is something we have to keep in mind and work on continually," Shoopman added. "We always want to make sure we are considering different, relevant topics the AMP program brings to the forefront to ensure farmers are utilizing the information and tools provided to push their farms forward into the next generation."

For presenter and Vice President/Managing Member at Moore and Warner Ag Group Jonah Kolb, the virtual event was the perfect way to connect with farmers to discuss alternative marketing options.

"During my presentation I asked farmers to think about their operations and what they do that sets them apart," Kolb said. "One of the challenges of being in a commodity business is producing a commodity – and diversification is necessary. There are a variety of tools and approaches that a farmer can implement to help contribute to their farming operation beyond their net income, whether that is through farming ground that isn't flat, black and perfectly square to utilizing conservation programs to gaining access into specialty markets and specialty crop contracts. Being willing to explore these alternative options makes farmers stand out and

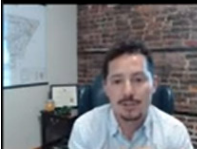
more valuable to investors and landowners beyond their annual rent checks."

Despite the meeting being virtual rather than in person, Kolb said the takeaway messages are still the same.

"Even though we are learning new ways to communicate every day, stories still matter and you need to share your story," Kolb said. "In some cases, COVID has opened up our lines of communication wider than ever before as we have worked even harder to have meaningful conversations and maintain relationships."


"When you look at the last few years of farming, they haven't been easy," Kolb added. "Farmers have changed the way they think about their farming operations, transitioning their mindsets and objectives from a lifestyle to positioning the farm as a profitable business. The farm lifestyle is great, but achieving profitability is a key part when we think about the longevity of the family farm for future generations."





All of the webinars from the Summer AMP series were recorded and are available on the ISA YouTube page. Visit [ILSoyAdvisor.com/AMP-agribusiness-management-program](https://www.ilsoyadvisor.com/AMP-agribusiness-management-program) and stay tuned to this ongoing continuing education program for Illinois soybean farmers to access and utilize on their own farming operations.



SOME COMMON MYTHS

- I don't need to grow to survive
- Farm managers are the boogey man
- I have to pay high(est) cash rent
- Investors drive up the price of farmland



Jonah Kolb, Vice President/Managing Member at Moore & Warner Ag Group, LLC, discusses growing your farm through leased acreage strategies during his July 29 webinar.




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See more ways the soy checkoff is maximizing profit opportunities for soybean farmers at unitedsoybean.org

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Partner perspective

IL Corn's, Rodney Weinzierl, tells us why corn and soy are more than just a great crop rotation

I feel confident in my guess that every farmer flipping through this issue of Illinois Field and Bean not only has a couple acres of soybeans, but also a couple of acres of corn.

The two crops make for a mutually beneficial rotation that adds diversity to farms, improves the soil, and helps farmers manage risk. Often, you can't have one without the other. In the same way, Illinois Soybean Association and IL Corn can work together to benefit the farmers of Illinois in meaningful ways.

As an example, almost any Illinois policy proposal that would impact an Illinois corn farmer would have the same impact on an Illinois soybean farmer. Yes, the policy might be specific to corn or to soybean management, but because most farmers grow both, the impact to members of our associations is the same.

We're building on that commonality and partnership in big ways and yielding big benefits for Illinois farmers, and following are some examples.

ISA and IL Corn work together to support meat exports through funding to the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and the U.S.A. Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC). Each organization funds specific projects in targeted countries, but together we increase overall demand for meat and poultry around the world.

One out of every four hogs raised in Illinois is exported out of our state. This type of work builds demand for corn and soybean farmers, and for our livestock farmer neighbors.

Both of our associations work to benefit our livestock farmer customers and neighbors via other projects as well. It was an honor to stand with the Illinois Soybean Association this spring at the aid of the Illinois Pork Producers Association as they considered depopulation related to COVID-19 shutdowns. We are also in partnership via the Illinois Livestock Development Group where we invest to increase livestock numbers in Illinois.

We both watch for coalition work outside of the agriculture community, helping non-farmers understand more about agriculture. Both ISA and IL Corn fund Illinois Ag in the Classroom to bring agriculture to every student in Illinois. Both are also significant voices in the Illinois Farm Families coalition, providing content targeted to millennial parents in Chicago that helps them connect with Illinois farmers and Illinois agriculture.



RODNEY WEINZIERL | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | IL CORN

Often the messages relating to sustainability, renewable fuels, basing farm management in sound science, and providing a safe and affordable food supply are common messages between both organizations. Partnering on consumer outreach projects adds value for Illinois farmers and allows your voice to be heard even further from the farm gate.

Where there is momentum for change, you'll find IL Corn and ISA working together there, too. Leaders of both organizations see opportunities for farmers in the sustainability arena and proposed carbon market; we're both investing money to make sure farmers are represented well with accurate data and analysis. We also see momentum for new locks and dams on the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers and we are committed to investing farmer dollars to their best benefit to increase transportation efficiencies.

Next summer, at Farm Progress Show 2021, you will be able to visit us in the same location! We are excited to announce a partnership on our Farm Progress Show presence. Many of you are members of both associations; finding us in one place just makes sense.

As IL Corn and ISA work together to provide maximum value to our Illinois farmer members, it is our hope that farmers will yield the benefits. Just like a crop rotation maximizes your corn and soybean yield, our partnership can maximize opportunities for Illinois farmers to create and capture profit opportunities, preserve farm independence, and prosper for generations.





New Board Member

Join us in welcoming new ISA board member, Buck Hill

Hometown: Grand Ridge, LaSalle County

Tell us about your farm: We grow 1,500 acres of corn, soybeans, and hay. I farm with my father and brothers.

What's your favorite memory on the farm? My first favorite memory is being able to stay the night on the farm with my dad watching the grain dryer.

Why do you represent Illinois soybean farmers on the checkoff and membership boards?

I wanted to be involved with an organization that directly impacted the industry I love, and I can't think of a better association to be involved with than ISA.

When did you know you wanted to farm? I always knew I wanted to farm. When I was in

my first years of college, I remember talking to my brother who was home farming already, and those phone conversations made me realize making it back to the farm was the most important thing to me.

What checkoff project are you most excited about this year? We've got some really exciting work coming up on the biodiesel initiative. I'm excited to be a part of the push to use more B20 blends in Illinois.

Favorite place in your district? Starved Rock State Park

Best place to grab lunch in your district? Dig Doug's BBQ in Streator, Ill

It's harvest time - what snacks/drinks are in the combine? Water, Dr. Pepper, and beef jerky

What's your job during harvest? I'm the tractor/auger wagon driver and back up combine driver.

Your best performing soybean variety on the farm this year: Beck's Hybrids 3442FP

What are you listening to in the truck? The Score 670

If you could have dinner with one famous person, dead or alive, who would it be? John Wayne

Who has been the biggest influence in your life? Both of my grandfathers

Current TV show binge? Ozark on Netflix

The game is on - what are you watching? The Cubs or

Bears - depending on who is disappointing me the least.

Give us a harvest update from your farm: Soybean harvest is rolling along, and we hope to be done with all harvest before Halloween. The lack of August rains significantly impacted yields negatively. Early yields are 6-8 bushel off of expectations as of July. We also experienced some anthracnose disease in our soybeans that caused early death. With that being said, we are optimistic for our later maturity soybeans with fungicide and insecticide applied. Corn has met expectations to exceeded expectations at this time. The derecho windstorm we experienced in early August did impact a few corn fields, but overall not a significant issue to our farm.

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