

FEBRUARY 2021

Illinois Field & Bean

A PUBLICATION OF THE ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

 **The
Soybean
Summit
issue**



SAY HELLO: HOME EDITION **2021 VIRTUAL SOYBEAN SUMMIT**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 17 + 24 | 9 - 11:30 A.M. | @ YOUR COMPUTER

It's that time of year to say hello at the 2021 Soybean Summit: Home Edition. As always, we'll be connecting you to leading soybean experts and the latest in soybean agronomy, sustainable production and agribusiness management—this time from the comfort and safety of your home. The advice and info you need to maximize yield and optimize business is all right here. All you have to do is log in and say hello.

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#2021SoybeanSummit



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Visit us online at
www.ilsoy.org/magazine/illinois-field-bean.



COVER: Funded by the Illinois Soybean Association checkoff program, Soybean Summit provides a rich lineup of expert speakers sharing the latest agronomic insights, sustainable production and agribusiness management advice, along with actionable recommendations to improve farmer yields, sustainably, and boost bottom lines. This year's event theme is "Say Hello: Home Edition."



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Welcome to the Soybean Summit issue!



TODD STEINACHER | IL SoyAdvisor Agronomic Content Coordinator

Welcome to this month's special edition of Illinois Field & Bean where the pages of this magazine are dedicated to the topics we will be covering in the virtual experience of the Soybean Summit to be held online Feb. 10, 17, and 24.

In my role as the Agronomic Content Coordinator for IL SoyAdvisor, I produce useful agronomic content for the platform's farmer audience, in addition to coordinating guest editorials and identifying content ideas to help farmers improve their operations. My background as a field agronomist, seed sales specialist, and farm kid have given me the opportunity to work with farmers across the state, and I enjoy putting together educational opportunities that help boost your bottom lines sustainably.

The Soybean Summit has traditionally been a one-day event providing a stellar lineup of experts who share the latest agronomic insights, sustainable production tips, agtech innovations, and agribusiness management advice with attendees. This year, despite necessary accommodations due to the pandemic, we still planned an informative, virtual event complete with highly regarded professionals geared up to provide you with information you can count on. You can catch all recordings and all things Soybean Summit at ilsoyadvisor.com.

This year's three-day virtual event covers topics ranging from weeds, pests, and pathogens, all the way to balancing farming, family, and stress, and everything in between. Each day will offer a keynote presentation followed by your choice of three breakout sessions.

Funded by the Illinois Soybean Association checkoff program, the IL SoyAdvisor Soybean Summit provides a fantastic lineup of speakers addressing a variety of issues that an Illinois soybean producer may face over the next five years, along with actionable recommendations to improve yields and farm profitability.

As a Certified Crop Adviser (CCA), it's our job to stay on the front of agronomic concepts and environmental stewardship. That's why the Soybean Summit is a great opportunity for Illinois CCAs to learn and gain valuable CEU credits for qualifying breakout sessions.

Illinois produces a lot of soybeans, and in fact, we are No. 1 in the country at what we do. The Soybean Summit is special because it is focused wholly on soybean production and making our best better. We haven't even come close to unlocking the potential of a soybean plant. As farmers, your livelihood is at risk every year, and it makes sense to gain knowledge and build your network through events like the Soybean Summit to prepare you for the future. We hope you enjoy this month's Soybean Summit event and learn some valuable insights to help improve your farming operation.

A special connection

One of my first official duties as CEO of Illinois Soybean Association was to attend the 2020 Soybean Summit. Even prior to coming to ISA, I knew what Soybean Summit was about. It's a crown jewel of a checkoff program, and it's known far and wide as one of the best farmer-centric agronomic events. For me, there was absolutely no better way to get acclimated to my new role than spending a day with more than 300 Illinois farmers, all there because they care about growing better soybeans. It was a special day for sure, and looking back, it's even more special now because it was the last event I attended in person in 2020.

I remember a conversation I had across a table from a dad and his two sons. We talked about how they were all farming together now, and were starting to have those conversations about succession planning and farm transitions.

I enjoyed meeting a husband-and-wife duo who attend the event together every year. They manage the farm together, they make best practice decisions together, and they enjoy learning together.

I visited with our exhibitors in the trade show space. One in particular noted that he loved the Soybean Summit for the caliber of farmers that it brings out every year – and that he loves having those conversations with farmers who are focused on making their operation better.

It was fun seeing the Illinois ag media force at work. Broadcasters and reporters were there in every session and talking to farmers and presenters in hallways, covering the event and getting the latest information out to their audience.

In short, what we do here in Illinois for the soybean industry, and the 43,000 soybean farmers we represent – is really special. And Soybean Summit is one of my favorite examples of that.

In a year like 2020 when personal face-to-face connection was taken away so suddenly, it's made me cherish those opportunities even more. There's no better way to remain connected with the farmers we serve than spending time with you, hearing your stories, learning about what keeps you up at night, and helping to provide solutions to issues you are seeing in the field. Our theme last year for the 2020 event was – "Say Hello" – because that's just what we intended to do – talk to you and make it known that your state soybean association was here to work for you.

This year, our team has pivoted to bring you the 2021 Soybean Summit – "Say Hello: Home Edition." It's not in-person as any of us hoped it would be, but I can assure you we have a very special virtual experience planned that's certainly not lacking in the latest agronomic and agribusiness management expertise.

As you flip through the pages of this issue dedicated 100 percent to the Soybean Summit effort, I hope you feel armed with the latest actionable advice that you can put to use on your soybean acres this spring.

We might be staying home, but we're staying connected, and that's really special. I look forward to seeing you online February 10, 17, and 24, and you can join us by registering at any time at ilsoyadvisor.com/soybeansummit.



JOHN LUMPE | CEO | Illinois Soybean Association



Funded by the Illinois Soybean Checkoff



SAY HELLO: HOME EDITION 2021 VIRTUAL SOYBEAN SUMMIT AGENDA

FEB
10

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. **ISA Welcome & Introductions**

9:15 - 10:15 a.m. **Keynote:** Soybean Biology: A Path to Increased Yields

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

10:20 - 11:20 a.m.

Weeds, Pests, Pathogens Track

Seedling Diseases and Seed Treatments – What's the Deal?

Sustainability Track

Soybean Nutrient Management for Profitability and Water Stewardship

Agribusiness Management Track

A 2021 Tax Update: What We Know and What We Don't

FEB
17

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. **ISA Welcome & Introductions**

9:15 - 10:15 a.m. **Keynote:** Feed the Consumer While Growing
Your Profits with Specialty Soybeans

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

10:20 - 11:20 a.m.

Weeds, Pests, Pathogens Track

Insect Management: What Did We Learn in 2020?

Sustainability Track

The Progression of Next Generation Cover Crop Management to
Increase Cash Crop Production and Advance Water Quality

Agribusiness Management Track

What To Do When It's Time To Hang Up The Boots

FEB
24

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. **ISA Welcome & Introductions**

9:15 - 10:15 a.m. **Keynote:** Award-Winning Ag Editors Share Their Takes on AgTech

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

10:20 - 11:20 a.m.

Weeds, Pests, Pathogens Track

What to Do While We Wait for the Elusive "Silver Bullet"

Sustainability Track

Precision Conservation Management: Establishing
a Region, Rapport and Conservation

Agribusiness Management Track

Balancing Farming, Family and Stress



Funded by the Illinois Soybean Checkoff

CONNECTING TO THE LATEST ILLINOIS SOYBEAN TIPS AND INFO HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER.

We can't wait to say hello during this year's virtual Soybean Summit on February 10, 17 and 24.

After registering, a link to join the event will be sent to you via email before February 10. You can join the Summit directly from this link, which will take you into the event platform, Aventri®, and will show you options for joining the keynote session and breakout sessions each day.

THINGS TO REMEMBER TO ENSURE THE BEST SUMMIT EXPERIENCE

1

Log in to Soybean Summit from a location that has a strong internet connection.

2

We recommend using a PC, laptop or tablet, instead of your phone. Speakers will be sharing presentations that will be easier to view on a larger screen.

3

If you experience issues with a weak connection, try calling into the audio line from your cell phone or landline.

4

Don't worry! If you get disconnected or your connection doesn't cooperate, all Soybean Summit sessions will be available to view after the event.

NOT SIGNED UP YET? THERE'S STILL SPACE AVAILABLE.

Register for free today at ILSoyAdvisor.com/SoybeanSummit



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Join us in celebrating this premier event for Illinois soybean farmers

By David Wessel, ISA At-Large
Director and Utilization Committee
Chairman

As a farmer, my natural tendency is to think of things by season like spring planting and fall harvest. Many of the farmers I know like

to call winter “meeting season,” and for good reason. It’s when our calendar is chock full of events and learning opportunities to keep us educated and informed, even in our off season. For me, Soybean Summit

has always been that meeting of the season. It’s the one where I start thinking about spring and what new practices I’ll try with my soybean acres that year. And I’ve got good news – it’s happening right now!

The funny thing about a global pandemic is that despite what’s going on in the world around us, the seasons will keep changing, and spring planting will be upon us again in just a few short months. This



year's meeting season has gone virtual in an effort to keep you safe, but still informed.

Our speaker lineup this year has a little something for everyone. We've lined up three mornings full of expert speakers on agronomy, conservation, and agribusiness management. I think you will find that by attending virtually, or watching the videos after they air, there's always something to take away, and always a new practice you can try.

So grab a cup of coffee, sit down at your home computer with a notebook, and join me online at the 2021 Virtual Soybean Summit, "Say Hello: Home Edition." You can join us at any time by registering at ilsoyadvisor.com/soybean-summit, regardless of when

this issue might make it to your mailbox. You can also access all of the event recordings at ilsoyadvisor.com.

Join us online

You can follow along with us on three different Wednesdays in February – 10, 17, and 24 – from the comfort of your own home. You can register for this free event at ilsoyadvisor.com/soybeansummit.

When you register, check out the excellent lineup of speakers and add them to your own personal learning agenda. The online platform will send you reminders for presentations that you've noted that you hope to attend.

If you are a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA), continuing education credits are available through live virtual attendance, too.

Talk about it on social

Share what you learn on social media by using #2021SoybeanSummit. ISA will be amplifying and engaging with posts that are shared. It truly does help spread the word to fellow farmers about the great content being shared here.

Send a thank you to our sponsors

We are always grateful for the support and participation of our sponsors. Our sponsors

are listed on page 10. I know they love hearing from their farmer customers, so I encourage you to reach out and let them know you appreciate their investment in this learning opportunity.

Stay tuned into ILSoyAdvisor

If you liked Soybean Summit 2021 content, you can get access to similar resources 365 days a year at ILSoyAdvisor.com. This website is an actionable agronomic information hub – funded through your soybean checkoff dollars. At any time, you can hop online to check out topics like weed management, planting strategies, or conservation practices.

One of my favorite offerings year-round on ILSoyAdvisor is our webinar lineup. ILSoyAdvisor hosts webinars throughout the year on various topics – all with the goal of improving your profitability and ROI. All webinars are recorded and available at any time for viewing.

Subscribe to ILSoyAdvisor Weekly Updates

Every week new resources are added to ILSoyAdvisor, and for subscribers, they come directly to your inbox. It's free to sign up and you can do so on the homepage of ilsoyadvisor.com. This is the best way to make sure you don't miss a

blog, webinar, or event opportunity paid for through your checkoff dollar investment.

See your checkoff dollars in action

As a soybean farmer and checkoff contributor, I like seeing checkoff dollars spent on useful causes. To me, there's no better soybean educational event than Soybean Summit. The topics are timely and relevant, the speakers are at the top of their class, and the takeaways truly help move the needle on my farm. My soybean acres improve when I take the time to invest in my own education, and I'm thankful for the checkoff in making those professional development opportunities available to us.

About David Wessel:

David Wessel, Chandler-ville, Ill., raises corn, soybeans, wheat, cattle, and hay on his 100 percent no-till farm. He is an at-large director for the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) and chairman of the ISA Utilization Committee. He is a past Soy Ambassador and Cass County FSA Committee chairman and has been involved with the Clear Lake Drainage District, Cass Morgan Farm Bureau, and Illinois Farm Bureau. He and wife, Tama, have two children.



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SAY HELLO: HOME EDITION
2021 VIRTUAL SOYBEAN SUMMIT

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Say

CONGRATULATIONS

TO TODD STEINACHER, 2020 ILLINOIS CERTIFIED
CROP ADVISER (CCA) AWARD WINNER

Congratulations Todd!

The Illinois Soybean Association would like to extend our congratulations to Todd Steinacher, CCA, recipient of the 2020 Illinois Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) Award. With his 14 years of experience as a CCA, Steinacher currently serves as an Illinois CCA Board member, an AgriGold regional agronomist, the ILSoyAdvisor Agronomic Content Coordinator, and is a CCA Soy Envoy alum. He works hard to plan and provide agronomic content to ILSoyAdvisor readers and recruit and mentor CCA Soy Envoys.

The Illinois CCA award recognizes a highly innovative individual who provides farmer customers with superior service in nutrient management, soil and water management, integrated pest management and crop production. Congratulations Todd and thank you for all you do!





2021 Soybean Master Adviser Award Winner: *Randy Niver*

By Claire Weinzierl

Each year, an Illinois Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) is nominated for the Soybean Master Adviser Award to recognize and reward them for their passion for soybean management. This year, we are recognizing Randy Niver as the 2021 Soybean Master Adviser.

Niver has been a CCA since 2012 and works as a Technical Agronomist for DEKALB Asgrow in East Central Illinois. He received his bachelor's degree in Ag Systems Management from The Ohio State University in 2007, and his master's degree in Crop Science from the University of Illinois in 2009.

"It's an honor to even be nominated for this award, not to mention be selected among peers who are every bit as, if not more deserving in some cases, than I am. To be thought of by a grower and nominated is truly an honor," said Niver.

In a world where information is right at our fingertips, Niver wants to help farmers sift through to find only what is relevant to their operation.

"I try to think of myself as a resource to growers and there's just so much information

out there, but you never really know what actually works and what doesn't," said Niver. "Being that go-to resource for a farmer to help weed out the information that's not relevant to their operation and help them be more profitable, achieve higher yield, or whatever goals they have, makes me feel good to be able to help. I like to be the guy that offers insights to make a difference."

Niver said his passion is working with farmers and serving as a source of information to help them navigate decisions.

"My absolute favorite part of my job is working directly with growers, helping them problem solve and come up with ideas that they may have never thought about or haven't thought about in a long time," he said. "To help with any part of their operation, whether planting, growing, harvesting, or little things behind the scenes such as logistics and succession planning. Anything I can do to help and work with growers, I just really enjoy that face-to-face time."

The best piece of advice Niver could give to a farmer is to not be afraid to try something new and do not be afraid to try it again.

"Just because it didn't work the first time, doesn't mean it won't work the next time," he



Randy Niver

said. "When you try something new, try for a couple of years and see if it's actually working or not. One year may be the one time out of 10 where it didn't work, or it may be the one time out of 10 where it did work. When I look at data to try to summarize information and make recommendations, I don't look at just one year. Granted, you can learn something from one year, but don't base all your decisions off of just one. Look at multiple years of information."

Dave Rahe Excellence in Soils Consulting Award Winner: **Kelly Robertson**

By Claire Weinzierl

Following the passing of former CCA Soy Envoy Dave Rahe, the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) introduced a new award named in his honor.

Rahe served as a CCA Soy Envoy in 2019 and was passionate about soil management, having spent the majority of his career specializing in the field. He authored blogs for **ILSoyAdvisor.com** covering topics such as soil compaction, micronutrient management, cover crops, and more.

The Dave Rahe Excellence in Soils Consulting Award recognizes an Illinois CCA nominated for excellence in soils consulting within Illinois soybean production systems. This year's recipient is Kelly Robertson.

Robertson is the Owner and Lead Agronomist at Precision Crop Services, LLC and has been a CCA since 1994. His territory covers the areas south of I-70 in Illinois and into southern Indiana.

A CCA and Certified Professional Agronomist, Robertson received his bachelor's degree in 1987 and his master's degree in 2005 from

Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He obtained his 4R Nutrient Management Specialty and was named the Illinois CCA of the Year in 2016. Robertson also served as a CCA Soy Envoy where he wrote articles focused on double cropping.

"It's an honor to be recognized for an award named after Dave," said Robertson. "He and I were friends and visited almost on a daily basis. He would come down and help me out when we needed some extra help in the field, and I would help him out with technology questions. We had a really good relationship and used each other as a sounding board for business and working with customers. To be recognized for an award named in his honor is special."

Robertson is passionate about soil consulting because it is key to growing a successful crop.

"Everything that we do in agriculture starts with soil – everything," he said. "If the soil isn't right, then nothing we do after that will be either. Whether it's growing a soybean crop or a corn crop, the whole growing process begins with the soil. Everything we do as farmers that affects the soil, affects the outcome of the crops or the animals we're trying to grow."

The best piece of advice Robertson can give to farmers? "Don't ignore the basics."

"The internet and social media are good platforms for sharing ideas and information, but problems arise when a farmer using the platform is inundated with as much bad information as good," he said. "An influencer may work in Oregon, but their advice is not meant for the soils, farming practices, or management styles in southern Illinois. We start chasing these 'silver bullets' because there's a promise of big yield or doing something more easily, and we start to ignore the basic fundamentals such as looking at pH, potash, nitrogen rates, and tillage practices. If we chase these silver bullets, we end up with problems that the basics would have fixed."

Robertson says farmers are like baseball players. Most everybody wants to hit a home run, but the players who have a great batting average and get a hit most times at bat, bring the greater value. "I'll take those players on my team every day," said Robertson. "The player that hits a home run once in a while and gets



Kelly Robertson

a big round of applause – I don't want him. I want the player that's consistent, who knows the basics, and who can get a base hit. I can take that to the bank."

Robertson's favorite part of his job is helping farmers work through difficult problems and providing a solution.

"When a farmer buys or rents new ground and that ground has history of low production or another problem, I like getting out there and digging in," said Robertson. "Then I go back to the farmer and look at the options to fix that problem within their management and budget. Being able to prescribe and implement that fix is the most rewarding part of my job."

Robertson recalls his favorite memories of Dave including the stories he told upon returning home from soil sampling for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) after Hurricane Katrina and their casual debates on soil problems.

"Dave and I would argue philosophy in a good way," he said. "If we encountered a particular problem in the soil, we discussed the best ways to fix it. We probably never changed the other's mind on anything, but it was good because it provoked thought and made us think outside the box," recalled Robertson.

Nominees for these awards were reviewed by a panel of ISA board members, Illinois CCA board members, and university professionals. Both Niver and Robertson will be recognized during ISA's ILSoyAdvisor virtual Soybean Summit event in February.



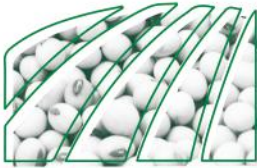
THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Five ways the soy checkoff delivers bottom-line results



1. FARMER ROI

According to an independent study by Cornell University, all U.S. soybean farmers have received an estimated \$12.34 in return value for every dollar they invested. In other words, the benefits in terms of the net additional soybean industry profits generated by the U.S. soybean checkoff program have far exceeded the cost of program expenditures over time.



2. PROFIT OPPORTUNITIES WITH HIGH OLEIC SOYBEANS

From increased food functionality to new industrial uses, high oleic soybeans add long-term value for all U.S. soybean farmers by providing a product that meets the demand of new and emerging markets for soy. USB brought the industry together to work with the farmer-leaders in expanding the availability of high oleic varieties and increasing farmer adoption of these varieties.



3. INDUSTRIAL USES OF SOY

In 2020, more than 35 new commercial products have been introduced by companies that received checkoff funding. Currently, there are more than 1,000 different soy-based products available on the market, including everything from turf grass to machinery lubricants to tires and asphalt. The soy checkoff is collaborating with the industry across the supply chain to broaden use of high oleic and commodity soybean oils through other new and novel applications.



4. BIODIESEL

The soy checkoff helped to establish biodiesel, the only domestically produced and commercially available fuel to meet the EPA's definition of an advanced biofuel. Biodiesel and renewable diesel consumption in 2019 was 2.7 billion gallons. Because of this growth in consumption, the value of U.S. soybeans has increased 63 cents per bushel. The checkoff continues to promote biodiesel use, driving up the demand for U.S. soy oil.



5. U.S. SOY HAS A PLACE AT HOME

The soy checkoff has spent over the last two decades forging partnerships and creating relationships to not only grow new demand for soybean meal and oil, but also expand existing domestic soy markets. As a result, 97% of the U.S. soybeans processed for meal today is used to feed poultry, livestock and fish. Meanwhile, 68% of the oil from U.S. soybeans is used in food, with 25% becoming biodiesel and Bioheat® and 7% being consumed via industrial uses.

Sources: 1. AFCCRC, Dr. Gary W. Williams presentation, August 2014, slide 44. 2. <https://unitedsoybean.org/media-center/issue-briefs/high-oleic-soybeans/>. 3. FY17 New Soy-Based Industrial Products/Applications Market Introductions Based on United Soybean Board Support and Non-USB Support, September 2017. 4. Informa Economics, Impact of the U.S. Biodiesel Industry on the U.S. Soybean Complex and Livestock Sector study, March 2015, page 34. 5. <https://ussoy.org/uses-for-soybeans/>.

HERE'S HOW THE SOY CHECKOFF WORKS

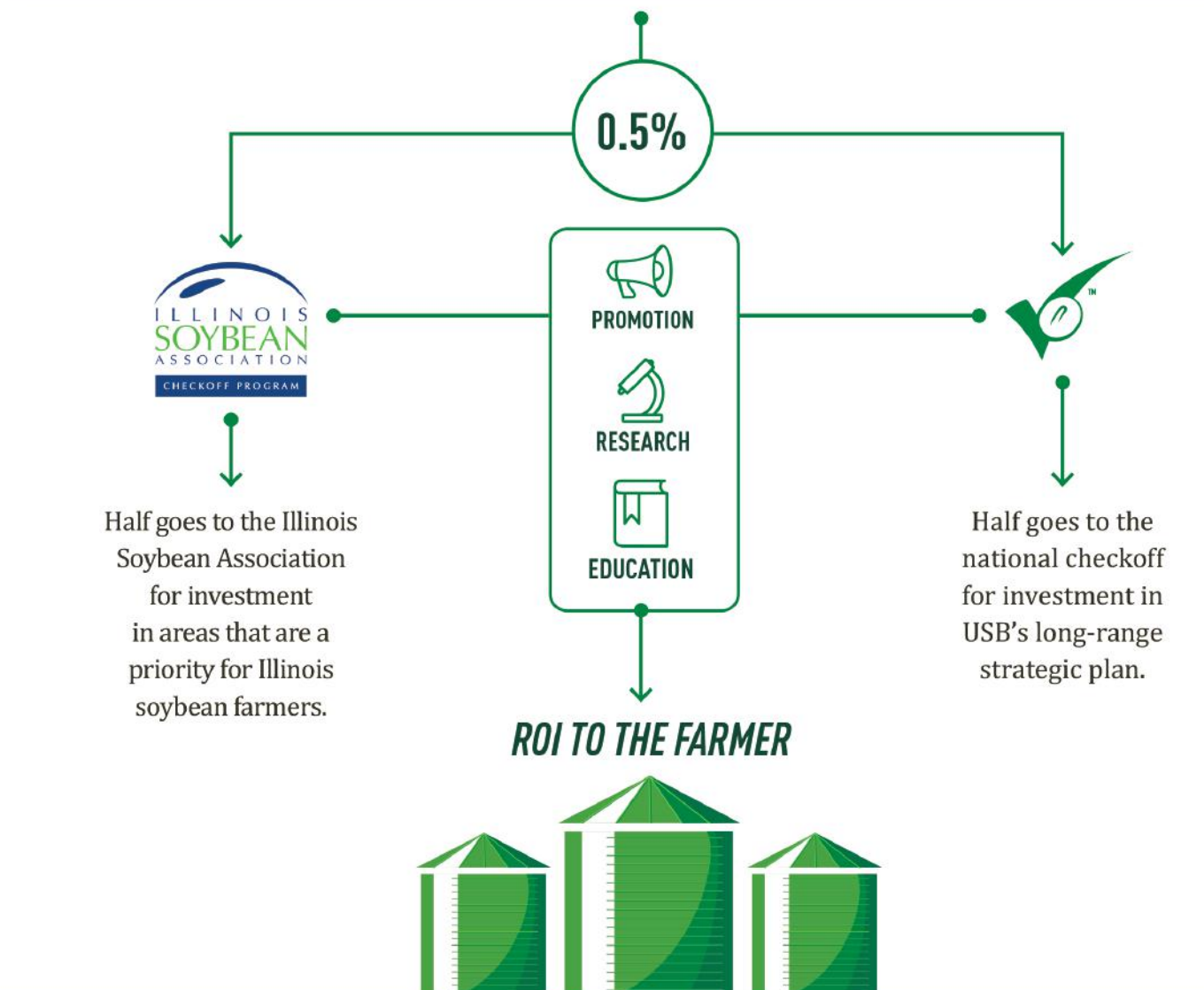
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Five thoughts to keep in your back pocket about agricultural tax strategies

Agricultural tax can be daunting but understanding certain strategies can pay.

By Jill Parrent

Agriculture tax strategies can seem like an ever-moving target with many different interpretations. Some farmers focus on the current year, others on the years that are to come, and even some are planning for generations. Because of the complexity of the ever-changing tax laws, tax planning and return preparation can be confusing and frustrating. By implementing a few key strategies, however, farmers can avoid the confusion and boost the long-term success of their business.

Kristine Tidgren, an adjunct assistant professor in the Agricultural Education & Studies Department and the director for the Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation (CALT) at Iowa State University, has deep roots in agriculture. She grew up on a farm in western Iowa and earned her bachelor of arts degree in journalism at Iowa State University. She received her J.D., from the University of Texas at Austin and was a practicing attorney. Her current work focuses on studying and interpreting laws impacting the agricultural industry. In particular, she focuses on agricultural taxation.

By having a better understanding of the necessity of tax planning strategies, farmers can plan for the future. Tidgren provides five suggestions to implement regarding agricultural tax strategies.

1. Find a trusted advisor who specializes in agricultural tax matters. The complexity of the tax law makes it important that whoever advises on tax matters really understands the details of the law and its application to agricultural businesses. This advisor is a

trusted partner for the farmer who can help improve their bottom line. Money spent on good advice is always well spent.

2. It is vitally important to keep great business records. This can mean different things to different farmers. Some farmers keep an accordion file with handwritten notes while others use a software package where they can scan and manage their business through technology. Regardless of farmers' comfort level with technology, the underlying recommendation is to keep great business records. Not keeping accurate records prevents someone from proving claimed tax benefits. It can thwart the planning process. Documentation matters and the more organized a farmer is, the more likely they will be able to take advantage of all of the tax benefits that may be available to them in a particular year.

3. Keep up to date on the tax law. Even if farmers consult with knowledgeable tax professionals, they still need to understand the tax rules themselves to maximize their business potential. To better understand the tax law for agriculturally based business, farmers can take time to read Publication 225. This is a special publication specifically designed for farmers, written and updated yearly by the IRS. Publication 225 walks through tax provisions that are specific for farmers, along with putting various other laws in the context of farming. It is filled with useful examples.

4. Engage in tax planning rather than tax return preparing. Some farmers may attend a February tax appointment, lug in their box of receipts, set it at the

feet of their advisor, and wait for the numbers to be crunched and the amount of their check to be determined. If this is a farmer's approach to tax planning, they may be missing out. The tax code is complicated and provides farmers with many tools that are not available to other taxpayers. This is because agriculture is unique in the sense that cash flow comes in spurts throughout the year instead of more evenly as with many other businesses. The nature of agriculture makes it difficult to apply regular tax laws. The only way for farmers to take advantage of these provisions is to know about them, understand them, and plan ahead by meeting with a tax advisor throughout the year rather than merely to file a return. This allows farmers to make decisions to control tax consequences, not just react to them. Farmers should seek to create a year-round working relationship with their trusted advisor.

5. Plan for the long-term, not merely for short-term gain. It is vital for farmers to make business

decisions, looking down the road and not simply to the next year. For example, how will expensing a piece of equipment impact a return three years from now or a business five years from today? Farmers must also consider the implications of these decisions on retirement, potential disability, or transition planning. When it comes to tax planning, it really is a long-term, not a short term, endeavor.

By applying these suggestions, farmers can better plan for the future. Agricultural tax planning is a key business tool. By studying the law, partnering with a trusted advisor, and asking questions, there is much for farmers to gain – perhaps for generations.

Join Kristine Tidgren's Soybean Summit session, "A 2021 Tax Update: What We Know and What We Don't," on February 10 to learn more about taxation programs and the impact they may have on farmers in 2021 and beyond.



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ISA's Agribusiness Management Program (AMP) is designed to provide farmers with go-to advice and guidance on many agribusiness management topics from succession planning to marketing. Through AMP, ISA hopes to provide farmers with peace of mind in their decision making, endurance in running their operations, excellence in the caliber of available resources and most importantly legacy, and the ability to see their farming operations through to the next generation. For more information on AMP and our online resources, visit ilsoyadvisor.com or contact Claire Weinzierl at weinzierlc@ilsoy.org.




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Soybean Summit presents Researcher Shawn Conley

Read all about the well-renowned soybean specialist, Dr. Shawn Conley.

By Claire Weinzierl

Dr. Shawn Conley grew up in southern Wisconsin on his family's dairy farm. Following high school, Conley attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he received his bachelor's, master's,

and doctoral degrees. Conley then moved on to the University of Missouri at Columbia where worked as a small grains specialist. In 2004, he was hired by Purdue University as State Soybean and Wheat Specialist, a role he held for the next three years.

In 2007, he moved back to his home state of Wisconsin where he currently works as the Wisconsin State Soybean and Small Grains Extension Specialist in the Department of Agronomy at the UW-Madison.

Checkoff-funded Research

Conley's overall research goal is to generate science-based solutions to address real world problems in soybean and small grain production.

This goal has led to a mountain of work completed for the soy checkoff, but what Conley thinks has been most beneficial to growers is the work he has done with benchmarking and the follow up Boots on the Ground project, which was also partially funded by the Illinois Soybean Association check-off program and the soybean research board through their contributions to the North Central Soybean Board.

"We've taken grower data from 9,000 farm fields from the entire north central region, which equates to over 600,000 acres of land, a huge dataset," he said. "It's a big data approach to understanding and translating what farmers can do on their own land to improve yield and cut input costs."

Through an integrated on-farm partnership, Conley worked with 48 farmers, including two in Illinois, who were given crop treatments to use on their farms. The results of the project showed an average of 5.5 bushel per acre yield increase from using the "improved" management treatments and could expect an increase of \$50 per acre extra net profit in the "improved" management treatment due to higher yields and lower costs from a lower seeding rate.

"I've done a lot of research with climate change and how it has impacted soybean production by state," said Conley.

Conley also wrote the initial research paper on the quality equation for the soybean check-off-funded High Yield PLUS Quality program.

Illinois-specific Research

"Years ago, we teamed up with Emerson Nafziger, a retired agronomist at the University of Illinois, and did some work on high yield and high management inputs," said Conley. "More recently I took another look at a maturity map and redrew the lines for the optimal maturity group for U.S. soybeans."

CoolBean.info Website

In addition to his research, Conley also manages the CoolBean.info website, a one-stop shop for all the work and research he has done on soybeans and small grains.

If you visit the site, the first thing you will see is a visual guide to soybean growth stages, taking readers all the way through a soybean's life cycle beginning with germination. Looking further into the website's offerings, Conley's soybean and small grains research is categorized into new information, early season, mid-late season, research protocols, variety trial results, and much more.

Up to this point, Conley has published 119 research papers, and has turned the majority of them into Extension publications targeted toward farmers and service providers that he works with. He is then able to translate them into usable bits for farmers and crop consultants.

Conley's commitment to agriculture has even led him to co-author a children's book entitled Coolbean the Soybean. In addition to authoring books, managing a website, and soybean research, you can find Conley on Twitter at [@badgerbean](https://twitter.com/badgerbean) for all kinds of helpful information regarding soybeans.

Passion for Soybean Research

"They're an incredibly important crop in terms of value but there's so many things you can use them for such as plastics, oil, or protein, and it's interesting," said Conley. "I joke that if you have a good piece of dirt anywhere in Illinois, anyone can grow 300 bushels of corn but it takes a real scientist to grow 100 bushels of beans."

Conley said that soybeans are much more challenging to work with because they are typically not as predictively responsive as corn.



Coolbean.info is a website developed Dr. Shawn Conley that showcases his soybean-focused work. It provides an attractive, easy to understand visual guide to soybean growth states and provides growers with the latest soybean research and information.

"It's been fun because 10 to 15 years ago, farmers thought of soybeans as a one-off crop," said Conley, who notes that farmers typically focused on corn most of the time. "I've seen it as an evolution over the last 15 years that farmers are focusing almost as much on their soybean crop as they are on their corn crop. They're much more engaged and excited to try things on their soybeans."

"I've got the best job, I think, in the world. I get to work with farmers, I get to do research, it's great. I love my job."

Plans for Soybean Summit

At this year's Soybean Summit events, Conley will be presenting "Soybean Biology: A Path to Increased Yields." In this session, Conley will discuss how changes in soybean physiology have influenced soybean yield potential. He plans to walk through the growing season and discuss the interaction of inputs with soybean growth stage and deliberate the role that soybean phenology plays

in overall yield response.

I will explain when farmers should be applying certain inputs and why we may not expect a response when we should be applying certain inputs and why we may or may not expect a response based on growth staging," said Conley. "We'll start out with planting, and then what goes on with the soybean plant during nitrogen fixation. When we get to the rapid growth stage, we will go over what we would be looking for to help protect the crop or try to help that soybean crop be less stressed."

Conley hopes that farmers tuning in will understand why certain inputs work at certain times, and why they do not work at other times.

Make plans to attend Dr. Shawn Conley's session on Wednesday, February 10 at 9:15 a.m. of the 2021 Soybean Summit presenting, "Soybean Biology: A Path to Increased Yields."

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Slug bug!

Join us in getting to know Illinois' Dr. Nick Seiter and his revved-up research on Illinois insect management.

By Betsy Osman

Most of us know the efforts of a few famous researchers, like Galileo, Newton, and some guy named Einstein. But the truth is, scientific advancements are built on the collective efforts of many researchers – the truth chasers who fly below the radar. Often what drives the work of these

explorers are interests, questions, and passions more tuned-in than those of history's favorite giants. Especially when it comes to solving real problems and moving industries forward.

Enter Dr. Nick Seiter, Research Assistant Professor and Faculty Extension Specialist at the University of Illinois.

Seiter's primary discipline is entomology, the study of insect and their relationship to humans and the environment. Entomologists are heavy-hitting contributors when it comes to such diverse fields as agriculture, chemistry, biology, human and animal health, molecular science, criminology, and forensics. The study of

insects serves as the basis for developments in biological and chemical pest control, food and fiber production and storage, pharmaceuticals epidemiology, biological diversity, and several other data-driven practices.

Professional entomologists contribute to the betterment of humankind by detecting the role

of insects in the spread of disease and discovering ways of protecting food, crops, and livestock from being damaged. They also study the way beneficial insects contribute to the wellbeing of humans, animals, and plants.

This is a life science that's critical for the preservation and protection of our health, our food, our environment, and our farms.

In 2019, Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) agreed to fund Seiter's research project, designed to combine field and laboratory experiments to evaluate the duration of residual control provided by common insecticides. Its primary target? Soybean pests. The findings of this study would be used to develop a web-based resource to inform farmers and crop advisors of the window of control expected from these materials.

"We would often hear, 'I sprayed Brand X insecticide but months later, I'm dealing with a pest problem. Did I use the wrong product? Did I spray too early?' We wanted to arm Illinois farmers with more information about which type of pest management system they need, when to apply, and how long they can expect to have subsequent control from that product," says Seiter. "We set out to provide farmers a longer window of protection from pests."

According to Seiter, insecticides are often applied during a specific soybean growth stage with little information on the actual insect populations present. (It's like shooting in the dark, hoping you'll hit the thing you're trying to hit.) These applications are often added to a fungicide or other crop protection applications with the expectation that the material will prevent further pest infestations. However, infestations of one pest species or another might occur at different times throughout the growing season, and the residual activity of these materials is not widely understood.

"Conducting these experiments over multiple growing seasons has been critical to reflect seasonal variability caused by changes in weather



conditions and insect pest abundance, and to obtain this information on multiple insecticides and target pests," said Seiter. "Some years are bigger for specific species. Last year was huge for leaf beetles; next year we may see more Japanese beetles. But conducting our research over multiple years gives us access to multiple species, different environmental growing conditions, and gives us a fuller picture from which to make recommendations."

Efficacy of insecticides depends on many factors, including the particular materials and ingredients being used, the susceptibility of the insects themselves, and weather conditions. Understanding these variables is essential to farmers making informed pest management system decisions.

"For example, an insecticide applied at growth stage R3 that provides 10 days of effective residual control would be ineffective against stink bugs that begin damaging the crop at R5," said Seiter. "Farmers and crop advisors in Illinois currently lack ready access to this information, and often must rely on their own experience or anecdotal information to make these decisions. Therefore, we proposed to evaluate the residual control provided by insecticides

applied to soybean foliage for control of common pests, and to share this information widely with farmers and crop advisors."

Seiter believes the results of this project will equip producers to time insecticide applications more effectively, ultimately improving their return on investment. Proper timing of an insecticide application optimizes its effectiveness, reducing the likelihood that a follow-up application is needed. Avoiding unnecessary or ineffective insecticide applications is key both to environmental sustainability and to preventing unnecessary exposure to target pests.

"In the end, our goal is to provide improved management recommendations to Illinois soybean producers, crop consultants, and other agricultural stakeholders who influence pest management decisions," Seiter said.

ISA recently announced its intention to fund another year of Seiter's research in an effort to positively impact production and profitability for Illinois soy farmers, and continue developing better

technology in the fight against crop-destroying enemies.

"Every year soybean growers deal with the threat of yield-reducing insects and diseases," reported Linda Kull, ISA Director of Agriculture Innovations. "The severity of these pesty challenges is determined mainly by a combination of soybean or host resistance, pest virulence, and the environment. While there are combinations of products and genetic traits that can help mitigate pest and disease damage, other important aspects include application timing, costs, and convenience for our farmers. With this work by Dr. Seiter, we are helping our farmers with information to save time and money by applying insecticides at the right time and avoid unnecessary applications."

So while we may never outpace crop-consuming insect armies, we can certainly better arm ourselves for the battle. "The bugs seem to get smarter and smarter every year," said Seiter, with a laugh. "We need to work together to stay one step ahead."

You won't want to miss Dr. Nick Seiter's presentation at the 2021 Soybean Summit Wednesday, February 17 at 10:20 a.m., "Insect Management: What did we learn in 2020?"

A foundation for planning

PCM means fewer risks and greater confidence for Illinois farmers.

By Claire Weinzierl

What is PCM?

The Precision Conservation Management (PCM) program is the premier conservation program of the Illinois Corn Growers Association (ICGA). The program was initiated through funding by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) has recently teamed up with ICGA to research on-farm conservation practices and the financial implications of their adoption via PCM.

"With these funds, and through partnerships with other organizations, we are dedicated to helping farmers implement conservation practices," said Clay Bess, PCM Lead Precision Conservation Specialist. "We work to show farmers a financial benefit by establishing trendlines and a dataset that gives them the confidence to implement practices such as minimum tillage, cover crops, better fertility management, and more."

PCM is supported through partnerships with more than 30 organizations, including private, public, non-profit, charitable, and government organizations, which have a vested interest in improving the sustainability of commercial agriculture.

Bess' role with PCM

Bess works with 100 growers in his six-county territory in PCM's East Central Illinois region, including Champaign, Coles, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, and Vermilion counties.

Bess works with farmers enrolled in the PepsiCo project, a PCM offering that has been in existence for nearly three years, which offers growers a \$10 per acre cost share on cover crops. He works with farmers to analyze

their economic and environmental sustainability metrics and then helps them develop conservation plans and implement sustainable practices.

Costs and benefits of adopting new conservation strategies with PCM

Bess said that the most successful practices he is able to recommend to a farmer regard fertility. PCM data is showing that a farmer who applies more than 40 percent of their nitrogen in the fall risks losing \$40 per acre. This amount comes from typically applying a greater quantity of nitrogen as some of it may be lost before the crop has a chance to use it.

"We're also seeing that the University of Illinois' Maximum Return To Nitrogen (MRTN) rate is actually exactly where a farmer wants to be, between 180-200 pounds of nitrogen per acre applied. That's what's going to get farmers the best bang for their buck," said Bess.

Bess said in his region, he is seeing that over wintering cover crops, commonly cereal rye, is increasing soybean production while bottom lines are mostly staying the same, and that this is the most successful practice surrounding cover crops from a financial standpoint.

ISA's partnership with ICGA on PCM

Following ISA's recent announcement of teaming up with ICGA on PCM, Bess remarked positively on the partnership.

"It's great to have ISA and ICGA logos next to each other on this type of effort," said Bess. "I think everyone is pretty happy with how PCM has performed since its establishment in 2016 and for all of us to come together and sit at the same table is pretty cool to have."

With this new partnership, PCM hopes to expand its da-

tabase by encouraging more farmers to participate.

"There are plenty of farmers out there that are using a double crop rotation," he said. "We even have farmers in Central Illinois that are using it, but because we don't have enough data to aggregate and anonymize, it's difficult to prioritize that within our pool when we cannot assess them as effectively as we need to. But with this new partnership with ISA and a brand-new region where double cropping is much more common, we're all pretty excited to have more data and farmers available to be able to more accurately analyze double cropping and maximize conservation acres."

What does a larger PCM presence mean for Illinois farmers?

According to Bess, a larger PCM presence for Illinois farmers means fewer risks and greater confidence.

"The best value that PCM provides farmers is being able to sit down with them, look at their data, and figure out what they're capable of," said Bess. "Then we can make sound recommendations for them that have great rates of success."

"There are plenty of conservation programs out there that are trying to grow too quickly, and the personal connection gets lost. What's different about this program is that farmers trust PCM specialists. A larger PCM presence will give farmers an opportunity to have that one-on-one consultation connection and be able to understand this entire puzzle of conservation, agricultural sustainability, and other related topics."

Plan to join Clay Bess in his session, February 24 from 10:20 - 11:20 a.m., "Precision Conservation Management: Establishing a Region, Report and Conservation" at the 2021 Soybean Summit.



Clay Bess (right) and Allerton, Ill. farmer Curt Elmore (left) look at data results in Elmore's PCM farmer report to assess how conservation, cover crops, and strip still impacted his bottom line.



Illinois Soybean Association Research Facts

Current fiscal year
checkoff investment
in production research:

\$1,357,268



TOP RESEARCH FUNDING AREAS

- Reliable herbicide technologies for weed control
- Nutrient loss management and sequestration in all soil types
- Profitable farm technology advancements Plant Pathology – Investigating Red Crown Rot, a New Pathogen in Illinois
- Soybean Variety Trial Protein and Oil Testing
- Insect Pest Management and Insecticide Efficacy Over Time
- Support for the North Central Soybean Research Program
- Studies to Assess High Quality Soybean Meal as Feed for Swine and Poultry



RECENT INNOVATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Research to support double-cropping in Illinois, which showed that adding wheat into the rotation could reduce numbers of soybean cyst nematode when populations are high.
- Collaboration with swine and poultry nutritionists to assess feeding high quality soybean meal to ensure soybeans meet the needs of end users.



TOP THINGS FOR ILLINOIS FARMERS TO KNOW ABOUT CHECKOFF DOLLARS INVESTED IN RESEARCH

The ISA checkoff program wants to ensure farmers have the support and data they need to make management decisions before issues arise. Early detection of pathogens, tracking pesticide resistance and increasing management options is essential to help farmers reduce soybean production risk. We also support research that trains the next generation of agricultural professionals to support the soybean industry and farm resilience, profitability and sustainability.



TOP AREAS OF RESEARCH CRITICAL TO THE FUTURE OF ILLINOIS SOYBEAN PRODUCTION

- Variety Selection and Development
- Herbicide-Resistant Weeds
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