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OCTOBER 2022

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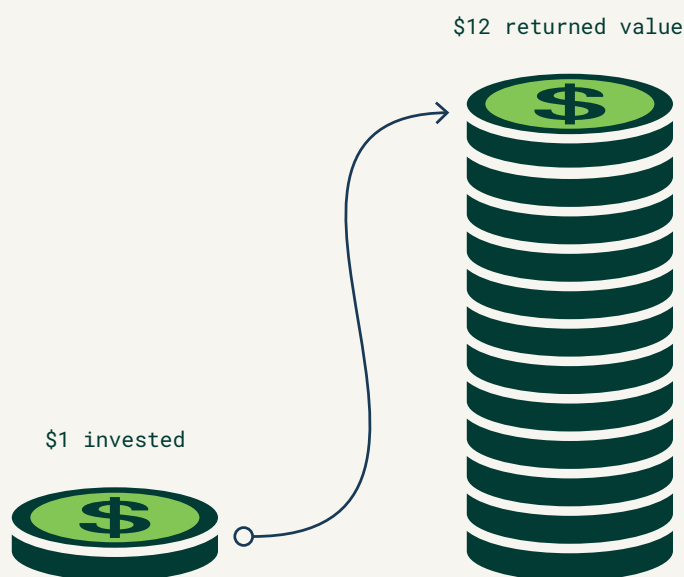
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Assistant Editor | Betsy Osman, Illinois Soybean Association
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Rachel Peabody
Director of Communications
Phone: (309) 307-9382
Email: rachel.peabody@ilsoy.org



FROM THE BOARDROOM

Checkoff Dollars: At Work, At Home



**ELLIOTT UPHOFF | DISTRICT 10 DIRECTOR |
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN BOARD**

With high soybean prices comes great responsibility from the perspective of an Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) board member. Sure, anyone can just spend the extra dollars, but our responsibility is to invest it and protect those checkoff dollars as if they are our own - because they are, in fact, farmer dollars.

Most farmers don't think about their checkoff dollars until they receive their checks after harvest. Before I became a board member, I had the same thought and that drove me to get involved. I also had a little push from a fellow farmer, Austin Rincker, from Moweaqua, Ill., who spoke very highly about serving on the ISA board. The reason he spoke so highly is because of his experience working alongside fellow farmer board members who put their minds together to make thoughtful checkoff reinvestment decisions.

After two years of being a Soy Ambassador, a program that allows you to get an inside look at ISA without being on the board, I gained a greater understanding of how our checkoff dollars go to work for Illinois soybean farmers. Now I am serving my second term as District 10 Director. For those who don't quite understand how the checkoff process works, let me give you a quick breakdown. One half of one percent, or 50 cents of every \$100 in sales, goes into the checkoff. Half of that money goes to ISA and the other half goes to the United Soybean Board (USB). ISA farmer board members then take those collections and get to work planning for how to best reinvest Illinois farmers' hard earned soybean checkoff dollars.

The board consists of 24 members, who are divided into three committees: market development, government relations and utilization. Committee members spend the spring reviewing project proposals and deciding what efforts will best further the goals of the checkoff. As a board member, project reviews and setting the annual budget is the most important work that we do, and we do it on behalf of the 43,000 soybean farmers we are proud to represent.

I am proud to be an ISA board member and serving alongside other farmer volunteers who are passionate about furthering Illinois soybean checkoff and membership investments. I encourage my fellow Illinois farmers to consider getting engaged with ISA, or other state commodity boards, as well. Come to meetings, participate in webinars and read the articles because you'll get a better understanding of the important work that's happening. I think you'll come to realize that you have a dedicated group of Illinois farmers working on your behalf and making sure your checkoff dollars go further.

What's It Worth?

I think you'd be hard pressed to put a dollar figure to the value of engaged volunteer farmer leaders.

I once came across the adage that volunteers don't necessarily have the time, they just have the heart. And I can't think of a better way to describe the farmer leaders of the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA).

The 24 volunteer farmers that make up our board of directors spend countless hours traveling, visiting various organizations in state and around the globe, interviewing with media, and making tough decisions on how best to spend your checkoff dollars. And they do it all to improve the industry of which they are part. In my role as CEO, I feel incredibly honored that I spend my days working alongside 24 of some of the most committed farmers I've ever known.

Without their tireless efforts, the soybean checkoff would not be what it is today, and every success of the organization can be attributed to their service. No matter what part of the state they come from, the farmers who lead ISA come together to better us as a whole. Their volunteerism and service have molded them into trusted advocates for farmers all across Illinois, and across all commodities, too.

In this issue of Illinois Field & Bean, we're showing you the multitude of ways their service, and their chosen soybean checkoff investments bring value right back to your farm. Or as we like to call it, "The Checkoff That Pays Off."

From exploring new markets for soy both domestically and internationally, to future-forward information platforms, this issue features a few of the checkoff-funded programs and new staff teams that bring you return on investment on your checkoff dollars, and the farmer leaders who guide them.

And for that, we would like to recognize our farmer leaders of the past, present, and future, and thank them for their time, service, and dedication to the organization and the future of Illinois soy. We understand that your service takes you away from your farm and running your business, and we are appreciative of the role you play in representing your fellow Illinois farmers.

It's an exciting feat to achieve a goal or overcome a challenge you see within the industry, and I'd encourage you to get involved and make your voice heard. It truly is the only way to get the job done so you can harvest the benefits. And even if you think you don't have the time, all you need is a little heart.

And the best part? We're always looking for fresh ideas and new farmer voices to lead the industry. If you or someone you know is interested in getting involved with the Illinois Soybean Board, send us an email at ilsoy@ilsoy.org.



JOHN LUMPE | CEO |
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION





ASA Vice President and Illinois soybean grower Daryl Cates meets with the village leader who conducted the snakehead feeding trials in his ponds, which resulted in the respected official recommending the adoption of soy-based fish feeds. Photo credit: Joseph Murphy, United Soybean Board

Go Fish!

Cambodian snakehead trials are making waves.

By Karen Edwards,
WISHH Strategic Advisor

Illinois soybean checkoff funds are making it possible for the American Soybean Association's World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) to expand long-term markets through innovative work that is tailored to the unique challenges of Cambodian aquaculture. Thanks to the Illinois soy checkoff investment, WISHH's early results show promise that the popular carnivorous snakehead fish can be trained to eat soy-based feeds.

ASA Vice President and Illinois soybean grower Daryl Cates has made three trips to Cambodia since 2018, which he reports allowed him to see Illinois soy checkoff funded results through WISHH. Cates' June 2022 trip found exciting progress despite the pandemic.

"Our Illinois soybean checkoff investment in the snakehead project, I feel has been well worth the money," says Cates. "It's been a win-win with Cambodian fish farmers being able to use soy protein pellets. Their farmers saw the snakehead is gaining weight faster with soy protein feeds. And

the farmers can harvest the fish faster."

Cates met with a key local official who leads multiple fishing villages and is now recommending the soy-based pellet feeds as a result of the trials in his ponds. WISHH is collecting data and will complete a full analysis.

Switching snakehead to eat soy-based feeds offers groundbreaking opportunities for sustainability in Cambodian aquaculture where the snakehead prey on local fish stocks. The feeding trials showed the local leader that he should encourage his communities to stop making their tradition-

al homemade fish feeds for the multiple species of fish in Cambodia. The local feeds are typically made from rice bran, small fish, and offal. Not only are they a poor protein source for fish growth, but these feeds pollute the ponds.

WISHH is also sharing the Illinois soy checkoff research with the Cambodian government, which is concerned about the traditional feeding practices' negative effects on water quality and more.

Cates was excited that his return visit to AgriMaster, a Cambodian feed mill, found a multi-million-dollar expansion underway as

well as a line of vehicles waiting to load soy-based fish feeds. "AgriMaster's growth is amazing," says Cates. "Five years ago, they were just adding the aquaculture line. Now they are in the process of a major expansion to increase their swine, duck, and other feed output. That means they should be in a good place to use more U.S. soybean meal"

WISHH is using United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service funding to help the feed mill keep innovating. This summer, WISHH sent a technical expert to AgriMaster to help them improve their extrusion processes.

The feed mill isn't the only growth Cates witnessed. "Construction in Cambodia is still moving. When I came back two and a half years ago, I was amazed at how much it had changed from when I was there the first time. And I am amazed at how much it has grown again with new construction going on so apparently the Cambodian economy is moving in the right direction."

Cambodian economic growth is also boosting business for fish processors and distributors, such as UNICA, to create demand for the popular snakehead fish. Cates visited the company where the leadership proudly served him and other farmers on the trade team their new fish chips made from snakehead that they have deboned. The owner is participating in WISHH's USDA Food for Progress project to improve her food safety as well as product innovation with snakehead, silver barb, and other fish species.



Cates, right, and ASA President Brad Doyle join in the preparation of the snakehead fish that is popular in many Cambodian food dishes. Photo provided by WISHH.

Cates also reports that Cambodia's aquaculture industry is maturing through the Cambodian Aquaculturist Association which includes fish farmers, feed millers, fish distributors, and more. The association has grown to 600 members in about two years even as the pandemic restricted some of its activities. CAA members joined Cates and other U.S. soybean farmers in a dialogue about how to further expand their association, which creates a foundation for long-term trade relationships.




Cates, left, and the other U.S. farmer leaders who joined WISHH's 2022 trade team to Cambodia are briefed on innovative new fish products made with snakehead and other species that a WISHH strategic partner is introducing to the market.

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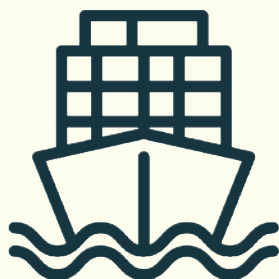
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MAINTAINING OUR REPUTATION TO DELIVER

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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ISA Market Development: Growing For Our Growers

ISA is growing our impact and our opportunities by developing new markets, expanding existing markets, and understanding where growth potential exists.



TODD MAIN | DIRECTOR OF MARKET DEVELOPMENT |
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

The Illinois Soybean Association is rethinking its efforts at developing new markets and expanding existing markets. We have accomplished much, but we also understand that there are exciting opportunities to expand our efforts and impact. Under the leadership of the Market Development Committee, we are refocusing our strategic thinking to ensure a sound business case for all of our programs. This includes challenging ourselves to better understand the markets we are considering for project investments and annually evaluating them to see if goals were met and deliverables achieved.

For trade missions we host and those requiring foreign travel, we need to ensure that we are advancing our objectives in each marketplace. Each country has its unique profile. Some want whole beans that they can process internally while others may want meal or oil. We need to better understand our target markets and where the growth potential exists.

Our goal is to expand our efforts to host buyers from across the globe in Illinois. As I said to a recent Chinese delegation that we hosted in our new Lombard office, "We are honored that you have come to visit our office, so thank you, but we must also acknowledge your wisdom because we grow the best soybeans in the world!" We have a compelling story to tell about the quality of soybeans we produce in Illinois and want to connect with the over 100 countries that maintain offices in Chicago.

Second, we are taking a hard look at the Illinois specific opportunities for domestic market expansion. We are re-engaging with the leadership of the poultry, beef, pork, and aquaculture associations to explore greater collaboration and expansion opportunities. We are also expanding our thinking about markets to include agricultural inputs and evaluating how we might respond to supply issues that are driving fertilizer price increases with strategic and targeted project investment.

One other area that we believe has significant growth potential and multiple benefits is the food space concentrated in the Chicago area. The concentration of market leading food companies in our state is an opportunity to not only expand the use of soy as an input but also to combat the unfounded narrative

that soy may have some negative health characteristics. We are developing an informational portal that features Illinois companies that are using soy in new and interesting ways.

Finally, we are continuing our efforts to strengthen the transportation network that remains our competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Repairing our rural bridges and modernizing the locks and dams on our inland waterways remain priorities for us. We have also launched a new collaboration with the United Soybean Board and the Benton Institute for broadband and society to support five Illinois counties in developing innovative plans that will bring broadband service to their rural communities.

Illinois is going to receive over \$1 billion in the next few years from Washington to build out broadband service and we are helping to ensure that our rural communities are prepared with plans that can secure their share of that funding. The ISA checkoff program is working hard to make sure our efforts to expand existing markets and grow new markets deliver for soybean farmers.





it's **good** to be **soy**

Thank you Illinois soybean farmers who are committed to growing our domestic resources, positively impacting communities, fueling the economy, and meeting global opportunities with homegrown solutions.

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The Illinois Soybean Association is proud to sponsor the Fighting Illini vs Purdue Boilermakers game on **November 12!** Visit our pre-game tailgate tent for some fan fun and to learn more about the good your checkoff investment is bringing to Illinois.

See the **good** soy is bringing to Illinois at **ILSoy.org**



RACHEL PEABODY | EDITOR |
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

I Believe in the Checkoff

As a freshman in high school, I learned the famous line of E.M. Tiffany, author of the FFA Creed – “I believe in the future of agriculture” – and I delivered it at my FFA banquet later that year.

That banquet was 20 years ago, and now the future of agriculture is riding around in my backseat.

A case in point is a recent conversation with my two girls as we passed a bean field. They told me about how chickens will soon eat those soybeans and that soybeans can also make crayons. I smiled thinking about how we’re always working to address the big challenges in our industry, but there’s something to be said for the importance of the little things like a soybean coloring book full of facts and a pack of soy crayons.

Thanks to Illinois farmers and their hard-earned soybean checkoff investments, we initiate meaningful conversations every day that move forward the promotion, advocacy, and education efforts of our industry.

In this October issue, we’re showing you tangible examples of “The Checkoff That Pays Off” and the ROI you’re realizing from your investment. We’re bringing you updates on checkoff-funded work from market development, animal agriculture, conservation agronomy, and more. As with every issue, we hope you feel more informed about your investment, the behind-the-scenes work of your industry, and the influence we’re creating in spaces across Illinois agriculture and beyond.

Just like E.M. Tiffany, I, too, still believe in the future of agriculture. And, I believe in the Illinois soybean checkoff and the collective power of

farmer checkoff dollars, administered by a farmer-led board, to move the needle on the soybean industry. Your Illinois soybean checkoff is generating demand, increasing practice adoption, building new relationships, and educating many audiences at any given moment, and to me, that’s a checkoff to be proud of, and a checkoff that pays off for Illinois farmers.

As you read this October issue, I’m sure we’ll find many of you at harvest and hopefully this copy of Illinois Field & Bean will keep you company in the tractor. I hope the soybeans that you’re harvesting, and this update from ISA show that checkoff work matters, whether it’s as small as a pack of soy crayons or as big as a loaded 2-million-bushel Panamax vessel.

Have a safe and bountiful harvest!





THE CHECKOFF THAT PAYS OFF

Influence at the Farm Gate and Beyond

Illinois soybean farmers and ISA leaders assess checkoff performance

When things like drought and broken supply chains — factors outside of soybean farmers' control — exert pressure on bottom lines, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. But despite Mother Nature's fickle tendencies, the country still relies on Illinois soybean farmers to raise a bumper soybean crop year-in and year-out. It's what you do best, and it demands your full attention.

Doing that job effectively each year means extending your focus to the performance and ROI of every input. And in today's ever-evolving soybean industry, the soybean checkoff is one of the inputs essential to your business. It's fundamental to your ability to keep up in the race to meet the world's skyrocketing soybean demand, and to ensure the crop you raise meets the standards to which it's held in the global marketplace.

"I want to be on the farm working. I don't want to do things like go to China to try to sell my product. The checkoff does a great job with the things I don't personally want to do," says Knox County soybean farmer Matt Hulsizer. "That enables me to do what I do best: raising soybeans."

The value of working together

Taken together, soybean checkoff programs — especially for product and market development — yield strong returns for U.S. soybean farmers. A 2019 Cornell University study showed a return on investment (ROI) of \$12.34 for every dollar soybean farmers invest in the soybean checkoff.

"With the soybean checkoff, we can basically give pennies on the dollar to work for us to find markets, support our product and do the boots-on-the-ground work to show we're doing the right thing and raising the right product for the world," Hulsizer adds.

Illinois soybean farmers like Hulsizer have been key players in maximizing the ROI of soybean checkoff programs in recent years. Resident farmers have deployed their experience in directing funds to high-impact areas for the soybean industry like advancing production, developing new markets and improving infrastructure.

"Every farmer can't market their soybeans to countries overseas or be pushing for biodiesel. The individual impact would be too small to matter," says Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) At-Large Director and Augusta farmer, Brady Holst. "But if we can work together to create demand by speaking with an industry-wide voice that benefits all soybean farmers, that will make a difference. And we can help do that."



BRADY HOLST
ISA At-Large Director
and Augusta farmer

"If we can work together to create demand by speaking with an industry-wide voice that benefits all soybean farmers, that will make a difference. And we can help do that."

“The world’s demand is growing for different uses like livestock feed and biofuels, and with the resources from the soybean checkoff, I can differentiate to meet that demand.”



ANDREW BOWMAN
Oneida soybean farmer

The checkoff’s role in meeting evolving soybean demand

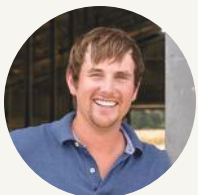
For soybean farmers, there’s no one-size-fits-all production system or target market that works for everyone. Partly because of the soybean checkoff’s work on the market development front, farmers have been able to adjust production systems and crop output to meet specific market needs.

That flexibility has enabled farmers like Andrew Bowman to leverage tools like new seed technology — also supported by the soybean checkoff — to create new revenue streams. This convergence of crop output traits and market development have helped Bowman, a naturally innovative, inquisitive farmer, specifically match production to both his agronomic conditions and market opportunities.

“We raise a fungible commodity, but we also have differentiation within that market. We can apply things like gene-editing, biotechnology and selective breeding to specific markets like seed beans, non-GMO and soybeans optimized for efficient feed rations,” says Bowman, who has raised soybeans for the non-GMO and high-oleic markets in the past. “The world’s demand is growing for different uses like livestock feed and biofuels, and with the resources from the soybean checkoff, I can differentiate to meet that demand.”

That kind of pioneering spirit has begun to open up new demand opportunities for soybean farmers, even in sectors where the soybean checkoff has been active for years.

“On-farm profitability wouldn’t be where it is without the checkoff today.”



NICK HARRE
Nashville soybean farmer and ISA director

Market development builds even more biodiesel demand

Leaders have worked to grow biodiesel demand for decades, and that effort is zeroing in on local and statewide use of the fuel on Illinois farms and in the state’s retail and corporate truck fleets. The promise of growing into these specific segments for biodiesel refined from Illinois soybeans is just one of the reasons soybean farmer Chad Bell of Viola, Illinois, sees his generation — him being the 6th of his family to raise crops professionally — as pivotal in building on past efforts and leading new ones in the future.

“Uses like renewable soy-based biodiesel is a hot topic. We’re taking a commodity we’ve had around a long time and looking at uses in our state to sustain demand year-round,” Bell says. “We have to make sure that we build awareness of this kind of product that we use on a daily basis that many Americans may not know about yet.”

Soybean checkoff-funded research has shown key benefits to the development of biodiesel, and they stretch well beyond the farm gate. And as the sector evolves to meet more agricultural and commercial over-the-road fuel demand, benefits like its contributions to reducing U.S. transportation greenhouse gas emissions are catching consumers’ attention.

What’s the soybean checkoff have to do with continued strength in soy biodiesel and other new market development efforts? A lot, actually; the last decade of checkoff investment in proving and promoting soy biodiesel alone has contributed just over 10 cents to the per-bushel domestic soybean price. Soybean farmers like Washington County farmer Nick Harre says it’s a clear demonstration of the ROI of the program.

“The soybean checkoff is an investment into which we all pay. But we have to show a return, otherwise it’s a failure. On-farm profitability wouldn’t be where it is without the checkoff today,” says Harre, also an ISA director. “I always tell other farmers that it’s farmers just like them who are making the decisions on how we use checkoff funding. And those decision-makers all know there has to be a return on investment for every program it funds.”

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What the soybean checkoff means to Illinois farm communities

What's the value of the soybean checkoff to rural Illinois communities?

Soybean checkoff programs help farmers connect with new market opportunities, like local processing facilities and improved river infrastructure for those shipping soybeans downriver to enter the global market. Those types of efforts don't just add to farmers' revenue potential; that support quickly makes its way to main street.

The soybean industry and its 43,000 farmers in Illinois generated \$8.8 billion in revenue in 2021. Much of that becomes part of the financial foundation of rural communities around the state that those farmers and their families call home.

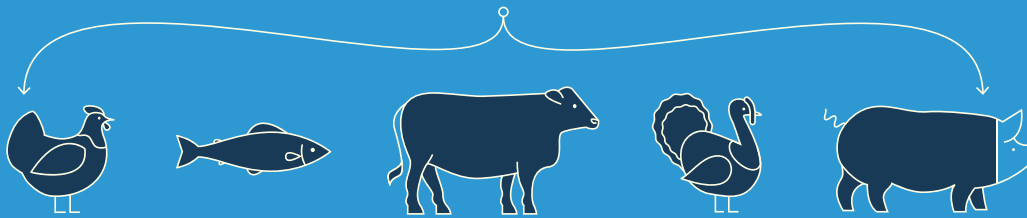
"Soybean farmers are deeply rooted in our communities. Many times, it's because of our business," adds Bell. "We don't always sit down and think about the different ways we can support our local communities and economies, but in reality, that's what we're always doing."

"Sixty percent of the property tax revenue in Knox County is based on farmland," adds Bowman, who lives in that county. Given the value of checkoff programs that support things like agronomy, sustainability, farmer education and market development for the crop, he sees a direct link between the soybean checkoff and fundamental parts of his community just like the global economy.

"That property tax revenue affects the school district, so it influences everyone in the community," Bowman says. "We've lost a lot of our local economies with globalization and commoditization, but I think we can see it come back in part because of the soybean checkoff supporting initiatives that contribute more value to the crop we grow. That value trickles down to our communities quickly."

ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

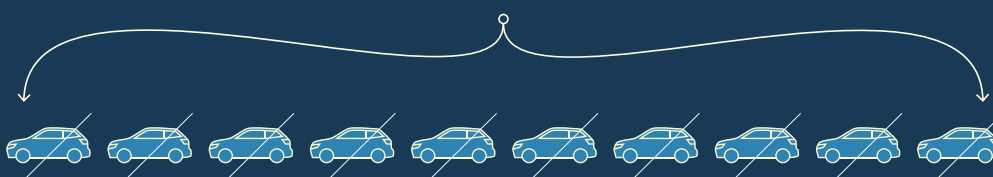
your .5% checkoff investment
per bushel sold



Animal agriculture and aquaculture consume 97% of U.S. soybean meal, making this market your number one customer.

SUSTAINABILITY

your .5% checkoff investment
per bushel sold



Through the Soil and Water Outcomes Fund, your .5% per bushel sold helped capture 8,000 metric tons of CO₂ — the same as removing 1,726 cars from the road.

“We invest in the checkoff as farmers, then represent Illinois growers at the national level. We can speak specifically to how things like improving river infrastructure boosts our global competitiveness.”

BROCK WILLARD
Griggsville soybean
farmer and ISA director



Why Illinois farmers are natural soybean checkoff leaders

Bordered on the west by the Mississippi River — the primary conduit for soybeans and other crops to the global market — and with growing demand from the state’s increasing soybean crushing capacity, Illinois soybean farmers have a front-row seat to many components of demand for their crop.

That means farmers like Holst see direct ties between what they do at the field level and the global marketplace. He and other Illinois soybean farmers have helped direct checkoff contributions to improving lock-and-dam infrastructure along the Mississippi River.

“I’m right between the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, so all of our soybeans go onto a barge and overseas. Sixty percent of Illinois soybeans do the same thing,” adds Holst. “So for our farm, the biggest impact we can have with the checkoff is developing international markets to increase our demand.”

This kind of experience makes local soybean farmers natural leaders in steering the specific soybean checkoff programs that will have the most influence at the farm gate. Brock Willard has even more crop delivery options where he farms in Pike and Adams counties southeast of Quincy. He also raises hogs and is near a soybean crushing plant, biodiesel refinery and Illinois River barge terminals. As an ISA director, he leverages his diverse experience in the soybean marketplace in helping target checkoff funding to areas like market development and infrastructure that are important to his farm and others like it.

“There isn’t really a company around that doesn’t put money back into research and development of their own product in one way or another. The checkoff is that for soybean farmers,” Willard says. “We invest in the checkoff as farmers, then represent Illinois growers at the national level. We can speak specifically to how things like improving river infrastructure boost our global competitiveness.”



THE CHECKOFF THAT PAYS OFF.

For more information on your investment, visit ilsoy.org






unitedsoybean.org

INVESTING IN NEW MARKETS FOR U.S. SOY

From promoting the profitability of using high-quality soybean meal in India to training animal producers on nutrition in Colombia, the soy checkoff is working behind the scenes to develop more market opportunities for U.S. soy. 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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Powering Up for Market Development

By Claire Weinzierl

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is redoubling its efforts to develop new markets and expand existing markets. With a strong track record of accomplishments in the books, there is a target rich environment of exciting opportunities to continue expanding ISA's efforts and impact. ISA would like to formally introduce the team behind those efforts, its Market Development staff.



Todd Main, Director of Market Development

Under the new leadership of Todd Main, who joined ISA as Director of Market Development in July 2022, the team is working diligently to refocus their strategic thinking and ensure a sound business case exists for all of ISA's programs. This includes working to gain a deeper understanding of markets considered for project investments, and rigorous evaluation of those project investments, to see if goals were met and deliverables achieved.

In his role specifically, Todd oversees ISA's Lombard office and the work done by the Market Development Department. He develops innovative strategies in support of ISA's goals in trade, animal agriculture, transportation, infrastructure, and new uses for soy in human nutrition and other consumer products. Main also monitors opportunities

to increase the market share of soy in existing and new markets, works to coordinate a handful of specific policy areas, and supports the rest of his team in their various roles.

"The policy areas I coordinate primarily are transportation and infrastructure," says Main. "Specifically, I'm working on an initiative to accelerate the replacement of rural bridges in Illinois because so many need repair or rehabilitation. We have a bridge bundling initiative that is making efforts to streamline that replacement process and get more of the bridges repaired. Illinois' transportation network is the competitive advantage we have globally in terms of exports, so we need to prioritize its resiliency."

Main also monitors Illinois' waterways and works to ensure infrastructure is maintained so they are open and functioning. The Illinois river hosts a series of locks and dams that need to be modernized, and ISA continues to work with partners to keep those initiatives maintained.

In addition, Main also prioritizes rural broadband access in his role. "Over the last year, we've been grappling with the challenge that broadband service in rural Illinois is insufficient at its worst and intermittent at its best. ISA and coalition partners at Illinois State University and the Benton Foundation have developed a methodology that counties can use to develop broadband service plans. We received a \$200,000 grant from the United Soybean Board to pilot the methodology in five rural Illinois counties this year."



Eileen Urish, Trade & Exports Manager

As Trade & Exports Manager for ISA, Eileen Urish works to increase the organization's engagement in the trade and export space by collaborating with farmers, exporters, foreign consulates, soybean buyer teams, and partner organizations. She is the staff lead for foreign trade teams coming to Illinois. Urish also manages ISA's relationship with international trade partners including the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), USA Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAP-EEC), U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), and others.

"Our role is to elevate and extend the work being done by those organizations," says Urish. "Through those outside engagements, we help manage projects in several regions such as the Soy Excellence Centers, soy aquaculture and the protein space for human nutrition consumption."

The Soy Excellence Centers, a program administered by USSEC, is one area of excitement for Urish.

"I think USSEC has been successful at engaging with outside audiences and is currently looking for alternative funding, which will help connect multiple sectors to come together in order to solve food insecurity and address workforce training efforts," says Urish.



Jenna Siegel, Market Development Coordinator

Jenna Siegel joined ISA as Market Development Coordinator in June 2022. In her role, Siegel primarily works to manage messaging and engagement around ISA's domestic relationships. This includes primarily managing opportunities in the animal agriculture area. Livestock is the number one consumer of soybean meal, not only in Illinois, but in the entire country so Siegel stresses the importance of ISA's relevance in this space.

"One of my main priorities is growing the use of soy in Illinois' poultry and turkey industries, in addition to maintaining our relationships with groups and collaborating with organizations such as the Illinois Livestock Development Group, Illinois Beef, Illinois Pork, and others," says Siegel. "Illinois is surrounded by states with the highest rates of turkey production, so we have a lot of opportunity for growth in this area."

"I'm also excited to explore how we can take our relationships and partnerships with organizations in Illinois to the next level. We've worked with these organizations for a long time so it's important that we must continue having a meaningful presence with those groups."

Additionally, Siegel manages efforts within the areas of aquaculture, soybean oil and soyfoods, and other soy protein topics.



THE CHECKOFF THAT PAYS OFF. In so many different ways.

See how the Soy Around the State media tour showcased the latest in soybean technology, research, conservation, innovation, and more.

Best practices are constantly evolving in soybean farming. To spread the word on the most recent breakthroughs, the Illinois Soybean Association took media members on a two-day, five-stop tour through Illinois to hear soybean growers and industry experts speak about cutting-edge technology, research, conservation practices and more. This tour provided a diverse look at how soybeans are grown in different Illinois locations, and we wanted to share the highlights from the event with you.

Benefitting from the latest agtech practices and innovations

ON-FARM INNOVATIONS change and grow with each passing year. For growers to get the most yield from their operation, it's vital to keep up to date.

That's why ISA At-Large Director Brady Holst is so passionate about running trials on his farm. He wants to bring the latest and greatest to growers across Illinois.

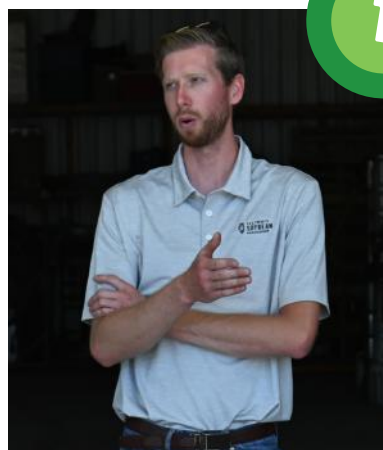
"There's a lot we've learned over the past five years," Holst said at the Soy Around the State media tour. "It's in the testing we do to figure out what's working and what's not."

Holst runs several trials on his family farm in Augusta, including biologicals, foliar feeding, and y-drop passes. He applies live biologicals in-furrow with the planter to boost nutrient uptake

in plants. Holst also tried foliar feeding this year with a combination of different silica and amino acid passes. In another trial, they are using different y-drop passes to split-apply nutrients to the crops.

"Accurately analyzing all parts of a business without bias is important to making the right choices," Holst said. "Data will continue to be the best tool available on the farm and should be utilized across all aspects of farming."

Holst is always interested in what he can accomplish with the latest agtech. That's why he purchased a drone for 2022. Holst wanted to see if the drone could improve his operation after struggles with the late-season wet weather in 2021.



BRADY HOLST
ISA AT-LARGE DIRECTOR

Augusta, IL

"We had to use a plane last year for our fungicide passes, which isn't typical for us," Holst explained. "And we have a lot of irregularly shaped fields that are

lined with trees, so you can't get everything with a plane, where with the drones you can get into every single small corner."

While Holst is excited about the latest in agtech and innovation, he knows the best is yet to come. He believes that check-off dollars are being invested in programs that will provide Illinois growers with even more resources to produce high-quality soybeans.

"Some of the more exciting things we've been working on with the checkoff are university research," Holst said. "There's a lot of interesting things that are in the pipeline that people are trying out." ■



Brady Holst demonstrates how a drone improves his fungicide applications.



Joel Gruver says growers should think of soil "like a sponge" during a demonstration.

Evaluating soil and its capabilities

SOIL HEALTH is a topic that's likely on every grower's mind, but it's not always an area growers devote the proper amount of attention. Joel Gruver, an associate professor of soil science and sustainable ag at Western Illinois University, would like to change that.

"It's just like personal fitness," Gruver explained to the Soy Around the State attendees. "Some people have other priorities. They just don't want to think as much about their diet and exercise, and they still perform. It's kind of the same way with soil health. Various motivators get farmers interested in soil health."

"Some farmers are more into long-term soil stewardship than others are," said Gruver.

Of course, not everything can be achieved by commitment. Even more influential in achieving soil health is the level of talent or

capability.

"Soil health is not about comparing poorly rated soils with highly rated soils," Gruver said. "It's about understanding your soil's capacity. It's about asking, *'For this type of soil, how well is it performing?'*"

When evaluating soil, Gruver encourages growers to think of it as a sponge. The better the soil can soak up water, the less runoff and erosion will occur. Soil operating effectively as a sponge also means it can supply water when needed, and it comes down to having good soil structure.

He explained good soil has a combination of elements, such as stable carbon and carbon that releases energy for microbial activity.

"The sponge functions, the microbial functions, the nutrient cycling functions – they all have a range of functions within a soil's capacity," said Gruver. "The question to ask is, how do we make soil all that it can be?"

To showcase the differences in soil structure, attendees compared soils from a fence row versus the crop field. Gruver explained that differences in soil can be attributed to how the soil is being used and what that farmer is seeking to accomplish. For example, soil in a fence row may not be receiving any fertilizer, while a farmer caring for a crop field might be managing the right pH balance and the right fertility levels.

But what is this all for? When the soil is in the right place, it impacts weed control and yield.

"The art of cultivation is controlling the weeds that are in the row. That's where you protect your yield," he explained. "When you start to have successful control in the row, you start to see dollars, you start to see yield, you start to feel like you're getting the job done." ■



Brad Zimmerman implements both no-till and cover crop conservation practices on his farm.

Seeing what's possible with no-till and cover crops

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE runs in soybean farmer and ISA Soy Envoy Brad Zimmerman's family. On a five-generation family farm in Groveland, Zimmerman's father started no-tilling his fields in the 1980s, a rarity in those years. Zimmerman saw the benefits to the soil firsthand, but more importantly, he learned the value of forging his path and finding gains in the margins.

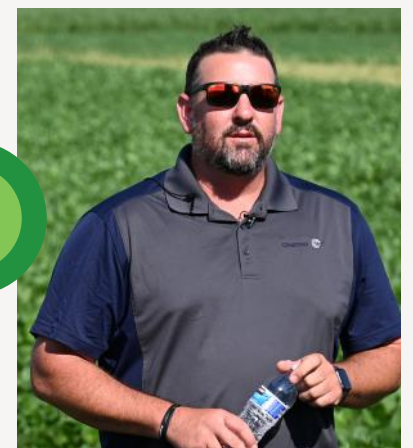
"I've got to give a shout out to my dad who was a bit of a pioneer and innovator," Zimmerman said at the Soy Around the State media tour. "So I decided to continue doing that. I do not like to do something the way everyone else."

Alongside his no-till fields, Zimmerman has committed to another conservation effort — cover crops. A biology lover, Zimmerman began planting cover crops to see if they could control weeds better, improve soil structure and bring nutrients to plants that need it. He likes to think that his hiccups and miscues along the way have paved a smoother road for other growers who plant cover crops.



JOEL GRUVER
PROFESSOR OF SOIL
SCIENCE AND SUSTAIN-
ABLE AGRICULTURE

Western Illinois University
Allison Research Farm,
Roseville, IL



BRAD ZIMMERMAN
ISA SOY ENVOY

Groveland, IL



Funded by the Illinois Soybean Checkoff

4

Entering the “Wild West” of carbon markets

CARBON MARKETS are a hot topic right now, but growers are still hesitant to enroll.

David Wessel understands. As a farmer in Cass County on a 2,400-acre family farm, he’s heard the hesitancy when speaking with fellow growers.

“It’s the Wild West, that’s the term you seem to be hearing a lot,” Wessel said. “There’s a lot of good programs out there, but a lot of different variables to consider, which makes it hard for growers to take that leap.”

But Wessel is interested in the ways carbon markets provide an opportunity for farmers to successfully implement conservation practices, something he considers vital to the future of farming.

“My family has implemented no-till for about 37 years,” Wessel said. “We had a landlord that was worried about some soil erosion on the ground. We just jumped in feet first and the rest is history.”

He believes putting more research into carbon sequestration will benefit Illinois farmers in the long run.



DAVID WESSEL
ISA AT-LARGE DIRECTOR
Chandlerville, IL

“I’m glad to see our checkoff dollars going to help support conservation practices and the research that needs to be done,” Wessel said. “We’re doing work on the soybeans to determine what they’re using, what is being sequestered throughout the year, how much is being removed, and more? Are we net zero, are we below zero? Hopefully we can learn more with the help of checkoff-funded research.”

Wessel himself has enrolled in carbon markets, and he thinks as we get answers to more carbon questions and the markets themselves become more clear, other farmers will have an opportunity to benefit.

“I am enrolled in carbon markets,” Wessel said. “There is an opportunity for farmers to try new practices, and the carbon markets can provide incentives to support those efforts.” ■

“I’ve failed way more times than I’ve succeeded, but I’ve learned a ton,” Zimmerman said. “While it can be frustrating, it’s great to be on the bleeding edge of some of this technology.”

Zimmerman started planting oats and radishes initially as cover crops. Since then he’s also found gains planting cereal rye, all of which he says have helped prevent weed pressure. He encourages other growers to take advantage of checkoff resources and see what’s possible and beneficial for their fields.

“We’ve got opportunities that dad didn’t have,” Zimmerman said. “I’ve learned a ton and am continuing to learn each year.”

For growers who want to implement these practices on their farm, the farm service program Precision Conservation Management (PCM) can provide the resources and support they need to get started. A farmers-first conservation program, PCM offers tools and education to manage, adopt and adapt conservation practices long term.

“We strive to educate farmers about how to adopt conservation practices on their farms,” Aiden Walton, a PCM specialist said. “I sit down with each of my growers a few times a year, one-on-one, very individualized, and look at what conservation practices they might already be doing or, if they’re very conventional in their farming ways, how to maybe adopt and adapt new conservation methods on their farm.”

In many instances, this includes financial assistance or incentives to get going.

“PCM has a lot of funding through NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Services), Illinois Corn Growers, Illinois Soybean Association, and tons of other partners that we have to offer cost-share dollars and financial assistance to growers doing conservation practices,” Walton said. “If growers may be a little hesitant about trying a cover crop for the first time, we can hopefully find some funding to put their way and help them get their feet wet and try that cover crop.” ■



While David Wessel believes carbon markets are a bit like the "Wild West" right now, he sees possibilities for them in the future.



Katie Dowson educates on the capabilities of seed treatments.



Funded by the Illinois Soybean Checkoff

5

See how seed treatment technology continues to evolve



KATIE DOWSON,
FOUNDER AND SALES & MARKETING MANAGER

Seed Life, LLC
Virden, IL

INCREASING YIELDS and reducing work. That's what Katie Dowson, founder of Seed Life, LLC, believes the latest seed technology can do, and she brings that passion to every grower she meets.

"How cool is it that we can put a coating on that seed that we know is going to positively impact that crop? Not just doing it in the field, but on the seed itself," Katie said at the Soy Around the State media tour. "Farmers know this input is going to be beneficial. Investment in seed treatments has risen, no doubt, especially in the last five years."

She explained how treatments today can protect the seed from yield-robbars like SDS and so many other potential diseases because of advancements in fungicide and insecticide technologies. Additionally, Katie said new coatings can place additional nutrients and biologicals that help get the plant out of the ground and speed up sprouting.

"We're able to protect the seed from so many things," Katie said. "And the technology keeps advancing."

If any of this sounds familiar, it's because you may have heard these ideas before as Katie spends a lot of her time sharing the positive and impactful story of production agriculture as an influencer on her social media platforms. She sees this work as a new way to make meaningful connections and raise the capabilities of the entire industry.

"We are reaching so many people because of it," Katie said. "The amount of people you can reach in one day is incredible. It's a great opportunity to educate." ■



To see the full [Soy Around the State](#) presentations, scan the QR code at left.

Funded by the Illinois Soybean Association Checkoff Program.



THE CHECKOFF THAT PAYS OFF.

SoyInnovator

Inspiring a future-ready position

By Betsy Osman

Mind-bending science. Turned-up technology. And innovations born from fever dreams. These descriptions underpin the futuristic vision of the Illinois Soybean Association's (ISA) newest mouthpiece, SoyInnovator.

"We set out to develop a new communications platform dedicated to bringing the latest in ag tech, data-related trends, and industry happenings to Illinois farmer audiences, all in the service of ensuring our farms are profitable, future-proof, and appeal to new generations of growers," says Rachel Peabody, ISA Director of Communications. "Because science and technology are continually evolving and for our soybean farmers to remain competitive, the path forward depends on how they prepare."

The new website, which boasts hot trending topics and provides an in-depth analysis of a wide range of tech products, is designed to provide growers (and the agribusinesses who support them) with data-driven news and reviews in a way that inspires continual improvement on the farm through the adoption of new practices and smart tools.

"The research discoveries happening today will transform into a new way of doing business in the future," says Peabody. "SoyInnovator focuses on what growers need to know and what's ahead, joining ISA's suite of farmer-facing media properties including Illinois Field & Bean magazine and the checkoff funded ILSoyAdvisor platform which offers actionable, year-long agronomic advice."

According to Peabody, SoyInnovator's technological landscape aligns with ISA's mission to help farmers sustainably feed and fuel the planet, pursuing progress in

agriculture and constantly questioning what is possible. Relevant editorial offerings are assigned to the categories of Sustainability, Technology, New Markets, and Production. Readers also have the option to comment on individual articles, subscribe to an e-newsletter, and use the platform as a forum to voice opinions and troubleshoot issues amongst ag tech enthusiasts.

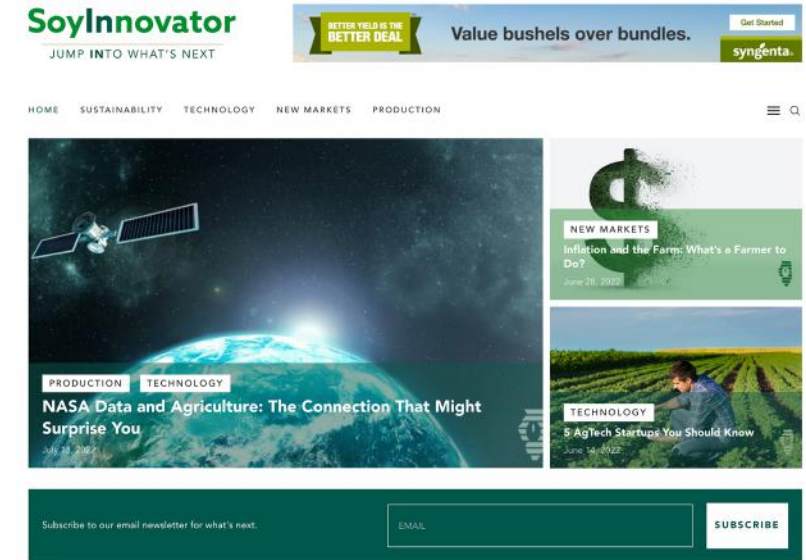
SoyInnovator's tightly curated compendium of everything from crypto currency to NASA collaborations includes:

"NASA Data and Agriculture: The Connection That Might Surprise You"

Space may be the final frontier, but for years, NASA has been leveraging technology to give farmers a leg up on getting more from their earth. It's true, and a bit of a well-kept secret, that there's a 50-year history of using satellite data for ag purposes. The idea that satellites are directly affecting things like the World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE), pricing, markets, and food aid seems at best a remote thought looking up from the soybean fields of Illinois, but their impact grows every year. And this trend shows no signs of stopping.

"Inflation and the Farm: What's a Farmer to Do?"

Fuel and fertilizer prices are rising, labor shortages are emerging, and the supply chain is lagging. While farmers can't control these circumstances, there are ways to manage inflation and its impact on your farm. Smart spending and careful planning are the key phrases to live by, whether we're talking about new equipment, land improvements, repairs or fertilizer application frequency. Readers are challenged to con-



sider these five pivotal steps to curtailing the pinch of inflation.

"Five AgTech Startups You Should Know"

This powerful piece profiles "5 AgTech Startups You Should Know," each born to enable farmers to improve yields and productivity, fill in for supply chain gaps and more. Readers are encouraged to keep their eyes on these fast-growing businesses and learn more about how these innovative thought-leaders are about to enhance farming operations across the Midwest.

"Blockchain in Agriculture"

Not to be mistaken for bitcoin – which is just one type of cryptocurrency – blockchain is a network of blocks of data that makes information and currency and other data available worldwide. Blockchain plays a vital role in agriculture, from food safety and traceability to tracking high value crops throughout their life cycle. SoyInnovator readers will discover how blockchain is fostering change from all angles of the supply chain.

"Is Autonomous Equipment the Future of Farming?"

It's no secret that over the years, production agriculture

has become increasingly more technologically advanced – especially with the rapid growth of artificial intelligence capabilities. From enhanced seed varieties to precision farming and improved data collection, these advancements show no signs of stopping. So, what's the next big tech that could be hitting farmers' fields in the coming years? This SoyInnovator editorial profiles how John Deere's New Autonomous 8R Tractor uses machine learning and artificial intelligence to help farmers make key decisions and improve productivity.

"Today's farmers are more tech savvy and motivated by emerging innovations that benefit the industry, the environment, and their bottom line," says ISA Chairman, Illinois soybean farmer, and agribusiness consultant, Steve Pitstick. "SoyInnovator was born to enable farmers of the future to become more efficient and better informed, to improve tomorrow's yields, and to be ready for what's next in Illinois agriculture."

Stay tuned, hungry readers. We're just getting started.

Visit SoyInnovator at **ILSoyInnovator.org**.



Soulcial Kitchen in Swansea, Illinois features all locally sourced produce and meat to fulfill their menus, featuring items such as their pulled smoked turkey, smoked baked beans, smoked turkey breast, and their savory collard greens.

Talking Turkey

ISA bolsters support of soy-fed animal agriculture as a fast-evolving market.

By DeAnna Thomas

On the heels of a growing domestic livestock consumption of soybeans, the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is making connections with turkey growers to further expand demand for Illinois soybeans.

"The ISA team is focusing efforts to grow turkey

populations in the state through contract growing to increase production volume, which could lead to a larger need for in-state processing plants in the long term," said ISA Market Development Coordinator, Jenna Siegel. "Before there is a worthwhile incentive for large investments in processing, Illinois turkey production numbers must increase."

Livestock are the No. 1 consumer of soybean meal in the state and nation. In Illinois, about 79 percent of soybean meal goes to hogs, with the remaining 21 percent going to poultry, turkey, and dairy. ISA is a dedicated supporter of soy-fed livestock markets, and turkey is no exception.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, Illinois produces 2.8

million turkeys in sales units annually. In comparison, neighboring states Iowa, Indiana, and Missouri produce annually about 20 million, 18 million, and 19 million birds, respectively.

Most Illinois turkey producers are contract growers for large, integrated farms located in Iowa and Indiana. It has become clear that one major barrier to success for Illinois turkey is the lack of



The National Turkey Federation team visits with Pitmaster Pete at Soulcial Kitchen about their mission, sourcing local products and featuring turkey on their menu.

processing housed in the state, including hatcheries, feed mills, and processors.

"For more processing facilities to be established, integrated farms must recognize the value and begin to invest in developing those facilities here in Illinois," Siegel said. "To help raise awareness, ISA will facilitate contract grower meetings and help connect farmers with new opportunities to market their product."

ISA also is helping to promote turkey with the help of the National Turkey Federation (NTF). This summer, ISA joined NTF to create an influential partnership to raise awareness by exploring new spaces, specifically within barbecue arenas and the Halal culture.

These efforts include ISA's recent sponsorship of the Windy City Smokeout, Chicago's top BBQ and country music festival. Additionally, ISA joined the NTF on the Illinois BBQ Tour for Smoke on the Midway, featuring a Turkey Smoke barbecue competition with the Kansas City Barbeque Society.

One such stop was to Soulcial Kitchen, a unique restaurant just outside of St. Louis in Swansea, Ill. In addition to providing their

patrons with mouthwatering menu items (order the collard greens, trust us), they also fight food insecurity by serving more than ten thousand hot meals annually to those in need through their Love Thy Neighbor and Currency of Caring programs. For every meal purchased at their uniquely-themed food trucks or inside their restaurant, a meal to fight food insecurity also is purchased.

You can learn more about the incredible work they do by visiting their website at www.soulcialkitchen.com. And be sure to stop in and see them on your next trip to the St. Louis area.

The NTF also has developed a website chock-full of turkey resources where viewers can learn more about soy-fed turkey, how to prepare smoked turkey and more. Visit www.turkeysmove.org for more information and mouth-watering recipes.

It is important that soybean growers recognize the value of livestock production as the number one consumer of soybean meal in Illinois and the entire U.S. For the

Illinois turkey industry specifically, soybean growers must continue to invest time and efforts into growing turkey

production through economic development and by promoting awareness to put more soy-fed products on our plates.



Board Member Spotlight

Get to know ISA board member, Matt Murray

My wife, Roganne, and I have three children, Teagan who is 11, Rhett who is 8, and Landry who is 5. We farm corn, soybeans, and seed corn in northern Champaign and southern Ford counties. I farm with my dad, Mike, and my cousins, Jack and Christopher. Our families and good friends help during planting and harvest. We also sell Pioneer Hi-Bred seed.

What made you decide to be an ISA board member?

Doug Schroeder, my predecessor

in District 11, introduced me to what ISA was all about, and after visiting with him I wanted to do what I could to promote Illinois soybeans and help Illinois soybean growers.

How has the industry changed since you began farming?

Technology advancements have changed agriculture in profound ways. Today we have high-speed planters, auto steer, data

collection and transmission to the cloud, remote irrigation control and monitoring, and more.

What is the most important thing to keep in mind when growing soybeans?

There is no one thing, from the decisions you make before planting to post harvest, the entire system needs to be harmonious to grow soybeans well.

Out of all the projects ISA works on, which are you most passionate about?

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) Soy Excellence Centers (SEC), which is a resource for businesses to use as a tool for talent development where participants have opportunities to advance their career through the exchange of ideas, professional development training, and hands-on experiences. SECs also exist to push markets to their full potential to create a future where soy is known as a course for change.

WISHH works with international associations to build lasting potential for **U.S. soy** trade.



Connect with WISHH
wishh.org



WISHH is a program of the American Soybean Association and is funded in part by the United Soybean Board and state soybean board checkoff programs.

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QUICK TO APPLY.
CLEAN & EASY TO USE.
ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY.**



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