

OCTOBER 2021

Illinois **Field & Bean**

A PUBLICATION OF THE ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION



**Growing
Conversations
About Soy:
The Influencer
Issue**



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The Soybean Research & Information Network (SRIN) is doing everything they can to help farmers enhance and protect soybean yield through access to the latest checkoff supported research. The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is proud to partner with SRIN to thank Illinois farmers for their efforts to help feed the world. This fall, watch for our thank you – a lunchbox filled with snacks, a drink, and all the info you need on the latest in soybean research from around the country.

We'll feed you the info that helps you feed the world.



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COVER: Stu Ellis, pictured on the cover, was one of the ag leaders responsible for bringing Farm Progress Show to Decatur, Illinois.



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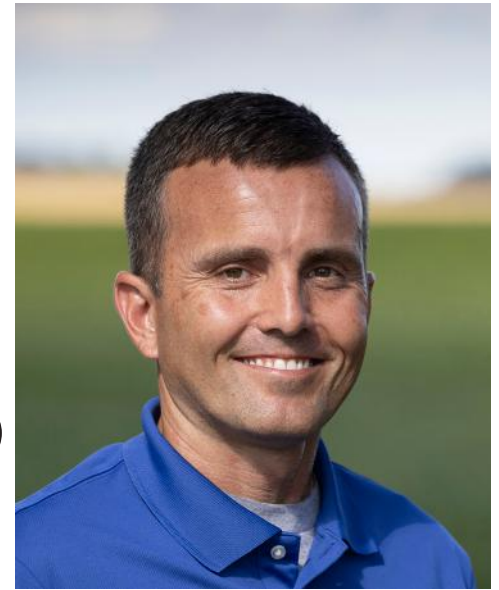
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FROM THE BOARDROOM

Welcome to La Terra



Ryan Frieders | District 1 Director | Illinois Soybean Board

When I think of an influencer, I think of someone who is knowledgeable about a subject and cultivates a level of trust and believability in their audience.

I had the opportunity earlier this summer to invite an entire group of influencers to my multi-generational family farm as part of the Illinois Soybean Association's (ISA) Gather Around the Table event. The event brought together a wide array of representatives from organizations all along the food chain. Soybean farmers like myself, along with food scientists, conservation professionals, and more, all came together to see a first-hand account of sustainable soybean production and enjoy a soybean-centric four-course meal with an incredible view of the farm.

The goal of the event was to connect professionals all along the food chain with agricultural experts more closely involved on the farm and to show what we as farmers are doing to promote sustainability and conservation, including soil health management and water quality improvement. I believe everyone who attended learned something new about the sustainability practices we are doing on the farm.

With the help of my young children, I led attendees on a tour of my operation and walked them through the sustainable practices we use day to day. While looking out over the soybean field, I explained the no-till and minimum tillage practices I've implemented on our fields in order to disturb the topsoil as little as possible and prevent erosion. I pointed out the buffer strips along the creeks bordering our fields that help reduce nutrient loss into the watershed by providing a place for nutrients to be absorbed into the soil before being washed away.

I led the group to a tank containing a 10 to 12 percent blend of biodiesel, which we use to fuel our equipment, and the solar panels that produce 50 kilowatts of solar energy that powers all of our electrical needs for the year by heating and cooling our homes and shops and drying grain in the fall.

For me, the best part of the event was getting to know the guests. That's where I got to meet some interesting people who have jobs related to agriculture, even though we don't necessarily think about them all the time. For example, there was a group of food scientists there whose job is to make food products taste better. They also use different ingredients to make foods healthier — some of those ingredients being soybeans or soybean oil. Sometimes as a farmer you forget how integral agriculture is to many other industries.

I also shared great conversation with conservation professionals, and I realized that at the end of the day, we all have the same basic wants and needs: a food supply that can be produced without harming the environment. I am tasked with protecting the crops I grow just as these groups are tasked with protecting other environmental resources as well. It really opened my mind to thinking outside the box with cover crops, tile drainage, and other practices, which is what made the event so successful.

Influencers can be extremely impactful, and it's important to cultivate a relationship with them and be able to share and receive information. Gather Around the Table was an excellent way to spark conversation, but I don't think it's the only thing that we as farmers need to do to stay connected with these business professionals.

My two cents? Continue working to communicate all the great work we do on our farms to those indirectly related to agriculture. It's important that influencers and consumers alike see for themselves how farmers work hard every day to provide safe, healthy, and sustainable food for them and their families. At the end of the day - we all have the same goal in mind.

Illinois
Field & Bean

Making History

Curiosity recently got the best of me, and I went searching to dig up a little history about our organization. How did it all begin and how did we get from there to here? Here's what I found:

Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) has existed in one form or another since the mid-1960s. Previously, ISA operated as the umbrella organization for both the Illinois soybean checkoff and Land of Lincoln Soybean Association (LOLSA). The Illinois soybean checkoff always has coordinated research, education, and promotion funded by checkoff dollars contributed by all Illinois soybean farmers.

LOLSA was created by Champaign County farmer Lyle Grace as a member organization, so the association was officially formed in 1964 to provide legislative representation for growers because checkoff contributions cannot pay for policy work. Illinois producers decided during the 1970s they wanted more non-government assistance. The Illinois Soybean Program Operating Board (ISPOB) was created to manage the checkoff. ISPOB requested farmers annually contribute a portion of proceeds to research and promotion.

During the same decade, LOLSA and ISPOB began supporting international marketing offices through the American Soybean Association (ASA), and ISPOB began funding production, and through the last few decades, a number of marketing, research, and promotion activities and legislative efforts have been added and refined by Illinois soybean growers.

In 1990, Illinois soybean leaders joined other state leaders to draft guidelines for a uniform, national soybean checkoff. The effort was successful, and the checkoff is now a major source of funding for local, state, national, and international soy projects.

To reflect the changes and provide an efficient structure for Illinois soybean farmers to support their industry, the terms LOLSA and ISPOB were replaced by Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) and Illinois Soybean Board (ISB) in 2012, respectively.

Working together as ISA, the ISG and ISB vision is to be a market leader in sustainable soybean production and profitability by increasing demand and advocacy.

While I appreciate you bearing with me on that quick history lesson, I think knowing where we've been is just as important as knowing where we are headed.

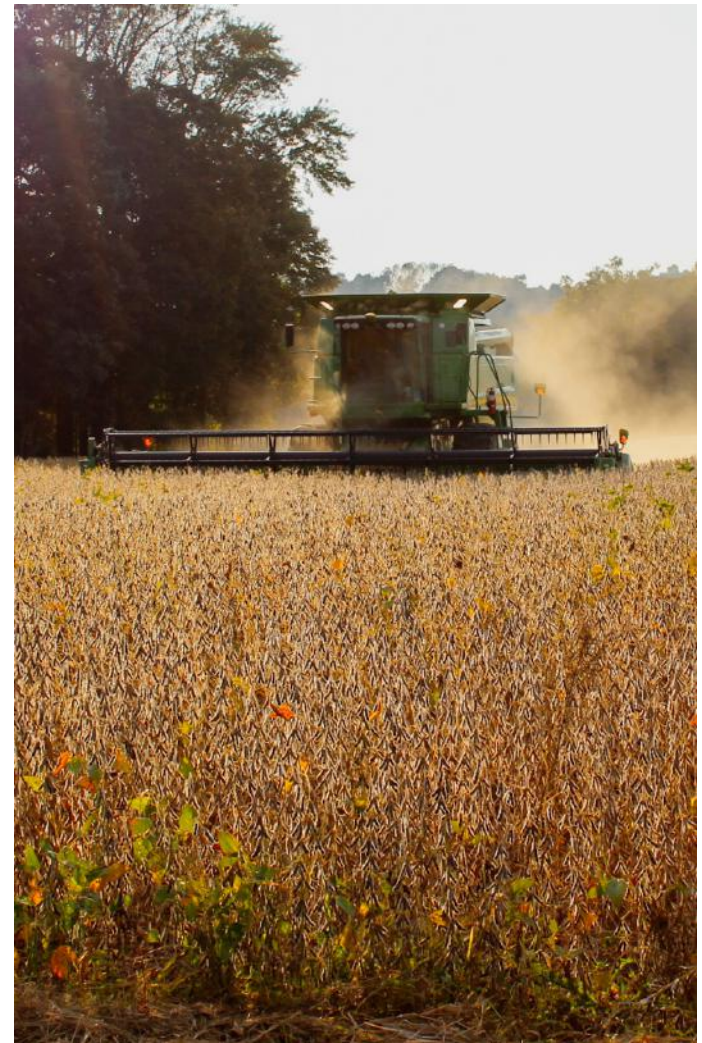
Throughout ISA's more than 50 years of history, it's incredible to think about the impacts we've made, the pursuits we've influenced, and the industries we've developed. And the best part? We are nowhere near done. ISA and the Illinois soybean industry are the source of much momentum these days. In our new FY22 fiscal year, which just kicked off Sept. 1, Illinois farmers will see their checkoff re-investing more than \$14M dollars back into their industry.

Where will we go next? Expanding into new markets like Egypt, educating farmers on carbon markets, and influencing the next farm bill policies are just a few of the hot items on the docket this season. I'm confident we are in the midst of making soybean history of our own, and all for the purpose of providing value back to the 43,000 farmers we serve. The best way to define the future is to create it.

As always, it's a pleasure to lead this organization. On behalf of ISA, we wish you a safe and productive harvest season.



JOHN LUMPE | CEO | Illinois Soybean Association



Every Farmer Has a Story

Meet Illinois ag journalist, army veteran, and one of the hardest working guys in farm broadcasting, Stu Ellis.

By Betsy Osman

Catching a moment with Stu Ellis is a little like trying to catch a rainbow. These days, he works between 60 to 80 hours a week, juggles jobs, broadcasts, family commitments, and is always working two-steps ahead on his next breaking story. He is a giant in the ag communications industry, known for his real-time farmer storytelling and commitment to working the ag journalist's beat.

He loves the grind. He lives for the hustle. He doesn't sleep much. And when it comes to populating newsfeeds and getting the jump on the next big scoop, Stu Ellis was on the scene long before social media.

Not many people know that Stu was born in an orphanage in Chicago, Illinois. Just shy of his six-month birthday, he was adopted by a couple from Taylorville, Illinois, who operated a family farm. Before his second birthday, Stu's mother was diagnosed with cancer and passed away.

Stu grew up working alongside his father on the farm, raising livestock, helping with various farming operations, and walking the beans summer after summer. He attended Taylorville High School where he first developed an appetite for radio and television broadcasting. His senior year, Stu entered a state-wide radio speaking contest and won second place.

"As a teenager, I got really excited about news reporting

and agriculture broadcasting," recalls Stu. "However my heart was in farming. More than anything else, I wanted to be a farmer, like my father. It's what I knew, it was a life I understood, and I wanted to follow in his footsteps."

Wanting to broaden his son's horizons to include as many opportunities as possible, Stu's father insisted that he go to college to earn a degree before he settled on being a Taylorville farmer.

"He wanted me to make some self-discoveries and gain some insights on my own so that one day I'd look back and feel confident I'd chosen my own path," says Stu. "He wanted to ensure that I had a backup plan."

After his high school graduation in 1966, Stu attended

the University of Illinois where he took several courses within the college of communications and eventually earned a B.S. in broadcast journalism. He enlisted with the U.S. Army's ROTC program and requested an extra year to earn his master's degree.

"I graduated from the Illinois Master's program on a Friday, and reported to the Army on Monday," remembers Stu.

Sadly, following his college graduation, Stu's father passed away, leaving the family with some difficult decisions about the fate of the family farm.

"I was going into the Army, my step-mother wasn't prepared to run the farming operation, so we made the hard decision to liquidate," says Stu. "I remember at that time being struck by how much insight my father had when he insisted I go to college to learn a trade outside of farming. It was as if he knew what was coming and wanted me to be prepared and provided for."

As a Second Lieutenant for the Army, Stu had volunteered to go to Vietnam and requested placement with the Armed Forces Network. However, because there were no available positions, he was told to go find a civilian job.

"I decided I was going to go take Walter Cronkite's job, but Dan Rather beat me to it," says Stu, with a laugh.

Stu found a position with WITY in Danville, Illinois, where he was promoted to news director. Soon after he was recruited by WSOY as farm director and hosted a morning news program, which aired for more than 16 years.

"In that role, I was able to travel to six different continents," says Stu. "It gave me such an appreciation for U.S. agriculture and how



Stu and granddaughter, and their prize catch-of-the-day.

it intersects with everyone else on the planet.”

When the station was abruptly sold, Stu reached out to the American Soybean Association (ASA) who had just awarded him the National Communications Award. ASA offered him a position and tasked him with creating new markets for “soybean ink,” a soybean-oil printing ink that had been developed by a newspaper in Iowa. Stu worked with groups of community volunteers across the country to approach their local newspapers and publishers, promoting the use of soybean ink. Within three years’ time, more than 1700 newspapers across the country bought in.

“It was an extremely successful grassroots campaign driven by a very excited group of soybean farmers and farm wives who were all eager to talk about this new use for soybeans,” says Stu.

From there, Stu went to work for Illinois Farm Bureau where he developed an educational curriculum for farmers focused on marketing and financial management. He began teaching classes across the state of Illinois and, not long after, was hired as the unit leader for Illinois Extension, managing six educators and 28 staff members.

It was around this time that Stu had an idea — an idea that would forever change the game for Illinois agribusiness — and the future for a community known for soy processing. He wanted to bring the Farm Progress Show to a permanent location in Decatur, Illinois.

Stu began working with the manager of the Macon County Farm Bureau to begin pooling community support. They started raising funds and growing excitement throughout local businesses and organi-

zations, bringing stakeholders, community leaders, and influential decision makers to the table. They began working with the city to ensure the infrastructure, underground piping, roadways, and ground site were adequate. Eventually, they raised over \$5 million in community pledges.

“It was an enormous undertaking, and I truly had to fight for what I believed would be the most advantageous for Farm Progress, and also for the City of Decatur,” says Stu. “I’d have to say building Progress City and bringing Farm Progress Show to Decatur is perhaps my greatest professional achievement. I will always be proud that I had a hand in that.”

Today, Stu and his wife of 43-years, Cindy, are helping to raise their five grandchildren. Stu hosts daily programming for WCIA in Champaign and will soon

launch a new weekly half-hour weekend program called, “Midwest Ag This Week.”

When asked what makes him most hopeful about the future of Illinois agriculture, Stu doesn’t hesitate.

“The young people I find in agriculture are so full of octane,” he says. “They’re optimistic, creative, and natural problem-solvers, and I just know they’re going to do things for our industry that we haven’t even considered. We are in good hands.”

Stu says he has interviewed more people working in agriculture than he can count — every one with a different story, a different perspective, and a different dexterity. The one thing they each have in common is an old-school ag journalist who saw something special in them and set out to share it with the world.

As long as Stu Ellis is reporting for duty, we are all in good hands.



Today, Stu hosts daily programming for WCIA in Champaign and will soon launch a new weekly half-hour weekend program called, “Midwest Ag This Week.”

Over Coffee and Between Friends

Over the past several years, the political climate has earned a black eye and a bad reputation. Division, scapegoating, and finger-pointing have lubricated today's politics, leaving folks with a bitter aftertaste. Many people don't feel politics applies to them or endeavors for their best interests. It's safe to say that Americans are largely divided on key measures of their ability to influence how the country runs, including the impact of voting for political candidates and the ability of motivated individuals to influence the way government works.

We've seen a change in the dynamics between political leadership and public opinion over the past few years. Today's power holders aren't necessarily those with the most wealth, but rather those who have the capacity to influence. Corporations and industry groups, labor unions, single-issue organizations — together, they spend billions of dollars each year to gain access to decision-makers in government, all in an attempt to influence their thinking.

I recently read a study that claimed, "Most Americans say that voting by people like themselves doesn't really affect how government runs things." According to this same study, the public is skeptical when it comes to the ability of ordinary citizens to influence the government.

If we don't feel we have the power to influence the direction our country is headed, is it any wonder people feel defensive, weary, and fearful of what's ahead?

Recently, the Illinois Soybean Association held our first Government Relations Committee meeting of the new fiscal year. It was an early morning, but smiles between old friends and new friends greeted each other with warm eagerness as farmer leaders gathered to talk political agendas. We discussed state and federal updates. We went over an upcoming B20 Club visit, policy priorities, and a Carbon Action Platform. We brainstormed the role of our growing Political Action Committee and did some vision-casting for the work of this committee dedicated to influencing legislation that impacts Illinois famers.

It was a respectful, positive, forward-facing political dialogue between people from different backgrounds. Everyone was heard. Everyone was valued. Everyone belonged to the conversation.

Politics certainly aren't perfect — but their saving grace is an ability to change and evolve to meet the needs of our citizens. Sometimes it helps to remember that politics aren't always faceless power suits, legal terminology, and mind-numbing processes. Sometimes politics are simply early morning farmers, gathered together, stirring coffee and stewarding hope, ready to illuminate a better way.



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






unitedsoybean.org

MAINTAINING OUR REPUTATION TO DELIVER

Whether shipping by river, road or rail, the soy checkoff is committed to ensuring America's infrastructure is a significant advantage for U.S. soybean farmers. We're looking inside the bean, beyond the bushel and around the world to keep preference for U.S. soy strong. And it's helping make a valuable impact for soybean farmers like you.

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



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Be Our Guest

Event gathered stakeholders from the food industry to discuss sustainable soybean production.

By Betsy Osman

On the evening of Thursday, August 12, under a tent and low-hanging tea lights, nestled beside a lush soybean field, the Illinois Soybean Association and stakeholders in the food industry “Gathered Around the Table” at LaTerra Partners in Waterman, Illinois, for an on-the-farm dinner event to discuss sustainable soybean production.

“We developed the Gather Around the Table dinner event because we wanted to set the stage for an unforgettable, influential experience. To do that, we let soy speak for itself,” says Rachel Peabody, Director of Communications for the Illinois Soybean Association.

“We believe that Illinois soybean farmers share the same commitment as food industry stakeholders providing consumers sustainably grown food ingredients, being good stewards of our land, and reducing our environmental impact. We want to get to know our stakeholders better and learn about their current efforts in meeting consumer demands for sustainable products or supporting the environment.”

The event featured soy as the lead ingredient in a four-course soy-centric menu. From hors d’oeuvres and fresh salads, to hearty main courses and a three-piece dessert tray, guests were thrilled by the unexpected quality, presentation, and flavors they experienced.

Overheard table discussions included the wide uses of soybeans (from tofu, soy sauce, and edamame to renewable fuels and high-quality animal feed), why land stewardship is important to farmers, soil erosion prevention tactics, water use reduction and quality, biodiesel made from soybeans, and renewable energy use. Guests were also invited to discuss their organization’s consumer demands for sustainable products with the hope that the Illinois Soybean Association can lend a hand in helping them meet those demands.

At one table, a professor shared a story about growing up in India. One day, she asked her grandmother, a privileged owner of coffee and tea estates along with rice fields, why their family ate so well while other people living on the property had to scavenge for food and sustenance. Her grandmother explained there was a caste system — those who had

abundance and those who had nothing.

“I was not even five years old when I pledged that I would do my part so nutritious quality food was not a privilege, but a basic human right,” said the professor. As result, she has devoted her professional practice to food science, working to improve food and water quality for populations around the world.

Hoosier Steaks owner Ashlie Miller shared how soybeans have always been a part of her life and how her sustainability-focused business depends on soy.

“Our farm is a third-generation family farm, so we realize the great responsibility we have as temporary caretakers of the land,” said Miller. “Sustainability is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. As we raise two farm girls, we realize that they too may

take over the farm and Hoosier Steaks one day, so keeping good practices in place is not only important for the present but for their future as well."

Jenny Yang, owner of Phoenix Bean Tofu, demonstrated the versatility and different forms of tofu and spoke about how she relies on local, sustainably grown Illinois soybeans to produce high-quality tofu.

"Illinois is the largest soybean-growing state in the United States," said Yang. "It is so easy to get soybeans grown only 45-minutes, one hour, or two hours away. Buying soybeans locally reduces the carbon footprint of our products. Illinois-grown soybeans are basically in our backyard, so it just makes sense to use them."

Following dinner and conversation, Illinois farmers provided walking tours to discuss soybean production, providing food industry stakeholders the opportunity to ask questions about sustainable farming practices.

Food industry stakeholder attendees also noted that they learned something new about soybean production in Illinois while attending the event.

"Sharing insights with my peers in the industry and meeting the farmers who grow the ingredients in the food we're eating is vital to fostering sustainable agriculture practices," said Katya Hantel of Conagra Brands. "It was energizing to see the steps Illinois soybean farmers are taking to responsibly manage the resources within the broader U.S. soy supply chain we source from."

"The 'Gather Around the Table' event was a wonderful opportunity to gain insight into Illinois' soybean production and all that it offers as the number one producer of soybeans," adds MeLissa Tate of Ferrara. "There are so many great companies like ours in the state of Illinois, and it was fantastic to spend the afternoon with them discussing sustainability."



The event took place at LaTerra Partners in Waterman, Illinois.



The event featured soy as the lead ingredient in a four-course, soy-centric menu.



Andrew Larson, ISA Director of Market Development, provided walking tours to discuss soybean production, providing food industry stakeholders the opportunity to ask questions about sustainable farming practices.

We Believe in Soy

In the pages of this October issue, we are talking about influence. From the relationships that we make, to the impact that we have on others, and the impact others have on us — an industry as dynamic as agriculture understands influence and its two-way street of effects.

For myself, when I think of influence, I think of my high school agriculture teacher. Whether I'm 14 or 34, he'll always be Mr. Me-teer to me, and I'll never call him differently. On paper, you probably couldn't find two people who are any more different — but we shared one really important thing. He believed in me, which in turn made me believe in myself, and that influence has rippled impacts throughout my life and career in a myriad of ways.

Whether it's someone cheerleading us and our industry from the sidelines or reaching out to a new audience, making new connections, and sharing new ideas, influence is happening every day in the soybean industry. It's an industry united by the shared belief that soybeans are a leader in meeting the protein, oil and food demands of the world, and that we will keep doing it better, and more sustainably, tomorrow.

The pages of this issue are a written example of what happens when you believe in the power of influence. We recently had the opportunity to build new relationships when we hosted food industry, urban, and environmental partners for an unforgettable on-the-farm, soy-centric dinner experience where we all learned about sustainability and environmental impact. You can read more about that on page 10.

The powerful work of influence as it relates to policy and advocacy is also covered in this issue on page 22. I think you'll enjoy reading about one congressman's unique opportunity to follow a field of soybeans in Atlanta, Illinois, all season long.

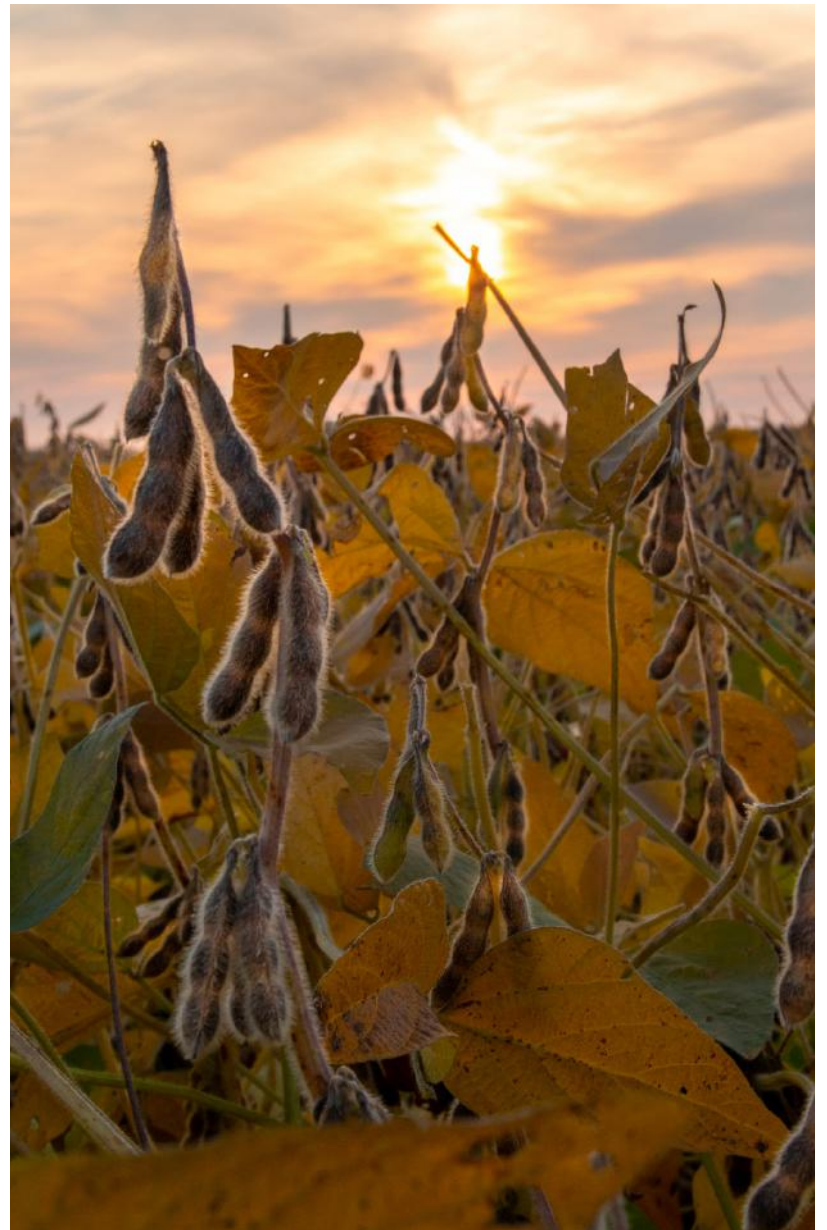
You can also catch up on your soy checkoff's investments in the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom (IAITC) program, which takes soybean influence to elementary schools around the state every year. From sprouting "beanie babies" to learning about soy crayons and more, check out IAITC's incredible impacts on page 18.

To me, the pages of this issue show the unwavering support we have for Illinois soybeans — on the farm, in classrooms, in boardrooms, and in the halls of Congress. This issue is dedicated to all of those that passionately pursue their causes, and for that, we thank you.

As always, I'd love to hear your thoughts on influence and where to go next when thinking of building new relationships for the Illinois soybean industry. Send me an email today at ilsoy@ilsoy.org.



RACHEL PEABODY | Editor | Illinois Soybean Association





IT'S TIME TO TAKE A STAND

TOGETHER, WE HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT

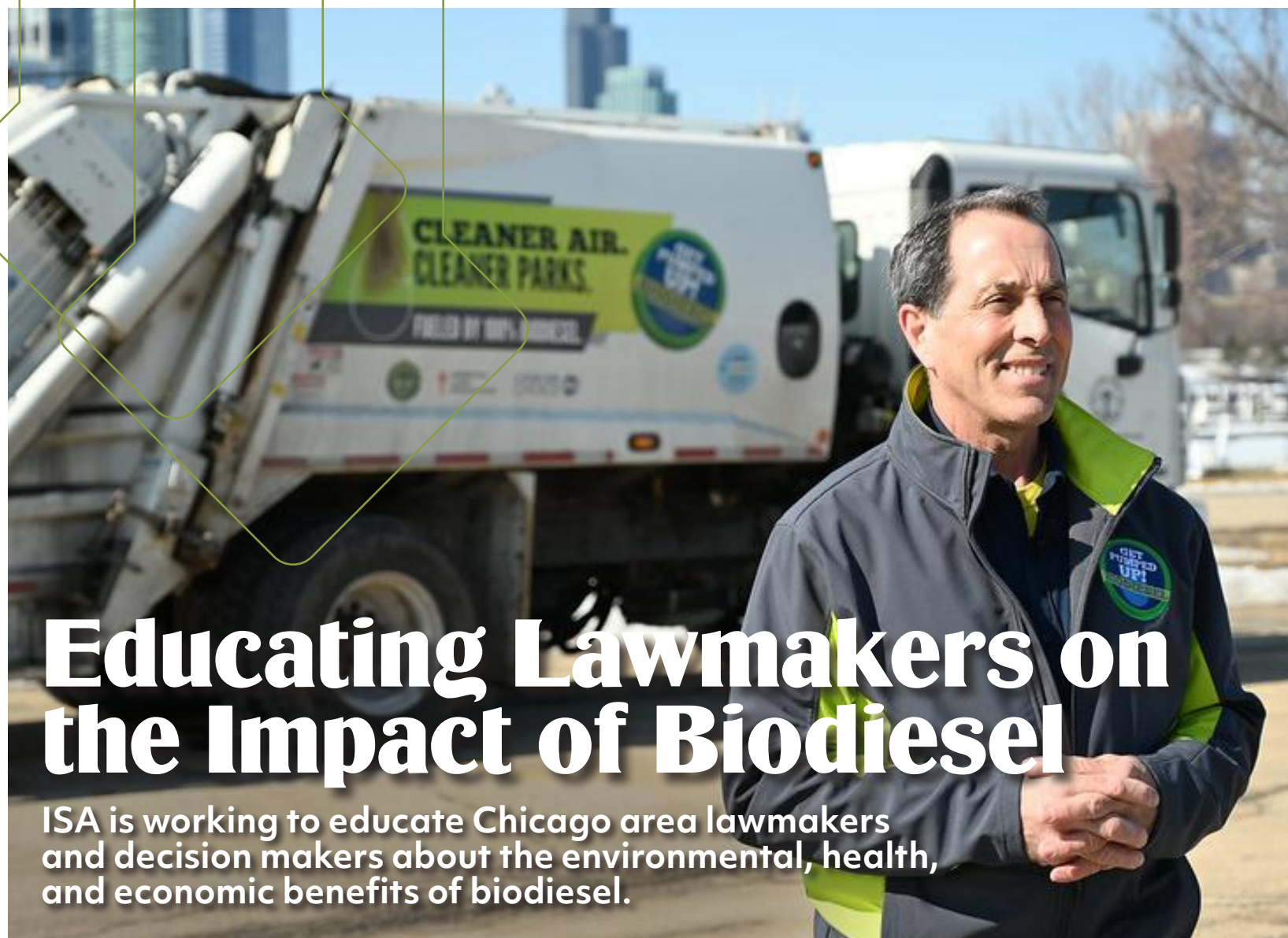
As the number one soybean producing state in the US, Illinois soybean farmers have a responsibility to protect what they've worked so hard to create. And there's no better spokesperson for your farm than you, that's why we encourage you to make your voice heard through Voice for Soy today.

In just a few clicks and less time than it takes to scroll your social feeds, you can make a difference in important legislative issues such as biodiesel, trade, infrastructure and more. Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) does the work of monitoring these issues impacting Illinois farmers at the state and national levels, engaging you through the Voice for Soy platform when it's time to act. We've laid the groundwork, but you must be the one to fight for the future you want. Your farm's viability, profitability and accessibility are all up to you.

Text "SOY" to 52886 to sign up to
be a Voice for Soy Advocate today.



ILLINOIS SOYBEAN GROWERS



Educating Lawmakers on the Impact of Biodiesel

ISA is working to educate Chicago area lawmakers and decision makers about the environmental, health, and economic benefits of biodiesel.

When it comes to educating legislators and other key stakeholders about biodiesel, ISA has been working closely with members of the B20 Club.

By Claire Weinzierl

So what's the secret to cleaner air, health benefits, reduced carbon footprint, and more jobs? What do all of these things have in common? They're just the beginning of numerous benefits we reap when we use biodiesel.

One priority of the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is to influence policy makers on the environmental, health, and economic benefits of biodiesel. Biodiesel is a reliable, high-performance fuel that works in any diesel engine without modifications. It has no effect on fuel efficiency and can run in any diesel engine without issue. In fact, biodiesel-

el even reduces engine wear, contains higher cetane for enhanced power, and offers engine cleaning properties.

Grown right here in the soybean fields of Illinois, biodiesel reduces our dependence on foreign oil as it originates from available, renewable resources such as soybean oil and animal fats. It does not take away from food production since soybean oil is a natural co-product of soybean processing.

Biodiesel blends are typically used in diesel trucks, buses, and off-road equipment such as tractors and lawn mowers, and many organizations are already reaping the benefits of biodiesel such as local municipalities, the Chicago Park District, and even

farmers using it to power their own equipment.

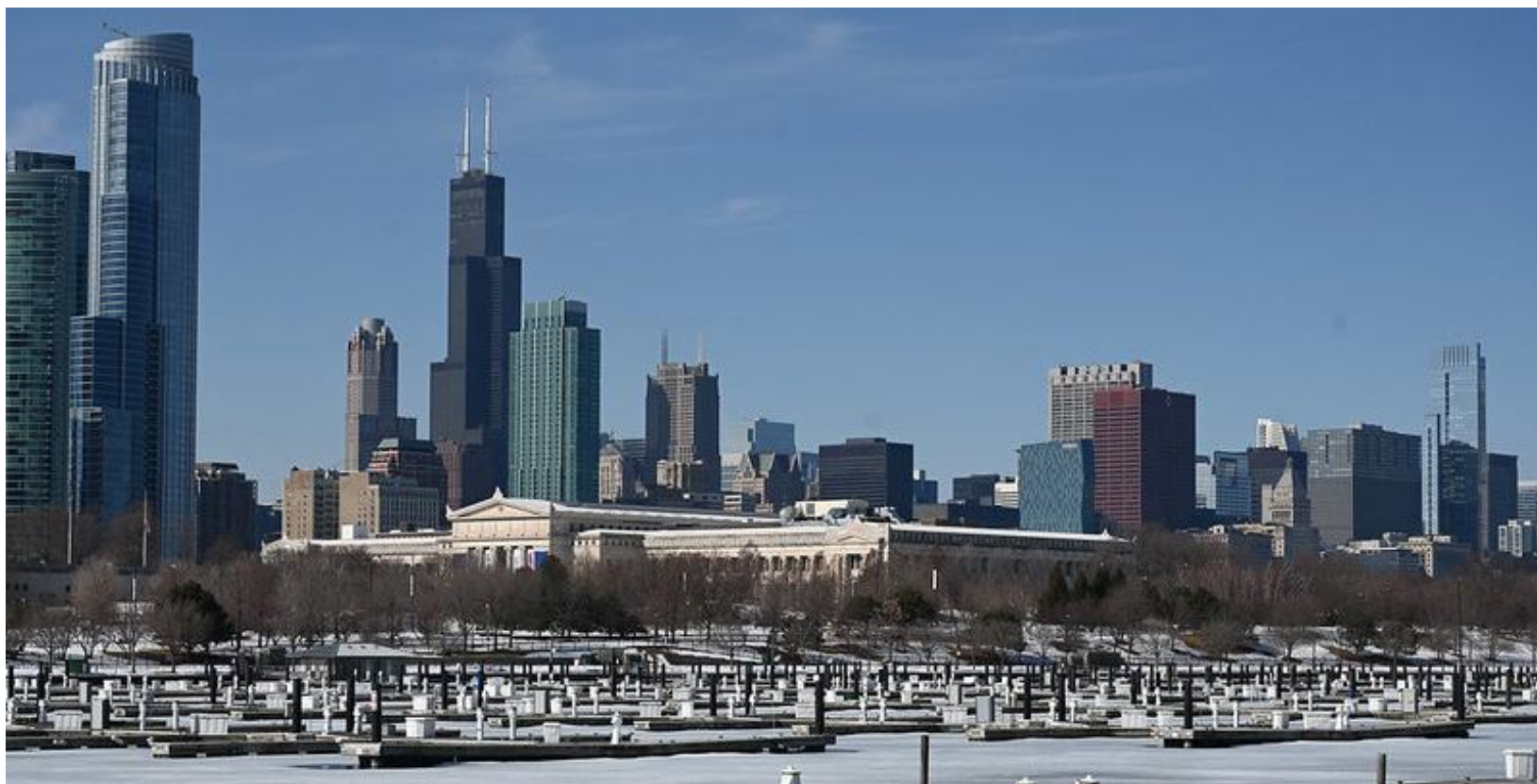
So how is ISA working to promote the use of biodiesel? ISA is taking steps to educate key legislators and influencers about the importance of biodiesel and shift in consumption of biodiesel from an 11 percent blend to 20 percent, or B20.

When it comes to educating legislators and other key stakeholders, ISA has been working closely with members of the B20 Club. A partnership between ISA and the American Lung Association, the B20 Club recognizes a select group of Illinois-based organizations with strong commitments to run fleets on biodiesel blends of 20 percent or greater.

"Working with B20 Club members is important because they are located all across the state, so there's usually always a member within a legislator's home district," says Pete Probst, Indigenous Energy.

"By connecting the legislator with the member site, it's a way to show them a practical example of how biodiesel works within their community and how easy it is to implement. It's important to use B20 Club members as partners to show biodiesel in use by a fleet and by people who use it every day."

Legislators and stakeholders then have the opportunity to visit with truck drivers and facilities who utilize biodiesel firsthand, while having ISA there to answer



ISA's efforts focus specifically on urban communities such as the Chicago area, the most densely populated region in Illinois, which also happens to have one of the highest asthma rates in the country a lot of which is attributed to diesel exhaust.

questions and to talk about the impact of Illinois soybean farmers and the economic impact that biodiesel has in Illinois.

"When it comes to the environmental benefits of biodiesel, it's an easy win due to its carbon reduction and the fact that it's safer to work around and operate with," says Probst. "It also results in cleaner air and has an all-around, easy message to get across because there's really no downsides to it."

The American Lung Association labels biodiesel as a Clean Air Choice® as it reduces harmful particulate matter compared to traditional petroleum diesel. It also generates 78.5 percent fewer carbon dioxide emissions from production and use. It's non-toxic and biodegradable, so humans can breathe easier knowing biodiesel makes for cleaner air.

ISA's efforts focus specifically on urban communities such as the Chicagoland area, the most densely populated region in Illinois.

"The Chicago area is important because it's so congested,

most of the population lives there, and a lot of fuel is used there. I think we get more bang for our buck since it's such a concentrated area and an area that has high concern for health impacts from diesel particulates," says Probst.

"Chicago has one of the highest asthma rates in the country, and a lot of it is attributed to dirty diesel exhaust. It's easy for people to see the direct impact that biodiesel can play in terms of cleaner air."

Biodiesel also proves to be the more economical choice when compared to petroleum diesel. It costs no more to operate and maintain vehicles fueled with biodiesel, and those in Illinois who fuel up with the biofuel can even save tax dollars. Illinois is already one of the largest biodiesel-producing states and supports nearly 2,000 jobs in all sectors of the Illinois economy, in addition to supporting Illinois' 43,000 soybean farmers.

"We're working to address top of mind priorities such as implementing the B20 standard in



B20, a blend of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent petroleum diesel, is safe to use in any diesel engine with little or no modifications.

Illinois, supporting stronger tax incentives at the state and federal level, highlighting fleet and diesel users in the state and the greenhouse gas reduction benefits of higher blends of biodiesel, in addition to highlighting the human health and environmen-

tal benefits to showcase how it can impact local communities across Illinois," says Andrew Larson, ISA Director of Market Development.

Check out smallshiftbigimpact.com to learn how we can make a better world with biodiesel.



A Good Influence: Voice for Soy Influencers

A spotlight on the Voice for Soy program and the influencers who are lending their time, leadership, and “influence” to the program.

Voice for Soy farmer influencers like Gracie Pierson head to their social accounts to spark important conversations about ag policy.

By Heather Atkinson

From February through July this year, the Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) partnered with six unique social media influencers involved in Illinois agriculture to expand the reach of the Voice For Soy platform. Tactics included carefully crafted Twitter posts, a series of interviews with Brownfield Radio, and enticing giveaway incentives.

The Voice For Soy action network, established on a platform called Phone2Action, makes advocate engagement in legislative issues as easy as tapping on a couple of buttons. When issues arise where constituent voices are needed to contact legislators, ISG staff set up and deploy action alerts from within the platform.

Enrolled advocates are notified of the alert by email, text, or both, and by clicking a shared link, are brought to a pre-populated form where they can review and make optional changes to the auto-generated message that will be sent to their legislators when they hit “send.”

Andrew Larson, Director of Market Development, has been largely responsible for the ongoing growth of Voice For Soy, and understands the value of working with individuals who are sometimes outside of the usual Illinois Soybean circle.

“It is important to share the message to potential advocates that the action they take really does make a difference,” Larson says. “Having trusted partners in Illinois ag social media who can share that message with their

subscribers is huge because they are true influencers who can lead by example and stand up for our industry.”

He continues, “These influencers open up their lives to the audience. By doing so, their followers and subscribers build deep trust with them. Having influencers share support for advocating for agriculture helps encourage others to stand up for their farms and take action too.”

One of the campaign influencers, Gracie Pierson (@FarmKidBlog), says her experience was positive overall.

“This was my first opportunity to do something like this, and I wanted to give it a try. It forced me to think differently about content for my public social media pages (A Farm Kid’s Guide to Agriculture). I appreciated the

topic prompts provided by the ISA team, and it was also my first foray into really talking about anything that wasn’t directly related to production. Overall, I feel that my audience responded to the topics I covered for Voice For Soy, whether or not they identified it as an influencer campaign.”

Illinois Soybean Association District 10 Director Elliott Uphoff

**TEXT SOY
TO 52886**



(@elliottuphoff) also participated as an influencer, this being his second time working with a Voice For Soy campaign.

"It seemed like an easy way to do my part and advocate for agriculture," he says.

In this year alone, advocates enrolled in the Voice For Soy action network grew from 1,355 to 1,555; one quarter of those 200 new advocates were a direct result of the success of the influencer campaign.

According to Larson, "Every voice matters! Adding to our advocate network is always a win for Illinois agriculture. This campaign helped move the ball forward."

Uphoff adds, "These types of activities are usually an uphill battle, but I can say I tried my best. I'll continue to answer the calls."

Will ISG hold another influencer campaign? Larson reveals that it's possible.

"We know that social media channels are increasingly important for how information and entertainment is consumed," says Larson. "ISG and all of agriculture must remain dedicated to this media option and the agriculture industry."

He concludes, "With massive decisions being made in Washington and Springfield that can

have major impacts on you and the future of your farm, it is hugely important to engage in advocating on behalf of agriculture. At no time has it been more important to let your elected officials know where you stand and what matters to you to keep your farm operating."

The Voice For Soy action network is a free and easy way for anyone to get involved in Illinois agriculture legislative action. To sign up for alerts, text SOY to 52886. Regular messaging rates apply and you can opt-out at any time. For more information on ISG and Voice For Soy, visit ilsoygrowers.com.

Get connected and raise your Voice For Soy



@VoiceForSoy



facebook.com/VoiceForSoy

Text SOY to 52886 to receive periodic action alerts

Visit ilsoygrowers.com



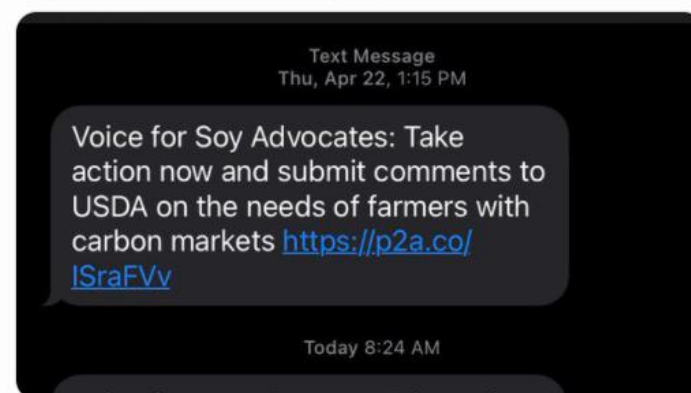
Elliott Uphoff @elliottuphoff · Jun 24

While you hopefully watch it rain, sign up for @VoiceForSoy Text SOY to 52886. Be ready to act when important legislation comes to your representatives desks. #VoiceForSoyPartner Use Code ElliottVFS



Elliott Uphoff @elliottuphoff · May 25

No spam texts, only action alerts. Text Soy to 52886 to get signed up and take action today @VoiceForSoy #VoiceForSoyPartner use code ElliottVFS for your chance at a free Rtic water jug



Elliott Uphoff tweets from the recent Voice For Soy influencer campaign. Uphoff is a soybean farmer near Shelbyville, Ill. Follow him on Twitter: @elliottuphoff.



Gracie Pierson
@FarmKidBlog

As a #VoiceForSoyPartner I use my voice to advocate for the infrastructure our state needs to keep our soybeans moving. Text "SOY" to 52886 and use code "GracieVFS" to join the @VoiceForSoy program and support Illinois farmers like me. 🌱🚜🌾

6:02 PM · Aug 20, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone



Gracie Pierson @FarmKidBlog · Jul 30

Policy and regulatory issues are ever-changing. The @VoiceForSoy team stays up on all the latest legislative details so I can focus on my farm. Being a #VoiceForSoyPartner brings my voice to those that need to hear it most. Text "SOY" to 52886 use code GracieVFS at registration.



Tweets from Voice For Soy influencer Gracie Pierson. Follow Pierson on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat at @FarmKidBlog and visit her website farmkidblog.com.



Continually Reaching the Next Generation

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom made the pivot to virtual in 2020, but maintained soybean education in classrooms across the state.

 By Sarah Meghrian
and Jill Parrent

Educating the next generation of agriculturists is an important task and one that is supported by a community of educators, companies and organizations, farmers, and others. The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) partners with the Illinois Farm Bureau's (IFB) Agriculture in the Classroom (IAITC) program to inform students about the importance of soybeans, their many uses, and how the soybean industry is continually changing and growing. This program influences youth education across the state of Illinois.

What has traditionally been in-person, hands-on opportuni-

ties in classrooms with students, has pivoted in the past year to virtual learning with the same educational goal. ISA and IFB have collaborated to create virtual alternatives to traditional, in-person soybean education with the same goal in mind – to educate the next generation of students about agriculture. The typical face-to-face presentation with an Illinois Ag in the Classroom Educator was conducted via Zoom, a video communications platform, to abide by state and health department guidelines.

Students were not able to take a field trip to a soybean farm this past year, an opportunity that traditionally gives students the experience of seeing a farming operation

in-person. Instead, as an example, students watched online video footage that provided a first-hand view of the inside of a tractor. This allowed for an entire class of students to experience this virtual field trip in a new way. This new virtual option brought different opportunities that weren't available in prior years.

Kevin Daugherty, IFB Education Director says, "The goal of Agriculture in the Classroom is to promote agricultural information and careers available in the agriculture industry. We want students to understand where their food comes from and how it is grown and used as nutrition for both animals and humans. By working with the Illinois Soybean Associa-

tion, we are able to help youth trace back the origin of food with soybeans in it and help them understand the benefits of soybeans."

In 2021, IAITC continued their Summer Ag Institutes (SAI) both in-person and virtually. The program is a series of webinars with the purpose of training elementary teachers and coordinators about agriculture. Each webinar covers a specific topic such as water, dairy, soybeans, or other agricultural facts. The intention of these webinars is for educators to learn and understand topics that can be incorporated into classroom lessons for elementary age students. The goal of the webinars is for students to learn directly from their teach-

er about the impact of agriculture in their everyday life.

One of the main focuses of IFB when it comes to soybean education is ensuring students understand the agriculture industry's focus on sustainability, which is the ability to avoid the depletion of our natural resources while enhancing the environment we are provided. One example of how sustainability is demonstrated in soybeans is by using soybean oil for biodiesel.

Biodiesel produced from soybeans creates more usable energy and releases fewer greenhouse gases than alternative sources of energy. Compared to fossil fuels, biodiesel reduces emissions by 41 percent.

These lessons are brought to the level of elementary aged students who can learn the difference between biodiesel and the gasoline the adults in their households often put in their vehicle at the gas station.

"County IAITC programs often teach students about soybeans during the spring semester. This gives students a chance to put a real-life visual to the information being taught," Daugherty states. "Soybeans are being planted in the spring, and it's easy to talk to young students about a topic when they are able to see it around them."

In 2020, IAITC included over 79 coalitions serving 86 counties with the remaining 16 counties being served by volunteers. Even throughout the changing climate of the 2020 – 2021 school year, IAITC was able to reach 15,893 teachers along with 163,981 students. These interactions were more than receiving a handout from their teacher — they were a direct lesson which was interactive for students.

Understanding the life of a soybean plant and the many uses for Illinois soybeans is

something that ISA and IFB are passionate about. Considering how important soybeans are to the Illinois economy and our food system, this is a vital topic for students to understand at a

young age. The opportunity for change to agricultural education, even at an elementary level, is what influences the next generation of consumers and agriculturists.



Kevin Daugherty, Illinois Farm Bureau Education Director



LEFT: Students had the opportunity to participate in a soybean germination activity at STEMCON at College of DuPage, coordinated by the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom (photo taken pre-pandemic). RIGHT: Teaching about agriculture to students is important and having the opportunity for hands-on learning in schools can change the course of their perspectives on agriculture.



Josh Bullard is a third generation ag teacher from a family of many who have devoted their careers to education.

Living to Serve

Meet the Bullards, a family dedicated to ag education and living out the words of the FFA motto for more than 70 years.

By Rachel Peabody

Today, Josh Bullard walks the halls of Morrisonville High School with the words "FFA" emblazoned on his blue polo shirt. Just over a decade earlier, he roamed the halls as a student. Even decades earlier, Bullard's grandfather, Bill, walked the same hallways as the high school agriculture teacher for 38 years.

Call it fate, or call it legacy – but Josh Bullard's career teaching agriculture in this small central Illinois town seems almost predestined. It's not just Josh and his grandpa, Bill – it's his dad, Chuck, his maternal grandparents, and several aunts who have all dedicated their lives to teaching.

For the Bullard's, teaching has become the "family business."

Josh Bullard

Josh Bullard has just embarked on his seventh year of teaching high school agriculture – starting first at Capital Area Career Center (CACC) in Springfield, and now at Morrisonville. When he started at CACC, he took over for none other than his dad, Chuck Bullard, who had held that post for more than 34 years.

"I spent three years at Illinois State University as a physics major, but my junior year I knew I was over working with computers. So, I went with something I liked and knew: ag education."

Josh doesn't call himself the most active FFA member during

his own days as a student – instead, that was more his older brother Jacob's thing. But, he eventually "caught the bug," and now he enjoys spending his days working with high school ag students and helping them look towards real world careers.

"Ag education was definitely the right path for me, and I've learned it being in my own classroom with my own experiences with students," he says. "I love seeing students learn a new concept and then try their skills at a Career Development Event (CDE). I also love seeing them work towards state and national FFA awards. So far at Morrisonville, I've instructed two American FFA degree students, and seven who achieved State FFA degrees."

Chuck Bullard

For Josh's dad, Chuck, the last thing he wanted to be as a high school senior was a teacher. Growing up in a family of teachers, he was ready for a different challenge. In 1975, he enrolled at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) as an ag business major, and just two years later, he came home to a life changing visit from none other than – a teacher.

"Dick Lyons, one of my LLCC teachers, was at my house talking to my dad," Chuck recalls. "He told me he'd like to see me be a teacher and that I should consider going on to SIUC in Carbondale to continue my education, so off I went."

Chuck put himself through college, taking 21 credit hours a semester and working Friday through Monday each week, all while making the dean's list each semester.

A few months after graduation, Chuck's golden opportunity presented itself at Capital Area Career Center (CACC) in Springfield. He went on to teach agriculture, mechanics, and the trades at CACC for his entire career, never once moving from the same classroom in which he started.

"Teaching at a regional vocational program, I've taught thousands of students at this point. Everywhere I go, I always find someone who calls me Mr. Bullard," he says. "It's the family joke at this point – Dad, you know everyone!"

Looking back, Chuck says that he's not too surprised that one of his kids also took the ag education route.

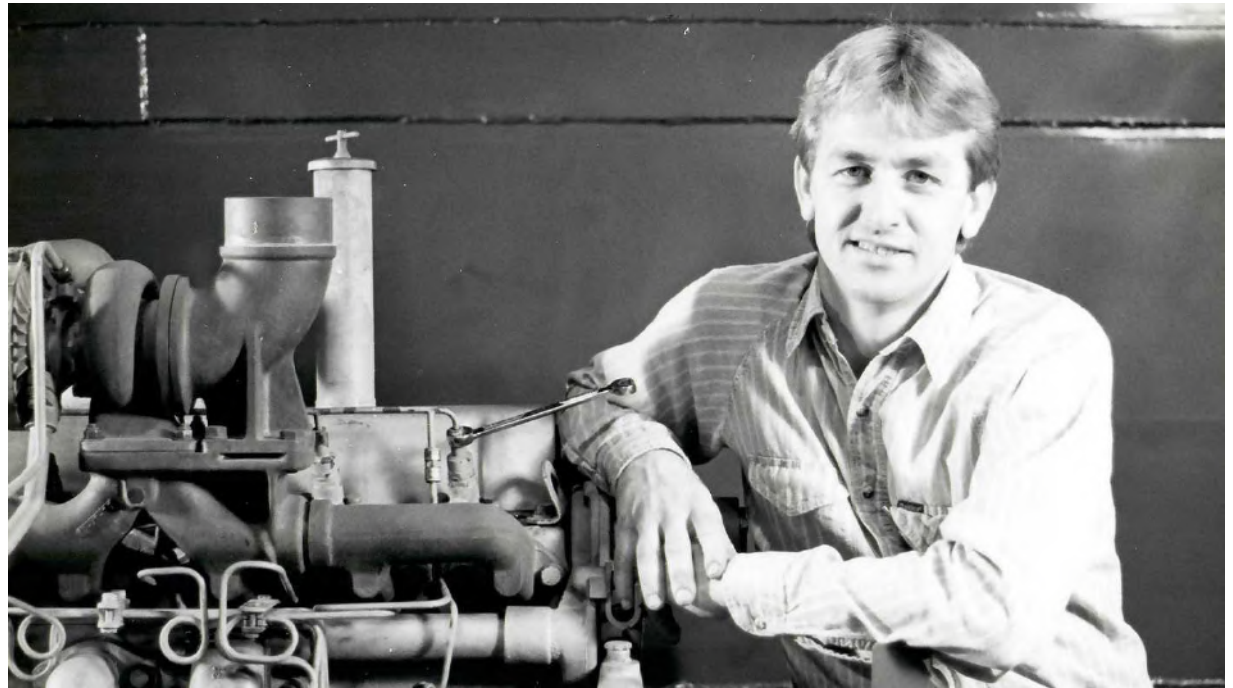
"They grew up with it. They were in my classroom from a young age, and they attended National FFA Conventions with me, too. They saw it wasn't a bad life, and that there's satisfaction in helping students and guiding them towards a career path."

Bill Bullard

Of my interviews with the Bullard family, I regret I never got the opportunity to meet Bill Bullard, the patriarch of the family who inspired a family legacy.

While his 38-year teaching career was impressive, even more so is his story of a tenacious young man who defied odds and went on to influence generations through service and selflessness.

"My dad, Bill, grew up very poor, living in an apartment with his mother," says Chuck. "There was never any money, and rarely enough food. My dad often told the story that one night his mother told him there would be nothing to eat, so they got on the floor and prayed together for food. A few minutes later, a neighbor knocked



Chuck Bullard fondly recalls his years as an ag and shop teacher at Capital Area Career Center (CACC) in Springfield - a role his son, Josh, stepped into upon his retirement.



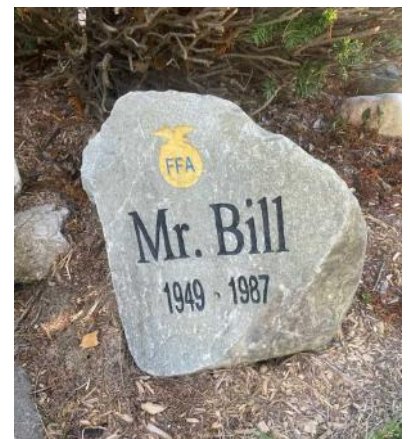
Bill Bullard is pictured here teaching high school ag classes in the same rooms his grandson teaches from today.

on the door and delivered a meal. My dad carried that story with him for the rest of his life, and it explains why he became the giving, philanthropic man he would become."

Bill Bullard would grow up in five different states and attend 18 different schools. He would go on to serve during World War II in the Navy, and upon arriving home, he hitchhiked from California to Oklahoma where he settled down to go to school. He earned his agriculture degree in three years and ultimately ended up in Morrisonville to teach.

"Knowing my dad's background explained a lot on why he was so dedicated to helping people in the agriculture and food industry," says Chuck. "He impacted many students in his classroom over the years and was always particularly helpful to those who needed a little extra hand in getting started. The last line of the FFA motto is "living to serve," and nobody embodied that more than my dad."

If the FFA motto is "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve," – I'd say the Bullard family more than understood the assignment.



"Mr. Bill" - a title Morrisonville, Ill., residents recall when remembering Bill Bullard, the community ag teacher that taught generations of students.



Illinois Social Media Influencers You Should Know

By Jill Parrent

Social media has changed the way we interact with others, create friendships, and ultimately gain information. In agriculture, this can shape the way people interpret information. Illinois has many excellent advocates for agriculture on social media, showcasing facts and allowing followers to learn about farming.

We hand selected some of the top social media influencers we think you should meet!



Rob Sharkey

 Rob Sharkey -
The Shark Farmer
 @sharkeyfarms
 @sf28430
 Shark Farmer
 sharkfarmer

What do you share on your social media channels with your viewers?

I try to show our day-to-day life in a positive, upbeat way. I share everything from farming to being a whitetail deer outfitter, as well as the media side of our operation.

The story of Rob Sharkey, The Shark Farmer:

I started my journey on social media in a unique way. Several years ago, I lost power for a week between Christmas and New Year's, and I began tweeting my power company relentlessly in a hilarious way. It began trending nationally, and I gained a following and started the SharkFarmer Podcast shortly after. I have found that if you learn to listen, people will share what's most important to them.

What is your favorite part of social media/being an influencer?

Social media has allowed me a chance to create platforms that highlight everyday farmers and people working in the agriculture community. I'm not interviewing organization executives and politicians who are very limited on what they can say. I have guests tell me every day, "Oh, I'm not that interesting," and I always respond with,

"Everyone has a story, and you are the best person to tell it." If we don't share our stories, someone else will, and they will likely get it wrong. We must be willing to share about our lives on the farm because the average person is so far removed from agriculture.

How are you working to move agriculture into mainstream social conversation?

I have "shook things up" in agriculture because I'm willing to talk about the hard topics that are considered taboo. For the past three years, I have had a Sirius XM show with my wife as my co-host. On Saturdays, we have the SharkFarmer Weekend Edition. We also have a national television show on RFDTV where we show funny videos and pictures highlighting farmers, people in agriculture, and the rural lifestyle. I am most proud of our Man on the Street interviews where we ask our urban friends about agriculture. We have a second show now called A Shot of Ag on WTVP PBS which gives me a chance to talk about agriculture with an audience that may have never had a chance to meet and talk with a farmer or set foot on a working farm.



Nathan Kleczewski

 @ILplantdoc

What do you share on IL Plant Doc?

My following is a mix of growers, industry, and other professionals and friends. Most frequently, I will share things we are seeing in the field, disease and insect management tips and tricks, and my personal articles (both outreach and peer reviewed literature) that I feel are important and useful for the agricultural community. I also throw in funny memes or gifs from time to time, potentially some cute pictures of my kids or pets, as well as occasional feedback on the recent state of the Green Bay Packers.

The story of IL Plant Doc:

When I was the field crop pathologist at Delaware, I

wanted to find a way to more quickly reach those in the agriculture community. The traditional way of doing this was to wait for the weekly or monthly Extension articles. Consequently, I saw a need for information to be sent out in a quicker timeframe, especially if out in the field. Twitter in general is a great way to snap a photo with information and a link to an article and send it while I'm out in the field. The use of technology makes social media in agriculture useful in troubleshooting or assisting in recommendations.

How are you working to move agriculture into mainstream social conversation?



There are people that do not understand how important agriculture is, not just from a food production standpoint, but an economic standpoint. Our country wouldn't be where it is if not for agriculture and the role it plays. We need to help grab more attention and do it in a way that is not just inviting to those in agriculture, but to those who are not familiar with what goes into putting those groceries in their cabinets and tax dollars into their economies.

One piece of advice to those following IL Plant Doc:

There are many places to get information, and it can be overwhelming. Find yourself a few trusted sources and use them to help sort through the muck and mire of the Internet.



Emily Reuschel

 @raisingreuschel
 @raisingreuschel

What do you share on Raising Reuschel?

Raising Reuschel is a place where fellow small-town women, rural moms, farmers, and farm wives find camaraderie, tactical tools, and inspiration. I share the stresses and joys of farm life and rural living. Positivity, joy, gratitude, and the notion that we can do hard things are sprinkled throughout my content! My fully personalized habit challenge called #youdoyou82 supports community through their personal journeys.

The story of Raising Reuschel:

In the spring of 2020, I had a tug on my heart to share about our life on the farm and my own health and personal growth journey. I knew from the beginning that my brand was based on the notion of 'raising crops, raising animals, raising babies, and raising ourselves'; hence, Raising Reuschel. In the process, I met countless incredible women in agriculture and fellow rural moms who helped me embrace this lifestyle and my role on the farm.

How are you meeting your audience where they are?

I bring a unique perspective since I did not grow up in agriculture. I ask questions and love to share what I'm learning along the way. I am thrilled to support women like me on their own journeys towards living healthy and authentic lives!


How is Raising Reuschel working to move agriculture into mainstream social conversation?

The way I advocate for agriculture is more subtle than others. There are outstanding "advocates" who go above and beyond to share information

about agriculture to educate consumers. They are truly a blessing. Weaving the joys of our life on the farm into my personal development content makes our lifestyle accessible and interesting for a variety of viewers. Having a positive experience with a woman in agriculture helps naturally bridge the gap between farmers and families across the nation.



Kathryn Mentzer

 @everydayillinois-farmfamily

What do you share on Everyday Illinois Farm Family?

Everyday Illinois Farm Family contains agriculture related stories involving the farm, agriculture in general, personal experiences with farming, growing our family in agriculture, and where our food actually comes from, since it's more than just a trip to the grocery store. We connect all the way from the field to the plate.

The story of Everyday Illinois Farm Family:

I never had considered sharing anything on social media, but when the pandemic hit, I had more time on my hands and decided to start sharing about our farm family. At the start of the pandemic, there were shortages of toilet paper, food – you name it, there was a shortage. This had me begin sharing on social media about food shortages, the food supply, and ensuring correct information was provided. My family grows food, and if I can

share my experience, this can influence others.

What is your favorite part of Everyday Illinois Farm Family?

The connections hands down. Often, connections around the country aren't even related to agriculture, but they still follow, comment, and engage with the content I'm sharing. When people say they learn something, that is an indescribable feeling. I get messages and comments exclaiming, "I learned about this on your page and now have seen it in real life." That makes what I'm doing worth it.

How are you meeting your audience where they are?

I, myself, do not know as much about agriculture compared to my husband. Often, I will ask him questions for a video that I'm wondering about, and he'll explain the answer to me in understandable terms. I often ask, "What do you think about this?" or, "Why do we do this?" My family has a willingness to answer questions which may bring about controversial conversations in a positive and relatable way.

How are you working to move agriculture into mainstream social conversation?

I'm not selling products or pressuring them to trust me. I'm selling my way of life. Misinformation can be spread quickly, and when your livelihood and health are involved, we are quick to correct it. We are just like other families, except we grow the food you may eat.

One piece of advice to those following @everydayillinoisfarmfamily:

If you have a question about where your food comes from or agriculture, go to who cares about it the most or grows it – the farmer. They are willing to answer and connect with you.



Representative Darin LaHood and Illinois Soybean Board Vice Chairman, Ron Kindred, look at Kindred's soybean progress near Atlanta, Illinois in August.

Growing More than Soybeans

Ron Kindred and Congressman Darin LaHood built a relationship all soybean season long in an Atlanta, Illinois field.

By Jill Parrent

As farmers planted soybean seeds at the exact width and depth this spring, another relationship was budding — one between Congressman Darin LaHood and Illinois Soybean Director and Vice Chairman, Ron Kindred.

This year, Congressman LaHood who represents the 18th District of Illinois and a Peoria native with constituents in a strong agricultural district, met with soybean farmer Ron Kindred in what has become a relationship with more depth than talking politics.

This spring, Congressman Darin LaHood and the Illinois

Soybean Association (ISA) announced the "Life of a Soybean" video series, providing a behind-the-scenes educational look at the process of planting, growing, and harvesting soybeans. The 18th Congressional District of Illinois is the 10th largest district nationally in terms of corn and soybean production. Much more than

a video shoot, these visits instilled a conversation between farmer and representative, forming bonds that can allow both sides to understand the job of the other.

Bundled in heavy jackets on a windy and chilly April day Representative LaHood shook hands with Kindred in Atlanta, Illinois, for the first time. Repre-

sentative LaHood was ready to try his hand at planting soybeans. They walked to the back of the planter with Kindred explaining how each soybean is treated and then planted at the exact depth and row spacing for ideal growth.

Kindred showed him the computers and GPS system inside the planter and tractors, and explained how each functioned. Representative LaHood was given the opportunity to drive the planter to see how precise and focused farmers must be each time they shut the door to the tractor. The first video explains the season of planting soybeans at the perfect time each year.

Farmers and Congress members are similar as they both like to discuss their passions, and these two conversations definitely coincide. Kindred spoke about spring planting progress and took

the opportunity to speak with the Congressman about some of the issues weighing heaviest on Illinois farmers' minds including biodiesel, trade, and infrastructure. Representative LaHood was able to see first-hand why farmers have a strong passion for advocating on behalf of agriculture – it affects their everyday work.

"Farmers don't get enough credit for the innovative work that they do," Representative LaHood stated. "They are stewards of our land, utilizing their innovation and modernization while looking out for the best interest of the land."

With the Illinois wind still blowing, Representative LaHood once again visited Atlanta this summer to walk into the soybean field with Kindred on a sun filled, 90-degree day to check on the growth of the soybeans. He learned that over 70 pods were projected to be on each plant and the tough-

ness that soybeans must display. In the field, Kindred pulled out a soybean plant to identify its health, nutrition needs, and the projected soybean yield it could potentially harvest.

Kindred and LaHood discussed their beliefs about the biodiesel Kindred uses on the farm and the need for legislation, along with the desire for infrastructure and rural bridge investment. The second video in this series showcases the progress the soybean plants have made since being planted.

"It was great to be on the farm with Ron to see how far the soybean plants have come since my first visit earlier this summer and discuss important issues facing Illinois soybean farmers," said Representative LaHood. "Farmers in the 18th District work hard each year to produce some of the world's best products, and it's important that elected officials in Washington work to empower

those who feed and fuel our country. In Congress, I'll continue to be a strong advocate for Illinois soybean producers on the Ways and Means Committee."

With harvest in full swing this fall, Representative LaHood will once again travel to Atlanta to harvest the soybeans he planted with Kindred. This experience and educational opportunity is unique, with soybean farmers like Kindred opening the door to members of congress to experience a farmer's livelihood. Soybeans won't be the only thing that grew this year for Kindred and Representative LaHood. They both will walk away with a relationship built in the field.

The door is always open at Kindred Farms for Representative LaHood. Kindred shares, "We welcome him to our farm in Atlanta any time, and we look forward to having him in the combine at harvest."



Representative LaHood and Ron Kindred discuss technology and planting during their first meeting in the spring of 2021.



SCOTT JENSEN | CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER
AND MANAGER OF FINANCIAL PLANNING
SUPPORT | COUNTRY FINANCIAL

Estate Planning for 2021 and Beyond

Once upon a time you passed your farm down to your kids. That's just the way it was. While many families will still have that goal, many are considering other routes as well.

The USDA reports that 70 percent of U.S. farmland will likely change hands during the next two decades — that's over 640 million acres. The unfortunate truth is that it's estimated that half of farming families are operating without an estate plan in place. That's a massive stumbling block for many farm families.

All in the family

While keeping the farm in the family is a noble goal, it can become complicated when dealing with the common issue of both farming and non-farming children. How do parents treat farming and non-farming children fairly? What's the difference between fair and equal? Can you have one without the other?

In a family with one farming and one non-farming child, if the parents treat the children equally, each will receive a half interest in the farm. On the surface this may look fair, but look at it from the perspective of the farming child who will work 100 percent of the farm and receive just 50 percent of the income. If the entire farm goes to the farming child, then the non-farming child may receive little. A third scenario is for parents to leave farming assets to the farming child and non-farming assets to the non-farming child. However, unless farm and nonfarm assets are of roughly equal value, even this third approach is flawed.

A common solution for this dilemma is to consider life insurance. By purchasing life insurance on the parents, an estate can be created for the non-farming child or provide the farming child with money to purchase farm assets from their non-farming sibling, helping create a fair outcome for everyone.

If not the family, then who?

Planning considerations change when no heirs or family members are interested in taking over the farm. These considerations can carry many different consequences.

Consider your options. Maybe a neighbor may want to purchase the operation? What about an employee? Could you help

them "buy into" the business? Beyond just the ownership considerations, how do you transition control? Maybe a charitable gift of property makes sense? An experienced and trusted professional can help you explore these options and develop a plan.

Power in planning

Because of the importance of planning in the agribusiness community, COUNTRY Financial offers the tools, collaboration, and ongoing support necessary for farm families to address their unique legacy goals. Whether you're a younger member of the family, focusing on your own career and family, or if you're exploring ways to pass the farm on to your kids, there's no time like the present to begin addressing these important issues.

4 essentials for your estate plan

Will: If you don't have a written will, your state has an intestacy statute. Most individuals, though, prefer to have a say in the disposition of assets, so make sure you have a will and review it every five years or following major life events.

Durable Power of Attorney: This document designates an individual to conduct business for you, make gifts, conduct financial transactions, and the like. Include successor designees in the event the named individual is unable to perform the role.

Advanced Medical Directive: Legal professionals often bundle together a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care along with a Living Will (directions for final care and wishes) into a single document called an Advanced Medical Directive.

Financial Go-Bag: Regardless of the size of your estate, everyone needs a spot to organize all of their financial information. Besides basic items, such as birthdates, Social Security, or military information, include tax records, banking, investment, insurance, business, and real estate information, too. Don't forget to include copies of the documents mentioned earlier and keep all of this in a secure location where family members or trusted individuals can locate.




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ANGIE HILDEBRANDT
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