

JANUARY 2022

Illinois **Field & Bean**

A PUBLICATION OF THE ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION



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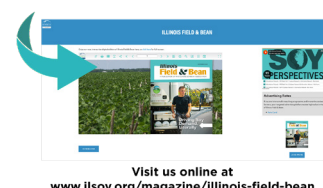
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COVER: Garrett Bruns is the Energy Manager for Premier Cooperative. Nearly 50 percent of his fuel customers use biodiesel.

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Fueling opportunity



**RON KINDRED | VICE CHAIRMAN |
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As we look back at last year's crop, we are reminded of the power that mother nature can exert on our industry. When we zoom out and see where conversations are headed, we see an increasing focus on lowering global use of petroleum products. Whether we agree with this from an economic or practical vantage point, it is important to note that changes are coming and indeed are already here. From my perspective I don't see this as a negative for my farm, but rather as a challenge we must adapt to meet and even take advantage of.

While many advocate for a future without any liquid fuels, those of us with skin in the game and boots on the ground know such major changes to business infrastructure will take time and have varying horizons. Located in Bloomington-Normal, only 20 miles from my farm, is Rivian Automotive, a new electric vehicle manufacturer. Rivian went public in November and within minutes the stock prices doubled to be near those of major companies like Disney or Apple. Changes are here.

Farmers make products that can reduce dependence on crude oil, representing a market we've been engaged in for decades. The difference is we are seeing increased and shifting interest in these fuels. Our soybeans have been making biodiesel for many years. In Illinois, transitioning just one semi to using a 20% biodiesel blend has the same impact as eliminating the emissions from five cars. These are real and achievable results that do make an impact right here in Illinois.

The Illinois Soybean Growers is leading an effort to get the state of Illinois to adopt a B20 standard which would realize massive savings in vehicle emissions and generate demand for soybean oil processed from 100 million more bushels. This small change will have a big impact. One is an increased understanding from Chicago area politicians of the role biofuels and agriculture can and do play in our state meeting its emissions goals. The use of biodiesel is an ultimate Illinois story. We grow it, we make it, we use it, and we benefit from it.

Renewable diesel is a different product from biodiesel in that it is made in the same way traditional diesel fuel is. Undergoing the hydrogen treating process transforms feedstocks into ASTM spec diesel fuel. This product being made from 100% renewable sources scores very well under carbon reduction plans in states like California. Indeed, huge interest in this fuel is present in these markets with more production capacity planned each year.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is made from a wide range of technologies, but like biodiesel, is blended with traditional jet fuel. The exact pathway for SAF is not clear yet, but is rapidly emerging to meet airline's goals of major emission reductions by 2030 and 2050.

In today's market the exciting news is we have demand and opportunity for our crop. When thinking of the past challenges and marketing options, this makes me very optimistic about the future for my farm and my son's career as he takes a larger role in our operation.

I do however want to make sure we have consistent and reliable markets. With major expansion of the soybean crushing industry in the news, and potentially more to come, farmers and organizations like the Illinois Soybean Association need to ask tough questions about which markets to prioritize to support growth and provide demand for Illinois ag products.

Added Value

In the soybean industry, we talk more about soybean oil demand than we used to, and the reason why is biodiesel. The United Soybean Board reports that in the last decade alone, soybean oil demand has seen 300 percent growth.

There was a time not so long ago when industry executives used to meet to discuss what could be done with the oil byproduct from soybean crushing. Today, those conversations have shifted. Not only do we have a thriving oil market thanks to biodiesel, but we're seeing farmers recoup that value in a market that was once more of an afterthought. This tells me that ISA's checkoff reinvestments in biodiesel for the last decade are working, along with the reinvestments of many others.

In my opinion, biodiesel is one of the best success stories that the checkoff has to tell. Today, because of continued investment and improvement, we have a product that is ready to use in today's diesel equipment, more cost effective to the end user at approximately .30 cents less per gallon, and it's also producing 75 percent less greenhouse gas emissions than traditional diesel.

We recently got to tell that story to a room of elected officials at a biodiesel demonstration and open house at the Ozinga facility in Mokena. Ozinga is a leading name in the concrete and bulk materials industry. Because of their corporate mission statement to ensure care for the environment for generations to come, biodiesel was a great fit for their fleet, both in performance and sustainability. They've switched their trucks to biodiesel with zero engine modifications. Practicing good tank maintenance, they incorporate additives to their mix starting every November which keeps their biodiesel from freezing and gelling, even on the coldest winter day. They've also saved money, not only at the fuel pump but in maintenance costs, showing that biodiesel is also good for a business' bottom line. We left that day having conveyed that using biodiesel means less emissions and lower costs without sacrificing performance, and we got to show how soybeans grown on Illinois soybean farms are making all of that possible.

This issue is dedicated to the ways your state soybean checkoff and membership programs are advancing biodiesel. It's a project we believe in – whether that be working with municipal fleets to switch to a biodiesel blend, or educating farmers about the benefits of fueling their equipment at home with a product they helped grow. For us, biodiesel is a reinvestment opportunity that's here to stay and it's an industry we will continue to champion and grow.

The next time you consider the market price you're getting for soybeans, think about biodiesel and the direct outcome of market demand. It hits you right in the wallet in more ways than one.

Here at ISA, market development investments remain a priority for our organization with more than 4.7 million dollars being reinvested for that purpose this fiscal year.

We'd love to hear your thoughts on market expansion, too. What's the next biodiesel? What's the next best reinvestment opportunity from your point of view? Send us a note today at ilsoy@ilsoy.org.



JOHN LUMPE | CEO |
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION





With 26 locations in Central Illinois and three fuel sites in Elliott, Leverett and Miller Station, Premier Cooperative puts biodiesel in their own vehicles, trusting the fuel they promote to their customers.

Slow Your Roll

Premier Cooperative is educating farmers on the importance of biodiesel, and growing trust in the product.

By Jill Parrent

Premier Cooperative's Miller Station location near Tolono, Illinois is bustling with fuel trucks and pickups filling up for the day. Premier Cooperative system has busy seasons, but the busy never stops, it only slows a bit during the winter and summer months. At Miller Station, morning office conversations revolve around who needs more fuel that week, which farmer is officially finished with harvest, and how Garrett's family finished the night before. Garrett Bruns is the Energy Manager for Premier Cooper-

ative. He just finished his busy harvest season on the family farm and is now looking toward the next step.

With 26 locations in Central Illinois and three fuel sites in Elliott, Leverett and Miller Station, Premier Cooperative doesn't stop moving. Their five bulk fuel trucks have tires that never stop, delivering fuel to farmers around Illinois. Premier Cooperative has stations from as far north as Elliott and south as Broadlands. They cover a large region within East Central Illinois, with the desire to continue growing the farmer-owned cooperative.

Premier Cooperative began in 1903 when the Savoy Grain Company was formed. By 1981, the Savoy Grain Company, Ivesdale Co-op Grain Elevator, and Sadorus Cooperative Elevator consolidated to form the Grand Prairie Coop, Inc. due to the growth of competitors in the area. In 2009, Grand Prairie Coop, Inc. and Fisher Farmers Grain & Coal Company consolidated to form the Premier Cooperative, Inc. In just over a decade, Premier Cooperative has continued to expand with added location sites, customer growth born from excellent customer service, and has a com-

petitive edge in the agricultural marketplace.

Employees like Jay Warfel and Jerry Shupe are working to gain the trust of farmers in the four-county region, educating them on biodiesel and the benefits it has to offer. Informing them is an important way to educate farmers to make decisions about the type of diesel they want to use. And, they use biodiesel in their own vehicles, knowing and trusting the fuel they put in their tank is the best quality possible.

Premier Cooperative is a champion for biodiesel, promoting it however they can. Nearly

50 percent of their customers use biodiesel, reaping the benefits of their soybeans at work first-hand. Many of those customers made the switch after a conversation with Jay, Jerry, or Garrett. With a 20-minute conversation, concerns are addressed, a firm understanding is often developed, and a relationship can be made. "It's the knowledge we provide and giving our customers an understanding of what we do," Jerry said.

"Our goal is to get rid of misconceptions. Our biodiesel is only soybean oil biodiesel. It's not animal fat, canola oil, lard, or just anything that flows," said Garrett. "To have trust, there must be knowledge of what the consumers are putting in their vehicle or machine."

Premier Cooperative is on track to close out the 2021 year with five million gallons of fuel sold. This includes gas, kerosene, B11, B20, and all variations a customer could need. B11 is the top selling fuel, Garrett explains, with farmers more apt to purchase a fuel that contains their own products. "There's no reason in the agriculture community that you wouldn't support what you're already doing."

Hunter Tweedy is one of the semi-truck drivers who is continually delivering fuel to the cooperative customers. He can be found delivering to a large farm one trip and a construction company the next.

"Larger farmers, trucking, and construction businesses are our biggest customers. They trust us, manage the fuel, and have a working knowledge of biodiesel," said Hunter. Trust is vital in the cooperative business. With the industry serving leading companies, the trust that Premier Cooperative has gained is something they don't look to change.

Jerry Shupe, a salesman for Premier Cooperative, drives the pickup which is wrapped in biodiesel messaging, a partnership between Premier Cooper-



Premier Cooperative is home to nearly 100 employees including (left to right) Hunter Tweedy, Jay Warfel, Jerry Shupe, and Garrett Bruns.



LEFT: Garrett Bruns showcases one of five fuel trucks they use to deliver fuel to their customers. RIGHT: Farming, trucking and construction businesses are Premier's biggest fuel customers.



ative and the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA). "The pickup gets quite a bit of attention," Jerry says with a grin. "One side of the pickup has a green combine and the other has a red one. That was important for us, and farmers always seem to notice." The driving biodiesel advertisement is a nod to farmers in Illinois, no matter the color of combine they prefer. With less than a year on the road, the biodiesel pickup has been driven many miles, with trips from Lincoln to Tolono to Peoria and back – and that's in one day!

ISA showcased this relationship during the Farm Progress Show in 2021, where the biodiesel wrapped pickup sat alongside ISA Director Elliott Uphoff's

biodiesel wrapped grain semi, with the goal of promoting both soy and biodiesel.



Premier Cooperative is not a nationwide operation. The small region it claims is home to 100 employees, and is trusted by farmers and agribusinesses alike. They don't take for granted the faith farmers have put over

the last 120 years, and Garrett ensures the customer always has top tier, reliable service. "As a cooperative, we must be transparent in everything we do. We don't just gain trust; we must earn it."

Nearly 50 percent of Premier's customers use biodiesel.

And just like that, the morning conversations are wrapped up while Jerry hops in his biodiesel wrapped pickup for a busy day ahead, and Hunter finishes pumping B11 into his semi for the first delivery. Agriculture never stops, and Premier Cooperative is here to ensure it never will.

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Hope Over Optimism

People tend to use “hope” and “optimism” as synonyms, but that isn’t entirely accurate. I recently read an article written by two psychologists who determined that “hope focuses more directly on the personal attainment of specific goals, whereas optimism focuses more broadly on the expected quality of future outcomes in general.”

In other words, optimism is the belief that things will turn out all right. But hope makes no such assumption. Hope is a belief that one can act to make things better in some way. It requires personal agency. While some people may be born more or less optimistic, having hope is a deliberate choice. It involves voluntary action, not just happy-hearted prediction.

When I learned Illinois Field & Bean was devoting an entire issue to the topic of biodiesel, this optimism vs. hope article sprung to mind. From a government relations perspective, advocating for biodiesel issues – making the choice to show up to fight another day – requires ongoing personal belief in our ability to contour a healthier, more sustainable tomorrow.

It requires reinvestment. It requires recalibration. It requires hope.

Over the last several months, your Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) leadership has been busy promoting the biodiesel tax exemption for blends over 10%, which save Illinois consumers up to 30 cents a gallon when they buy diesel fuel. We continue to emblazon our digital podiums with the positive health and environmental benefits associated with biodiesel.

We are pursuing legislation that promotes blending higher percentages of biodiesel. During the 2021 legislative session, the bill unanimously passed the Senate Agriculture Committee, but due to a shortened session, did not pass the full Senate.

Over the summer, the State of Illinois passed an enormous green energy bill in order to save Illinois’ nuclear fleet, and as part of that legislation, biodiesel – along with wind, solar, existing hydropower, and geothermal energy – were declared renewable energy resources.

We continue to engage with our B20 Club members to bring in legislators to learn about B20 biodiesel, its advantages, and its positive effects on the environment. Some of our B20 Club visits have included Arlington Heights, Ozinga, and the DuPage Forest Preserve. We’ve been fortunate to meet with more than four dozen legislators from every corner of state.

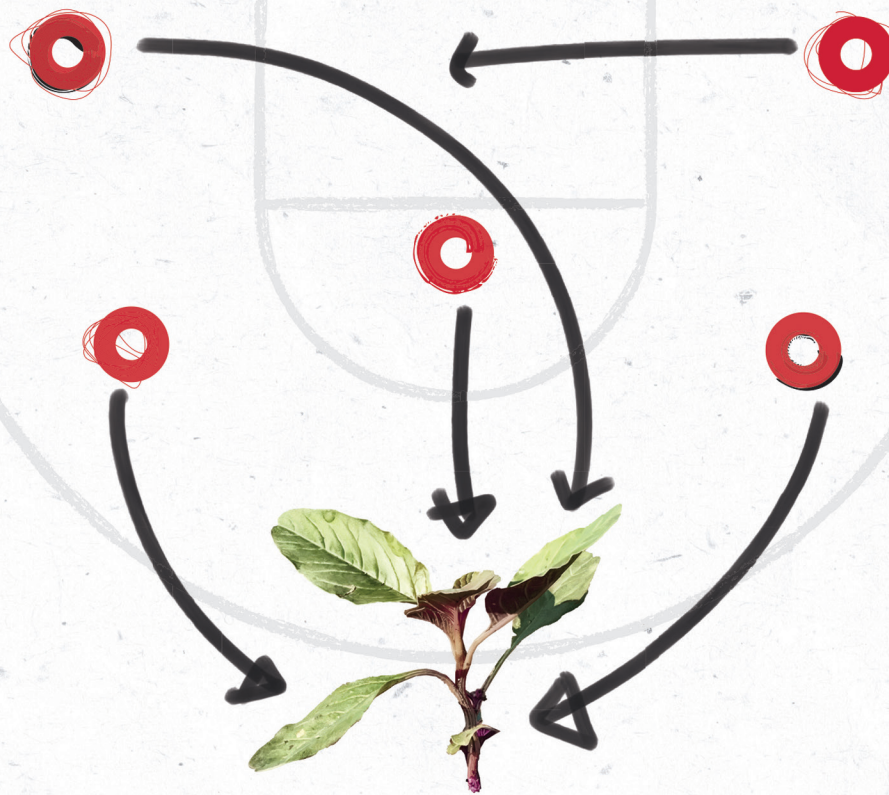
At the Federal level, we continue to advocate for an extension of the \$1.00 per gallon biomass-based diesel blenders tax credit, which expires on Dec 31, 2022.

I am certainly optimistic that ISG and its members will continue to pioneer new inroads and opportunities for biodiesel and its prolific benefits; the resources are there, the technology is there, the demand is there. But my hope lies in our ability to inspire the next generation of growers who will be audacious enough to choose a better history for agriculture.



MIKE LEVIN | SENIOR DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS | ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION





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Home Field Advantage

One of the most memorable moments from this past fall was when the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program sponsored the October 30 Fighting Illini vs. Rutgers game. Standing outside of Memorial Stadium that morning and watching the players roll in on a bus fueled by biodiesel, there was a lot of pride in knowing what we do as a soybean industry really matters. We not only feed the world, but we can fuel it, too.

I went through that entire day beaming as Illini nation heard not only the benefits of biodiesel, but learned all about how “it’s good to be soy” and that Illinois-grown soybeans get the job done – responsibly, economically and sustainably. Rooting for the home team and promoting soybeans made for the perfect fall day.

Illinois farmers can root for Illinois’ home team too when they use biodiesel. From a checkoff reinvestment aspect, the work ISA and others have done with biodiesel have paid off. Biodiesel is putting money back in the farmer’s pocket as it adds more than 10 percent to the price of soybeans. Imagine if every farmer we knew was filling up their tanks at home and all of their equipment with biodiesel blends. Buying biodiesel is an opportunity to use a product your soybeans, and your checkoff, have made possible.

This issue tells the story of why biodiesel matters in a myriad of different ways. We take you behind the scenes of biodiesel production and give you a 101 in how the product is made in the story on page 14. Taking the biodiesel message on the road to farmers, on page 6 we introduce you to our friend and partner, Premier Cooperative, who is dedicated to delivering high quality biodiesel to their customers. We’ve also provided updates in this issue on biodiesel policy and the many different ways Illinois Soybean Growers is providing advocacy support to our farmer members both in Springfield and Washington, D.C.

I hope the pages of this issue get you thinking about ways you can use biodiesel on your farm, if you aren’t already. It’s not only a high-quality fuel option that can power your equipment in every season, but it’s a more environmentally-sound option and it’s boosting your bottom line, too.

I’m asking Illinois soybean farmers to support biodiesel, and to keep rooting for this homegrown, sustainable product. Let’s remember that each farmer’s checkoff investment reinvested in a product like biodiesel yields big returns – and that’s something ISA can get behind. We aim to be “the checkoff that pays off” for the farmers we are so proud to serve.

Join me in rooting for the home team this year – and let’s bring home more wins for soy biodiesel.

Got an idea for us? Drop us a note today at ilsoy@ilsoy.org.



RACHEL PEABODY | EDITOR |
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION





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Funded by soybean farmers and their checkoff.



The soybean oil used for biodiesel production often includes the very soybeans you're growing on your farm.

Biodiesel 101

Learn about the soybean's journey from field to fuel.

By Brynna Sentel

By now you've probably heard that biodiesel is a viable, environmentally-friendly fuel option for your farm equipment. You've heard about its positive impacts on the environment, and that using it helps boost your bottom line. But do you know what exactly happens to a soybean after it leaves a field to become biodiesel?

Well first, let's break down what kinds of biodiesel there are.

One of the more common blends you've likely heard of is B20, a 20% blend of biodiesel and 80% traditional petroleum-based diesel. B20 blends are typically going to have the best impact on the environment and your equipment.

It's important to note that biodiesel can be made using a variety of feedstocks including raw vegetable oils - such as soybean oil - used cooking oils, yellow grease, and animal fats. The soybean oil used for biodiesel production often includes

the very soybeans you're growing on your farms across Illinois.

In fact, you can produce one gallon of soy-based biodiesel using only 41 lbs. of soybeans, that's not even a full bushel!

"Soy remains the largest feedstock supplier of biodiesel, but all feedstocks are marketed as biodiesel," says Scott Fenwick, Technical Director for the National Biodiesel Board (NBB). "Today's industry represents biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel, all of which are fuels that

can be made using soybean oil as a feedstock, but with differing processes."

The process begins with dehulling and crushing soybeans. The oil is then separated from the rest of the bean, creating the soybean meal, and is then distilled and refined to remove contaminants.

Soybean oil, methanol and a catalyst like methoxide are heated up to temperatures between 40° and 65° Celsius in a process known as transesterification.



Glycerine is separated from the oil to leave behind what is known as methyl esters, which is the technical name for biodiesel. But the glycerine isn't just thrown out after that; it becomes a byproduct that can be used in a variety of products including soaps, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

This entire process takes anywhere from one to four hours depending on the temperature. But the process doesn't stop there.

Before biodiesel is sent out to fuel your equipment, it must meet a series of American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) international standards just like regular diesel, however biodiesel requires additional steps to ensure it meets quality assurance standards.

For example, biodiesel requires a higher cetane number of 47 versus the diesel cetane number of 40. A higher cetane number equates to shorter ignition time and better overall performance.

"Fuel-grade biodiesel must be produced to strict industry specifications in order to ensure proper performance," says Fenwick. "Biodiesel blends meet specifications for legal diesel motor fuel, depending upon whether or not the blend contains up to 5%, B5 in ASTM D975, or between 6 - 20%, B6 to B20 in ASTM D7467. Also, B100 must meet the ASTM definition and specifications for biodiesel itself, ASTM D6751, before being blended."

As far as the environmental benefits go, B20 specifically

has shown to reduce particulate matter and carbon monoxide emissions by more than 10% and unburned hydrocarbons by more than 20% in heavy duty highway engines. It has also shown to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 86% and fossil fuel use by 80% compared to petroleum diesel.

Positive environmental effects like this help contribute to an estimated \$5.73 million in health savings when you also consider hospitalization costs, lost workdays and other healthcare costs in Illinois.

In 2019, National Biodiesel Board (NBB) did a statewide study examining the economic

drivers stemming from biodiesel use during the preceding year. They estimated \$633.3 million in value was added to the 532.4 million bushels of soybeans in Illinois in 2019 because of the use of biodiesel. That's almost \$2 a bushel!

Not only does the use of biodiesel add value to the price of soybeans but it stimulates the economy. The same NBB study concluded that 90% of Illinois diesel retailers sold blends of biodiesel between B11 and B20. Not to mention, over 7,500 jobs were supported by the biodiesel industry, which contributed to \$1.6 billion in household income.

"The biodiesel industry continues to evolve to meet changing consumer demands," says Fenwick. "The fuel itself is the most researched renewable fuel on the market, leading to its designation as an Advanced Biofuel and its approved use up to a B20 blend in of the vast majority of all diesel engines on the market."

The Illinois Soybean Association partners with the American Lung Association to recognize members of the B20 Club, a select group of Illinois-based organizations with strong commitments to run fleets on biodiesel blends of 20% or greater. For more information visit ilsoy.org/about-biodiesel.



Farmers like Elliott Uphoff, Shelbyville, run biodiesel on their farm knowing it's produced to the strictest industry standards for quality.



(YOU)

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ISA Goes to Washington

by Betsy Osman

Michael Torrey Associates (MTA) began with one client and a mission: to be a voice for agriculture and the food industry, and to help build bipartisan understanding in Washington D.C.

Located on Capitol Hill, this team of lobbyists has extensive background in the ag and food industry. Many of them, including founder Michael Torrey, grew up on a farm and bring their ag roots and a passion for wanting to “do right” by agriculture to their work in DC.

“Personally, it makes me feel like I’m doing something good for agriculture, even if I’m sitting in an office in D.C. instead of the cab of a combine,” says MTA Executive Vice President and Illinois farm girl Tara Smith.

As a firm, MTA works for a variety of animal ag interests, including the animal health sector, the animal feed sector, and a land grant university doing research in animal agriculture. The last two years has seen a diverse set of issues hit the forefront, including African Swine Fever making its way to North America (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) to climate issues such as feed additives that could reduce methane emissions in the livestock sector, to supply chain disruptions.

Of course, all of this is to support the animal agriculture sector

but it also indirectly supports our Illinois soybean farmers who grow the feed for the animals.

On behalf of Illinois Soybean Association (ISA), MTA works closely with those in the Illinois delegation on both sides of the aisle to ensure they have information from ISA on legislative positions and priorities. When needed, they also work with administration officials.

“Often the best and most productive work that is done in D.C. is done as part of a coalition, so depending on the issue, we may be working with the Soy Transportation Coalition, the National Biodiesel Board (soon to become the Clean Fuels Alliance America) or any variety of soybean processing companies to partner and work together to advocate for a position of importance to Illinois soybean growers,” said Smith. “And of course, we work with and align ourselves with the American Soybean Association.”

Like the rest of the world, the lobbyist’s landscape has changed over the last year in response to pandemic shutdowns. “We’ve recently welcomed back some in-person events in DC, which has been wonderful,” said Smith. “It still isn’t the norm for meetings and events, but it’s nice to break up a day of Zoom meetings with some actual face time.”

Recently the team helped to host in-person events for both Congressman Rodney Davis

(R-IL-13) and Congressman Darin LaHood (R-IL-18). Discussions included their perspectives on work being done on the bipartisan infrastructure package, which is fully paid-for, includes money for hard infrastructure like roads, bridges and rural broadband, and is supported by the Illinois Soybean Association and the American Soybean Association.

“These events were a great a opportunity to talk about issues of importance to Illinois soybean growers, like biodiesel and the maintenance of stepped-up basis in the tax code,” said Smith. “They involved a number of agriculture partners with similar interests, such as oilseed processors, biodiesel manufacturers and other commodity organizations.”

According to Smith, animal ag producers are watching many of the same issues as soybean growers in terms of key legislative issues namely a desire to be sure the government is funded and to support bipartisan infrastructure initiatives that could improve roads, bridges and rural broadband. Like all of us in the agriculture world, the animal ag industry is also closely watching this administration’s rewrite of the Waters of the United States Regulation and is providing input regularly.

“All of us in agriculture are gearing up for the next farm bill, which we expect to be announced in early 2022,” said



Tara Smith,
MTA Executive Vice President

Smith. “Priorities between soybean growers and the animal ag sector may be different for the farm bill, but two areas where I suspect there will be alignment is the need for market development funds, and the need for research funding. With the announcement that African Swine Fever has been diagnosed in both the Dominican Republic and Haiti, my sense is that keeping the U.S. swine herd healthy will be one of the biggest priorities – at least for hog producers – in the coming years.”

And while two days are never alike for Smith and her fast-paced team of ag champions, what doesn’t move is their commitment to represent Illinois soybean farmers and the issues that matter most.

“We want Illinois soybean farmers to know how much we value what they do, and appreciate the opportunity to represent them in Washington,” said Smith. “As a farm girl myself, I’m proud to work for ISA and the farmers it represents. My heart will always be home in Illinois.”

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Soy Biodiesel:

A Win-Win for Illinois Farmers

It's not every day that a product can claim that it can perform as well as the competition without any modifications needed, that it can help protect the environment, and that it can all be done without increased costs. But soy biodiesel **can**.

With a commitment to fund research and development opportunities for soy biodiesel, the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff program has helped create a reliable, high-performance, and engine-friendly fuel that is paying soybean farmers dividends. In fact, the demand for B20 (diesel fuel made with 20% soy biodiesel) has added more than 10% to the price of every bushel of soybeans. And what's more, biodiesel blends of B11 or higher are exempt from the state's sales tax, making it an economical and beneficial choice for farmers running diesel equipment on a regular basis. Analysts believe that if Illinois widely adopted B20, it would use over 400 million gallons of biodiesel annually, which is the same as the oil from over 250 million bushels of Illinois soybeans.

Checkoff-funded biodiesel research has helped uncover some key benefits of the alternative fuel, including:

- Superior lubricity, reducing engine wear
- Higher cetane, providing enhanced power
- Exceptional performance, even in cold-weather environments
- Fewer emissions of particulate matter, reducing the risk of asthma and other respiratory diseases
- Reduced CO₂ emissions, contributing to a more sustainable environment
- Job creation, supporting nearly 2,000 jobs in Illinois alone

By helping to find a new market for soybean oil and investing in making biodiesel more beneficial to end users, ISA has helped drive biodiesel demand higher now and into the future. That's a checkoff investment that clearly pays off.



With a total height of 361 ft (110 m), the Illinois capitol is the tallest non-skyscraper capitol, even exceeding the height of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Statehouse Conversations on Biodiesel

ISA continues to educate legislators about the need for a B20 standard.

By Stephen Sostaric

In making Illinois the top soybean producing state in the country, the state's farmers play an important role in producing the biodiesel that keeps the economy moving. However, growing the soybeans used in the fuel is only one part of the equation. Legislative policy work in Springfield plays a vital role in ensuring soy biodiesel will continue to fuel Illinois' economy while providing the state's citizens with the health and environmental benefits of cleaner air.

The Illinois Soybean Association's (ISA) policy team has spent 2020 and 2021 working to raise awareness of biodiesel in Springfield. Teaming up with B20 Club members, ISA staff met with legislators to showcase real world applications of biodiesel already happening in Illinois. These demonstrations were an opportunity to educate and connect with state legislators from across the political and ideological spectrum, including those ISA has not traditionally engaged in the past.

"We know some of the areas that stand to benefit most from

a B20 biodiesel standard are more urban areas with higher amounts of traffic represented by legislators who are not normally involved in agriculture issues," said Mike Levin, ISA's Senior Director of Government Affairs. "Biodiesel gives us the chance to demonstrate how Illinois soybean growers can have an impact no matter where you live."

Meanwhile, in Springfield, legislation was introduced to create a B20 standard requiring a minimum of 20% biodiesel in every gallon of diesel sold in the state by 2024. The ISA policy team worked with legislators to advance the legislation while working with Governor Pritzker's office to ensure biodiesel's place as part of the state's energy policy.

Ultimately, while the legislation did not pass this session, it did pass out of the Illinois State Senate Agriculture Committee. This passage is an important demonstration of support for the concept of a B20 standard. Even without B20 legislation, the sales tax exemption for biodiesel was preserved. "The sales tax exemption has proven to be a great driver of biodiesel sales, getting diesel users to

(See Statehouse Conversations on Biodiesel, page 20)



The ISA policy team works with legislative leadership at the Illinois State Capitol in Springfield.

Statehouse Conversations on Biodiesel

(continued from page 19)

try it for themselves and see that it's safe and reliable to use in their equipment, just like regular diesel," said Levin.


As 2022 begins, the team isn't letting up on advancing biodiesel policy in Illinois.


ISA's policy team, with the help of B20 Club members, will continue outreach to state legislators to educate them on the environmental impact of B20. The value of these in-person events cannot be understated, giving decisionmakers the chance to see the difference B20 biodiesel is already making in their backyards as well as how it performs in the wide range of elements typically encountered in Illinois. Building these relationships is the best way to give legislators a better understanding of B20, their local fleets,

and the impact they can have locally.

"B20 Club members across the state of Illinois are committed to both their fleets and the environment and are finding ways to improve both at the same time by using B20. These fleets are leaders who are paving the way on how we can use renewable homegrown fuels to be better, greener, now," said David Kubik, Public Policy Manager at ISA. "When an 18-wheeler moves to B20, it's like removing the greenhouse gas emissions from five and a half passenger vehicles."

As the push continues to meet the energy needs of the future more sustainably, ISA will continue to meet the challenge to educate decisionmakers in Springfield on the homegrown alternatives already being used every day around the state, showing how expanded use of homegrown biodiesel is a small change that can make a big impact.





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Every Farmer Has a Story

Meet Kevin “KJ” Johnson.

By Betsy Osman

When Kevin “KJ” Johnson steps onto the family farm, there is a memory of his childhood in every direction. Watching his father prepare equipment in the spring, hobby truck rides in the fall, and sitting for long combine rides during the harvest season. And though KJ is old enough to recall the old-fashioned, mixed rotational processes his grandfather taught him as a boy, he is the face of farming today.

Under the rubric of progress, KJ has modernized his family’s operation, all in the name of new efficiencies and getting it a little more right than past generations. To talk to him, you realize he has a gift for capturing the allure of being part of a longtime farming heritage, while articulating the challenges present for today’s growers. He embodies the idea that the new farmer-brain isn’t rigid and closed to new ideas –

it’s pliable. It’s open. It’s ready for change.

The guy loves three things: his family, his farm, and unbridled horsepower. But it’s his deep respect for the land he was born to care for that he enjoys discussing most.

KJ was born and raised on a grain farm in Vermillion County, Illinois, as the oldest of three boys. “I always knew I wanted to change agriculture. I wanted to get my hands dirty – really feel the earth I was blessed with – but also to get involved at an influential level.”

KJ attended Parkland Community College, then went on to Illinois State University where he began studying agricultural business and political science. While still in school, he took a job working for Congressman Tim Johnson on his campaign trail. After the congressman had won the 2000 election, KJ was offered a position with the congressional staff. He continued taking college

courses, learning everything he could about the business of agriculture, while working for the congressman on ag and energy policies.

“I learned so much from the congressman and that work experience,” KJ said. “He taught me that nothing comes easy; and that slow and steady always wins the race. But he also encouraged me to listen. Going into meetings, he would remind me to stay open-minded, even if I had an agenda or big opinions on a particular subject. He also taught me that legislation truly is like making sausage. Most people don’t really want to know what goes into it.”

KJ worked on the congressional staff for 12 years, until he announced his retirement. Around that time, Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association (IFCA) called to offer him a position lobbying in Springfield and Washington D.C. They wanted him to start right away.

“I told them I was honored by their offer, but I needed a little more time to think about it. Someone needed to stick around to turn the lights off and close the door behind the congressman. That’s how Illinois folks do things.”

In January 2013, KJ went to work for IFCA, lobbying for farm policies at the state and federal level. He served this role until recently when he was promoted to interim president.

“As president, I get asked all the time what I’m going to do differently. The truth is, I’m not going to try to reinvent a wheel that’s working,” says KJ. “We’re making strong efforts to keep ahead of pesticide issues, ag regulations, and talking to legislators about how important crop protection products are to farmers across the state of Illinois.”

KJ is also developing a leadership program for the crop input industry, designed to groom the next generation of ag leaders. “We need to be asking ourselves



Kace Johnson, age three, watches on as his father, uncles, and grandfather power through autumn harvest.

who is going to lead the charge? If we're not telling our own story, someone else is. And that means we're on the dinnerplate."

KJ still farms with his father and two brothers, a blood-bound crew that shares an affinity for the white-knuckled thrill of tractor pulling competitions.

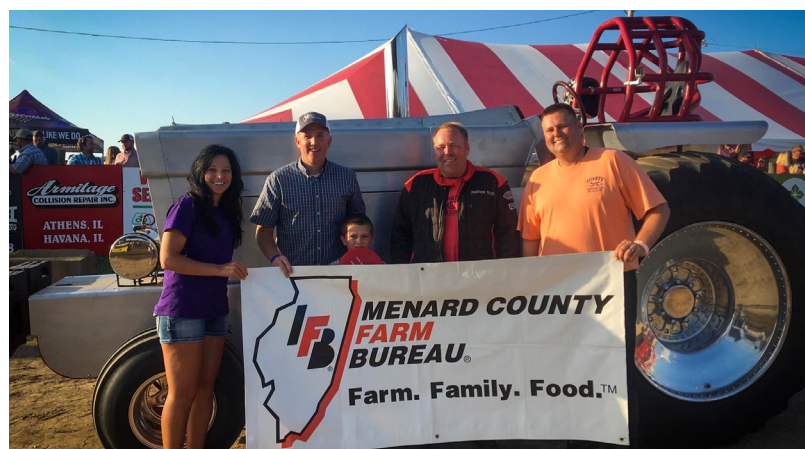
Biodiesel produces between 30-50 more horsepower than regular diesel fuel. And in a tractor pull competition? That's the difference between first and second place.

"I remember my very first tractor pull. I was six years old, and I distinctly remember hearing my grandmother yell at my father, 'You keep those boys safe!' He laughs, 'As a father today, I honestly don't know what my own father was

thinking. But I'm so glad he introduced me to the sport at an early age."

The Johnson father-son team uses B11 in their tractors, an adoption they made when they realized they could produce more horsepower with biodiesel. "Every winter, we test the latest in diesel,

turbos, and injection pumps. And every winter, we come to the same conclusion: biodiesel produces between 30-50 more horsepower than regular diesel fuel. And in a tractor pull competition? That's the difference between first and second place."



The Johnson father-son team uses B11 in their tractors, an adoption they made when they realized they could produce more horsepower with biodiesel.

"I'd encourage all my farmer colleagues to give biodiesel a try. And if you tried it several years ago, and weren't impressed, maybe it's time to try again," said KJ. "It's not the same product it once was. It stores better, and we're seeing major advantages both in our fields and also on the pulling track."

KJ Johnson may live for speed and mega horsepower, and pushing back when it comes to defending the best interests of Illinois farmers. But he's also the kind of guy who sticks around to turn the lights off and close the door.

That's how Illinois folks do things.



KJ with his wife, Anna, and children Kace (age three) and Beckett (one year).



ISA staff members Brynna Sentel and Stephen Sostaric serve breakfast to farmers unloading grain at Central Grain Co. in Belvidere, IL.

Breakfast and Biodiesel

ISA travels across the state providing breakfast and promoting biodiesel.

By Claire Weinzierl

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. But to farmers, fueling their bottom line is just as important as starting off the day with a good meal.

This past fall, the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) hosted four breakfast events at

grain elevators across Illinois to provide a well-deserved, hearty, on-the-go meal to farmers while promoting the use of soy-based biodiesel on the farm. The effort targeted various regions across the state and the hosting elevators included Central Grain Co. in Belvidere, M&M Service Com-

pany in Litchfield, Roanoke Farmers Cooperative in Roanoke, and Premier Cooperative in Thomasboro.

These events are just one tactic of ISA's farmer-facing biodiesel campaign this year, which aims to reach fuel decision makers by educating farmers and gauging their perceptions

of biodiesel and the benefits of making the switch. ISA hopes to help overcome preconceived notions about biodiesel including quality and equipment integration challenges. B20 and lower blends are a drop-in replacement for petroleum diesel and can be used in any diesel vehicle without any modifications.

"We wanted to have a conversation with farmers to let them know that their soy checkoff is invested in biodiesel," said Rachel Peabody, ISA Director of Communications. "It's a good investment for them as a product made from the crop that they grow. In terms of B11 and higher, biodiesel adds to the spot price of soybeans. It also provides a great sustainability message as a cleaner-burning fuel, and one that is not only home-grown but a more environmentally friendly option to implement into farming operations."

There are three main messages ISA hopes to tell farmers in its biodiesel efforts: it strengthens farmers' profitability, it's a high-quality product, and it's sustainable.

"Every time you fill your tank with a B20 blend made from soybeans, you're contributing to your own bottom line and the bottom line of soybean growers across the country. B20 adds more than 10% to the price of soybeans and adds to your financial stability. From a bottom-line perspective, it makes a lot of sense for farmers to use a product that they grow," said Peabody.

Today's biodiesel quality is better than ever. The quality of biodiesel has made strides over the years and ISA is confident that Illinois farmers can utilize the fuel in their equipment with pride as a product that they contribute to.

"When it comes to the quality of the product, the length that terminals and refiners go to produce high-quality fuel is much different than it was 10, 15, or 20 years ago," said Tony Haberer, Energy Marketing Manager for M&M Service Company. "At M&M Service Company, I can speak to the amount of effort and time that we go through on a seasonal-basis to make sure that the product is of the highest possible quality. Moving away from fossil fuels is another huge

benefit and using renewable fuels such as biodiesel helps us move away from that dependence on petroleum-based diesel fuel."

The third message ISA hopes to convey is that biodiesel is a renewable, cleaner-burning diesel fuel replacement for any diesel engine. Biodiesel is a more environmentally conscious option for on-farm use as it results in cleaner air, less dependence on fossil fuels, and farmers can reduce the carbon footprint of their operations.

According to the National Biodiesel Board, biodiesel reduces greenhouse gases by 86%, lowers particulate matter by 47%, which reduces smog and makes the air healthier to breathe, and reduces hydrocarbon emissions by 67%.

"Just give it a try," adds Peabody. "Farmers may have tried it when it first came out, but it's a completely different product now. The quality is as high as it's ever been, and farmers are using it with success so it's worth giving it another shot."

Peabody suggests to go ahead and talk to your fuel provider about how to effectively incorporate biodiesel into your operation as it can be a great solution for farmers. Providers such as M&M Service Company, often have the ability to do custom blends of biodiesel to accommodate farmers' needs and help support them in making the switch.

For more information about using biodiesel on your operation, visit ilsoy.org/farmer-resources-biodiesel.



ISA staff members Claire Weinzierl, Brynna Sentel and Heather Atkinson serve breakfast to farmers at Roanoke Farmers Cooperative on a brisk, windy fall morning.



The American Lung Association (ALA), focuses on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future. We were founded over 115 years ago by a group of volunteers dedicated to ending the lung health threat at the time: tuberculosis.

With tuberculosis largely controlled in the United States, we have extended that mission to other respiratory diseases, including the COVID-19 Pandemic. Cleaner air is imperative in our defense against the COVID-19 virus, a study by Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health concluded. The study found a significant correlation between high concentrations of fine particulate matter emissions from vehicles and increased vulnerability of citizens contracting the COVID-19 virus. The link between air pollution and COVID-19 mortality rates was documented in a separate study as well, highlighting the importance of clean air when faced with pervasive diseases and, more specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Though transportation-related air pollution, is obviously still a concern, diesel engines manufactured today have cleaner fuel combustion engines and components than ever before. Since it began regulating diesel engines, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has made significant progress towards the reduction of diesel-related emissions. However, because diesel engines can operate for 30 years or more, millions of older, dirtier engines are still in use today. The recent pandemic has emphasized the fact that reducing exposure to diesel exhaust is particularly important to the betterment of human health and the environment; and though regulations have come a long way, they are not enough. We, as the people affected by harmful emissions, must take independent action to reduce exposure to air pollution. One way to do that is to utilize cleaner burning fuels and engine technologies.

When drivers choose cleaner fuels, they significantly reduce the transportation emissions associated with the use of petroleum fuels.

In support of these environmental and health concerns, our organization oversees the Clean Air Choice™ program. Clean Air Choice™ actions taken by consumers, commercial, and government fleets to decrease vehicle emissions are vitally important to address public-health issues and improve the quality of life in our communities.

Human Health - Exposure to diesel exhaust can lead to serious health conditions like asthma. Respiratory illnesses can worsen existing heart and lung disease, especially in children and the elderly. These conditions can result in increased numbers of emergency room visits, hospital admissions, absences from work and school, and premature deaths. In addition, low income, African American, and Latino communities are often exposed at a disproportionate level, resulting in higher rates of asthma and lung disease when compared to other communities.

Environment - Emissions from diesel engines contribute to the production of ground-level ozone which damages crops, trees and other vegetation. Ozone, also contributes to the production of acid rain, which

adversely affects soil, lakes and streams and enters the human food chain via water, produce, meat and fish. These emissions also contribute to property damage and reduced visibility.

Global Climate - Climate change impacts air and water quality, weather patterns, sea levels, ecosystems, and agriculture. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from diesel engines through improved fuel economy or idle reduction strategies can help address climate change, improve our nation's energy security, and strengthen our economy.

ALA works with public and private partners to promote the use of alternative renewable fuels such as biodiesel and ethanol blends. When drivers choose cleaner fuels, they significantly reduce the transportation emissions associated with the use of petroleum fuels because alternative renewable fuels burn cleaner and with fewer toxic emissions.

For more than a century, we have maintained our place as America's trusted champion for lung health education, lung disease research, support, programs, services, and advocacy. ALA is proud to partner with the Illinois Soybean Association and the B20 Club as we work together to promote the benefits and uses of biodiesel, to support cleaner transportation, and to reduce toxic emissions.

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Board member spotlight

Get to know ISA board member, Betsey Emerick.

Meet Betsey Emerick, at-large director for Illinois Soybean Association, who farms with her mother, Patti, and brother, Matt.

What's your favorite memory on the farm?

In 2015 I had to run a grain cart for the first time. My dad had wanted me to learn how to run it for three years, however I was scared to death and didn't want to. Well one of our employees was in an accident and couldn't drive for harvest. My dad said, 'Well Bets you are it, we literally have no one else!' My first day on the job, I got to run with my dad, and had so much fun. I fell in love. I don't think I ever took so many selfies in my life.

When did you know you wanted to farm?

I always wanted to work in the family dealership, but after my

uncle passed away and my dad sold out the dealership and my dad became a farmer, I realized I wanted to do whatever my dad did. My degree is in finance, and I have always been a numbers person, so I always wanted to run the business side of things, but whether that was farming or with the dealership it didn't matter because I just wanted to work with my dad.

Why were you interested in representing the checkoff and membership boards?

I wanted to be around like-minded farmers who are proactive and progressive in their industry and I wanted to help change the industry and the world for the better. I also wanted to bring a different perspective to the board, representing young women in agriculture.

What checkoff project are you most excited about this year (FY22)? I would say locks and dams because I am all about the dollar. The more you improve your lock and dam systems the more your transportation will improve, which improves your basis line, which in turn, will give you more money.

What do you love about agriculture/the soybean industry? Everyone is super nice, friendly, and willing to help and give you advice. If I ever have any questions, other board members are willing to help me out.

Favorite place in your district and or/best place to grab lunch? There is a place in Vandalia called Blind Society. It is like the roaring 20s prohibition scene and next door to it in the

same building they have opened up the Witness Distillery that is going to take our corn and wheat and turn it into whiskey bourbon.

Tell us about harvest. We were a little later than everyone else. We planted soybeans first on April 27 and we were super wet all spring and we finally began harvest September 28.

What has been the biggest change you've encountered during your years of farming? I would say the technology and the size of the equipment has changed a lot. I started out with an 8-row head and a 30-foot bean platform with an auger, and now we are using equipment as large as a 12-row head and a 45-foot platform with a belt system, so we don't have as much loss. Also, the accuracy of planting is now 99% on population, which is exciting to me.

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Way to go B20 Club!

The Illinois Soybean Association would like to extend our congratulations to the B20 Club of Illinois, recipient of the 2021 Chicago Area Clean Cities Leadership Award. This award recognizes their leadership in public service.

The awards are given annually to organizations and individuals that take actions to locally reduce petroleum consumption and improve air quality, such as by using cleaner-burning alternative-fuel vehicles, electric vehicles or other advanced technologies.

