

OCTOBER 2024

Illinois **Field & Bean**

A PUBLICATION OF THE ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION





JOHN DEERE



G5 Display

Do more with a bigger, faster, and clearer display¹



StarFire™ Receiver

Go tower free and get accuracy up to 2.5cm



JDLink™ Modem

Stay connected to monitor your operation in real time



John Deere Operations Center™

Seamlessly connect all your in-field data

JOHN DEERE PRECISION AG

HIGHER YIELDS? MORE PRODUCTIVITY? *PRECISELY.*

No matter what machines you have, precision ag technology helps you get more out of them, from precise seed placement to valuable input savings. And it starts with four foundation technologies. Together, they connect your machines, your field data – your entire farm – so you can find new efficiencies, improve yields, and increase profits.



Get precise at [JohnDeere.com/essentials](https://www.johndeere.com/essentials)

¹ Compared to Generation 4 models.

CONTENTS

October 2024

Volume 4 Issue 12

6 Driving New Market Potential

Earlier this year, the ISA Market Development Committee traveled to Southeast Asia to explore soybean meal market opportunities for Illinois soybean farmers. Learn more about the team's eye-opening experience and the many ways ISA is tapping into international markets to increase demand for Illinois soybeans.

10 From Illinois Farms to International Plates

Sixty percent of Illinois soybeans are exported to destinations around the world. This article highlights the "chain of custody" that Illinois soy goes through to get from farm to market.

12 The Road Ahead: Shaping an Ag-Centric Transportation System

How do we make investments now to ensure a resilient transportation system by 2050? Learn more about what's needed to create an ag-centric transportation system.

16 Investigating the Bio-Based Lubricant Market

The ISA Soy Innovation Center is developing bio-based lubricants while simultaneously developing market opportunities.

18 What the EPA's Final Herbicide Strategy Means for Illinois Growers

Corey Lacey, Ph.D., ISA Environmental Policy Manager, answers readers' top questions and breaks down the EPA's final herbicide strategy.

20 Sustainable Synergy

Tim Rendall, ISA Domestic Markets Manager, highlights sustainability in the agri-food supply chain and the need for better alignment between companies and farmers.

22 The Illinois Field of Beans BBQ Grand Slam

Hit the road with *Illinois Field & Bean* to check out the local barbecue competition scene.

24 A Sound Farmer

Don Guinnip, Clark County farmer, proposes that a sound, farmer-directed wheat program is good economically, environmentally, socially and politically.

DEPARTMENTS

4 FROM THE BOARDROOM

5 CEO'S MESSAGE

26 GROWTH BY ASSOCIATION



Visit us online at
www.ilsos.org/newsroom/illinois-field-bean/



COVER: For 60 years, ISA has had a hand in helping the state's farmers find ways to maximize use of their soybeans, exploring opportunities for new global customers through trade and exports, innovative biobased products and promoting soy as a food-based ingredient. This issue of *Illinois Field & Bean* explores the ways ISA works with international soybean buyers to build a preference for U.S. soy, how we're diversifying markets and cultivating credibility with manufacturers, distributors, even the food and restaurant industry, and how today's market research is driving economic value for Illinois farmers.

CHAIRMAN
Ron Kindred, Atlanta
District 9

VICE CHAIRMAN
Brad Daugherty, West Union
District 14

SECRETARY
Dwayne Anderson, Lynn Center
District 3

TREASURER
Tim Scates, Carmi
At-Large

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-TREASURER
David Wessel, Chandlerlerville
At-Large

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE
CHAIR**
Ryan Frieders, Waterman
District 1

**MARKET DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
CHAIR**
Brady Holst, Plymouth
At-Large

**SOYBEAN PRODUCTION COMMITTEE
CHAIR**
Bryan Severs, Potomac
District 7

DIRECTORS
Steve Pittstick, Maple Park | District 2
Buck Hill, Grand Ridge | District 4
Mark Read, Putnam | District 5
Jim Martin, Pontiac | District 6

STAFF CREDITS

Editor in Chief | Betsy Osman
Assistant Editor | Olivia Key
Staff Contributor | Brynna Sentel

OTHER ISA STAFF

Chief Executive Officer | John Lumpe
Director of Illinois Soybean Foundation | Suellen Burns
Executive Employee Relations | Nicole Butler
Director of Government Relations & Strategy | Andrew Larson
Director of Market Development | Todd Main
Director of Finance | Kati Owen
Director of Agronomy | Abigail Peterson
Director of Operations | Dustin Scott
Director of Marketing Communications | Michael Whitmer

Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) is owner of Illinois Field & Bean, a publication for Illinois soybean farmers, designed and written to provide timely and useful industry information. Illinois Field & Bean is published by the Illinois Soybean Association, 1108 Trinity Lane, Bloomington, IL, 61704. For address corrections, contact Illinois Field & Bean at 1108 Trinity Lane, Bloomington, IL, 61704. Phone 309-663-7692. Web address: www.ilsoy.org. Email: ilsoy@ilsoy.org.

Comments and statewide news articles should be sent to the above address. Advertising space reservations must be made by the first of the month preceding publication. In consideration of the acceptance of advertisement, the agency and the advertiser must, in respect of the contents of the advertisement, indemnify and save the publisher harmless against any expense arising from claims or actions against the publisher because of the publication of the content of the advertisement.

FOR ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Betsy Osman
Editor in Chief
Email: betsyosman@ilsoy.org

David Niekamp, Coatsburg |
District 8
Elliott Uphoff, Shelbyville | District 10
Matt Murray, Paxton | District 11
Brock Willard, Pittsfield | District 12
Heath Houck, Nokomis | District 13
Jeff Parker, Belleville | District 15
Brian Atteberry, Carmi | District 16
Rick Rubenacker, McLeansboro |
District 18

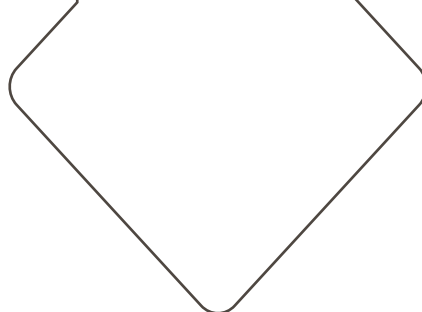
AT-LARGE DIRECTORS
Betsey Emerick, Vandalia
Jeff O'Connor, Kankakee
Scott Gaffner, Greenville

UNITED SOYBEAN BOARD (USB)
Dwayne Anderson, Lynn Center
Gary Berg, St. Elmo
Lynn Rohrscheib, Fairmount
David Wessel, Chandlerlerville

**AMERICAN SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION
(ASA)**
Stan Born, Mahomet
Daryl Cates, Columbia
Ryan Frieders, Waterman
Jim Martin, Pontiac
Ron Kindred, Atlanta
Rob Shaffer, El Paso
Roberta Simpson-Dolbeare, Nebo
Bryan Severs, Potomac



FROM THE BOARDROOM | Funded by the Illinois Soybean Checkoff



Switching Gears



BRADY HOLST |
MARKET DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR |
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

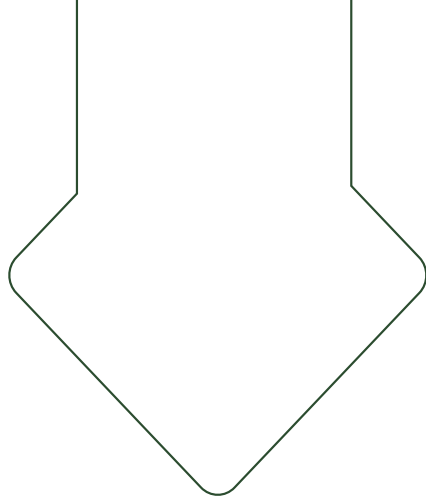
After serving the Illinois Soybean Association as Chairman of the Soybean Production Committee, I am excited to take on the challenges that come with being the Chairman of the Market Development Committee. In my former role, I helped further the goal of educating Illinois farmers about the newest and most innovative production practices. This will transfer well into my new role, as global buyers prefer the use of more efficient practices that grow the highest-quality soybeans. These practices boost profitability for buyers around the world and result in a preference for soybeans grown in Illinois.

The coming years will be challenging for global markets. Many countries are expected to shift their focus toward self-sufficiency, stepping away from the globalism that brought large increases in trade in the past. With global disruptions from the pandemic and ongoing wars, many countries have investigated more self-reliance in agriculture products to reduce problems with trade disruptions around the world. As Chairman of the Market Development Committee, I can assure you we will continue working to show that increasing global trade benefits all parties involved.

With the large changes underway in domestic soybean-crushing capacity, changes in the flow of soybeans will happen as well. Products moving through the current infrastructure will also change along with the destinations. Because of these large changes coming so quickly, we will need to actively evaluate infrastructure paths and capacity. This will be important to maintain our current lead in delivering agriculture products on time. Reliable, timely delivery of Illinois soy benefits global buyers who expect a predictable product on a predictable timeline.

This year could be one of the largest soybean crops produced in the U.S., so increasing demand is especially important. I look forward to being involved with the Soy Innovation Center to develop new uses for soybeans in the coming fiscal year. I'm most excited about connecting people with great ideas for how to utilize soy in a new way. Connecting them with the right people will make a large impact on soybean demand in the future. The toughest part will be attempting to utilize more soybeans to keep up with the increase of production on fewer acres.

This fiscal year will present all-new challenges. As in farming, the new challenges will keep things interesting. With the global landscape changing every day, you can rest assured the team at the Illinois Soybean Association is looking out for our farmers and the markets they utilize. I look forward to working on these new challenges for Illinois farmers as Chairman of the Market Development Committee. Together, we will find new places for our soybeans to go and identify the best ways to get them there.



60 Years Later



JOHN LUMPE | CEO |
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

For the past 60 years, the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) has worked with farmers to optimize the value of their soybeans. Our goal is to market every bushel of Illinois soybeans at its fullest potential and highest possible value. From developing and securing new global markets to creating innovative soyfood and biobased product uses, our efforts have spanned the globe but have also focused within our state boundaries.

Our work demonstrates that investments made by Illinois soybean farmers—both financial and in people power—can have immediate results yet sometimes require patience. Regardless of the timeline, our efforts are about building a strong foundation with the goal of creating value for soybean farmers in Illinois over the long haul.

Although we believe in a mix of exploration and innovation, we also know there are times when farmers face imminent financial challenges. The current farm economy is such a time. That's why we work to provide innovative tools and information resources to help our farmers produce more with less. We know that in order to think about increasing your return on investment, you first need to realize a sustainable return. The solutions and resources we offer are geared toward both because we know farming is and always will be cyclical.

It is just as important to keep one eye on effective solutions for today as it is to explore greater opportunities for tomorrow. Profitability and sustainable efficiency are key ingredients of resiliency.

There are also times during our economic cycle when we can afford to boldly step forward, to invest in the future and look beyond our borders. Our work with international soybean buyers is a prime example of this philosophy in action. Through consistent engagement, trade missions and partnership-building, we've built a strong preference for Illinois soy. We collaborate with the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) to participate in trade missions to key markets such as Europe, China, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. These missions build loyal and lasting relationships with buyers, educate them on the superior quality and sustainability of Illinois soy, and address their specific needs.

International buyers want to look Illinois soybean farmers in the eye. They want to shake your hand. Our farmer-led missions include meetings with feed millers, livestock producers and food manufacturers in other nations. This creates strong, lasting partnerships that ensure Illinois soy remains a preferred choice.

Innovation is a cornerstone of our strategy to create new value. The expansion of soy-based products such as oil derivatives, bioplastics and other industrial applications, is fueling further growth.

Many of these innovations have roots in ISA investments, and each of the sectors continues to grow. One example is the estimated value of soy-based chemicals. According to a study from P&S Intelligence, today's value of \$27.9 billion will grow to \$45.6 billion by 2030. Gains like this don't happen overnight, but they are powered by a sustained commitment to soy research and development.

Our investments over time have led to soy gaining traction as a food-based ingredient that offers healthy, sustainable options for consumers. ISA actively promotes soy as a versatile and nutritious ingredient, ensuring that it remains a staple in kitchens around the globe. You'll read more about these efforts in the coming pages.

The economic value of ISA's work and investments cannot be overstated. The research and development spearheaded by ISA have far-reaching impacts, including boosting farm incomes and supporting local communities. As we continue to explore new markets and commercial uses for soy, the returns on these investments grow, contributing to the overall vigor of our state's agricultural economy.

It's important to remember that the progress we see today is often the result of years, sometimes decades, of hard work. The investments made during previous funding cycles lay the groundwork for today's successes. Although we all appreciate quick wins, the true value of our work lies in the long game. By committing to this ongoing investment, we ensure the position of Illinois soy as a global market leader for years and years to come.





Driving New Market Potential

Southeast Asia Trip Highlights Soy Demand Opportunities, Barriers

By Eileen Pabst, International Markets Manager, Illinois Soybean Association

How do you grow a budding trade relationship between Illinois soybean farmers and buyers in Southeast Asia? Consult the lyrics of a song made famous by Beatles member George Harrison, advises Jeff O'Connor, farmer and At Large Director, Illinois Soybean Association.

"It's gonna take time, a whole lot of precious time," O'Connor says, quoting the song. "It's gonna take patience and time... to do it right."

In January, myself along with O'Connor and other ISA leaders made that essential investment of precious time, traveling to three countries in the region. We walked away with a clear sense of substantial opportunities ahead for Illinois farmers, along with

deeper awareness of the systemic challenges Cambodia, the Philippines and Vietnam face in forging stronger trade relationships.

"We had several goals for the trip, but the main goal was to maintain and expand our soybean and soybean meal exports," explains Mark Read, ISA District 5 Director. He farmed about 2,300 acres of corn and soybeans with his brother, Chuck, before retiring

and renting the farm to an experienced strip-till farmer. "U.S. soybean exports have declined in recent years for various reasons including COVID, African swine fever and currency issues. We see good potential growth over the next several years."

Here's a look at how Southeast Asia's post-pandemic re-

(See Driving New Market Potential, page 8)



While in Cambodia, the team visited Rathada Hatchery Farm, a fish processing and retail outlet that adopted improved aquaculture practices through ASA/WISHH's Commercialization of Aquaculture for Sustainable Trade (CAST) project.

Driving New Market Potential

(continued from page 7)

covery is progressing—and the insights we gleaned along the way that travelers O'Connor, Read and Caitlyn Abbey, ISA International Markets Specialist, say will strengthen paths for Illinois soy into the region.

Challenges And Opportunities

Infrastructure and logistics pose significant hurdles for soybean buyers in Cambodia and the Philippines, O'Connor observes. Vietnam appears best positioned to handle new soy orders.

"Cambodia and the Philippines both share logistics challenges," he says. "Cambodia relies on transportation through Vietnam first because they have no deepwater port. Manila in the Philippines is their hub for inter-

national trade, and subsequent travel is by smaller watercraft. Vietnam is well developed and has a population with a growing GDP. They do have the infrastructure for international trade and a river system to move into other countries."

Each country's investments in accommodating soybean purchases reflects local culture, dietary preferences and relationships with trade partners, Abbey points out. Here's how she describes the position of each country our group visited:

- Cambodia: "They are investing in aquaculture as a future market for protein consumption," Abbey explains. "Industry leaders work there very closely with industry leaders in Vietnam but are looking for more independence to start buying and importing into their own country."

- Philippines: "Industry leaders love U.S. quality but usually buy on price," she notes. "The relationship between the

Philippine government and the U.S. government gives stability to trade in the country."

- Vietnam: "The country is growing very fast and is in need of more protein to feed its growing population," Abbey says. "The market is expanding very fast, and industry leaders are looking forward to growing the Vietnamese market."

Addressing those needs is something Illinois farmers are well-positioned to do, Read says. He credits programs such as World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) for promoting emerging industries in the region such as aquaculture and building meal demand, in particular.

"Illinois is the leading container exporter as well as the leading bulk exporter in the U.S.," he explains. "About 60 percent of Illinois soybeans are exported, so it is vital that we keep our customers satisfied."

Deeper challenges date back years and reflect political and

leadership changes in the individual countries.

"Cambodia best exemplifies the barriers for new markets," O'Connor says. "Historically, it has had an unstable government. They are trying to develop that stability while at the same time supporting their population after generations of abuse. The food system needs to build the underlying calorie and protein needs for the population after decimating it through prior food-acquisitioning processes. Basically, they need to create a modern system to grow food essentials economically."

Hog herd rebuilding is a key priority for the Philippines, which faces significant setbacks from African swine fever.

"They were building back up (their herd) as we were there," Read says. "Soymeal is a big part of the swine ration, so it is encouraging that demand should grow in the future."



Also while in Cambodia, the team toured Made for This Fabrication, an organization that provides citizens in Siem Reap with vocational training.

Meanwhile, the Philippines must reckon with growing geopolitical challenges from neighboring China.

"The Philippines is facing increasing tensions with China over disputed territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea," Read explains. "We have seen more shipping problems around the world in recent times. We need safe shipping lanes to be able to move our grain safely."

High post-COVID transportation costs are another barrier, Abbey says.

Currency challenges and inflation pressures will also have a bearing on these countries' economies.

Consistency, Quality and Price

Throughout the trip, our ISA contingent of farmers and staff leadership emphasized several key benefits of Illinois soy that are attractive to local buyers.

"Quality and price are the two top considerations," Abbey explains.

O'Connor agrees, noting the "quality and consistency of product year after year." Other factors local buyers value about Illinois soy include amino acid content and digestibility, plus the reliability and timeliness of deliveries.

Verifiable sustainability of the crop is another advantage. Our team discussed the U.S. Soybean Export Council's (USSEC's) Sustainable U.S. Soy Assurance Protocol (SSAP), which verifies that soybeans were grown in a sustainable manner.

"This program is growing worldwide as more countries are concerned with the climate crisis, and U.S. soy stands in a good position to address this," Read says.

During the trip, we scheduled numerous in-person meetings with leaders in industry and government.

"We tried to meet with different levels of the industry, from importers to feed millers and end-users," Abbey explains.

Looking Ahead

Underlying fundamentals suggest the relationship between Illinois and Southeast Asia is on strong footing moving forward.

For one thing, many countries lack sufficient electricity infrastructure to process their own soybean meal, making imports of Illinois soy attractive, O'Connor says. Other countries in the region have access to other vegetable oils, so demand is lower. But Cambodia, the Philippines and Vietnam value U.S. soy oil because they lack comparable access.

Demographics of the region also tell an important story long-term, Abbey adds.

"This market is significant because as China's population declines, Southeast Asia will be our future biggest market," she says.

Back home in the U.S., Illinois farmers can use these insights from our trip and take action to sustain such trade relationships.

"Illinois farmers need to have a better understanding of the value of free trade and the impacts of tariffs," O'Connor explains. "Advocating for fewer trade restrictions to open markets should be a priority among Illinois soybean farmers."

Checkoff dollars are making this kind of demand growth possible, Read adds. "We value trade agreements that remove barriers, open markets and encourage U.S. government support for trade," he says. "We want to improve access to global markets for U.S. soybeans, corn, wheat and livestock products."

To learn more about opportunities in Southeast Asia, Abbey encourages growers to follow updates from USSEC.

"Farmers can continue to communicate with those that they met on this trip and continue to help support ISA's initiatives surrounding Southeast Asian countries," she says.



During the visit, team ISA met with several organizations and industry leaders to explore soybean meal market opportunities for Illinois soybean farmers.



From Illinois Farms to International Plates

By Eric Woodie, Trade Analyst, Illinois Soybean Association

Illinois is a driving force in soybean production. Remarkably, 60 percent of the soybeans grown in Illinois find their way to international markets, showcasing the state's integral role in global food systems. The journey of Illinois soybeans from the farm to destinations around the world is a testament to a sophisticated supply chain, featuring various stages of handling that ensure quality and efficiency.

The Farming Stage: Foundations of Quality

Illinois soy farmers, using

advanced agricultural techniques and technology, grow high-quality soybeans. Illinois farmers are diligent in using sustainable best practices to produce soybeans that meet both domestic and international needs.

Once the soybeans are mature, harvesting begins. Modern equipment efficiently collects and cleans the beans, which are then transported to local elevators or processing facilities. This stage is crucial, as it sets the foundation for the quality and consistency of the final product. The beans are sorted and graded based on size, color and other factors to ensure they

meet specific market requirements.

Transportation and Storage: Preparing for Export

Following initial processing, soybeans and soybean meal are transported to terminals near major transportation hubs such as container and rail yards and river terminals. Efficient logistics are vital in this phase, as they ensure that soybeans and soybean meal are moved to export terminals in a timely manner.

Export Facilities and Processing: Ready for Global Markets

As Illinois soy products move

down the Mississippi River or are transloaded into export containers, they are prepared for shipment according to international standards and regulations. This might include additional quality checks, official U.S. grades performed by the Federal Grain Inspection Service, phytosanitary certification processes to ensure soybeans are fit for export, or all of the above.

Global Avenues: Markets and Uses

Once exported, Illinois soybeans embark on diverse paths. They are used in a variety of ways across the globe:

1. Animal Feed: A significant portion of exported soybeans is processed into animal feed. Soybean meal is a vital feed ingredient for livestock such as poultry, pigs and cattle. This usage supports global meat production, making soybeans a crucial element in the international food supply chain.

2. Soybean Oil: Soybeans are also processed into soybean oil, which is used in cooking and food production. It's a staple in many cuisines and food products. The versatility of soybean oil makes it a valuable export product.

3. Industrial Uses: Beyond food, soybeans find applications in various industrial products including biodiesel, biodegradable plastics, paints, cosmetics and much more.

4. Human Consumption: Some soybeans are exported directly for human consumption. Products such as tofu, tempeh, soy milk and soy protein are popular in many cultures and are sought after in international markets.

The top U.S. soy product export markets are diverse and strategically important, reflecting global demand for soy in various sectors. The leading destinations for U.S. soy exports are:

1. China

China is the largest importer of U.S. soybeans, significantly influencing global trade. The country relies heavily on soybean imports to meet its demand for animal feed, particularly for its massive pork industry.

2. Mexico

Mexico is a major buyer of U.S. soy, primarily for animal feed and food products. The close geographic proximity and strong trade relationships between the U.S. and Mexico facilitate a high volume of soy exports. Interestingly, on average

40 percent of Mexican import of U.S. soy products originate out of the Gulf of Mexico.

3. Japan

Japan is a significant market for high-quality, sustainable soybeans used in human consumption products such as tofu, soy sauce and other traditional foods. Japan's preference for quality and its established trade partnerships make it a crucial export market for the U.S.

4. European Union

The EU represents a diverse market for soy. The EU's emphasis on sustainability creates opportunities in various sectors that Illinois soy is primed to meet.

5. Taiwan

Taiwan imports U.S. soybeans primarily for animal feed and food products. Its strong economy and increasing demand for protein-rich foods drive the need for U.S. soy, making it an important market for Illinois. Given Taiwan's reliance on consistent, timely supplies and competitive container pricing, Illinois soy enters that market via containers steadily.

6. Indonesia

Indonesia is an emerging market for U.S. soybeans, with demand driven by its expanding livestock and poultry industries and a long-standing tempeh industry. As Indonesia's economy grows, so does its need for high-quality imports to support its food production systems. The Indonesian market is serviced by both container and bulk exports, making it a top Illinois soy customer.

7. Egypt

Egypt has become a notable importer of U.S. soybeans, primarily for animal feed. Its strategic location and growing agricultural sector contribute to its role as an important market for Illinois soy.

These top export markets, among many others, reflect the diverse applications and high demand for Illinois soybeans and soybean meal across the globe.

The Importance of a Robust Supply Chain

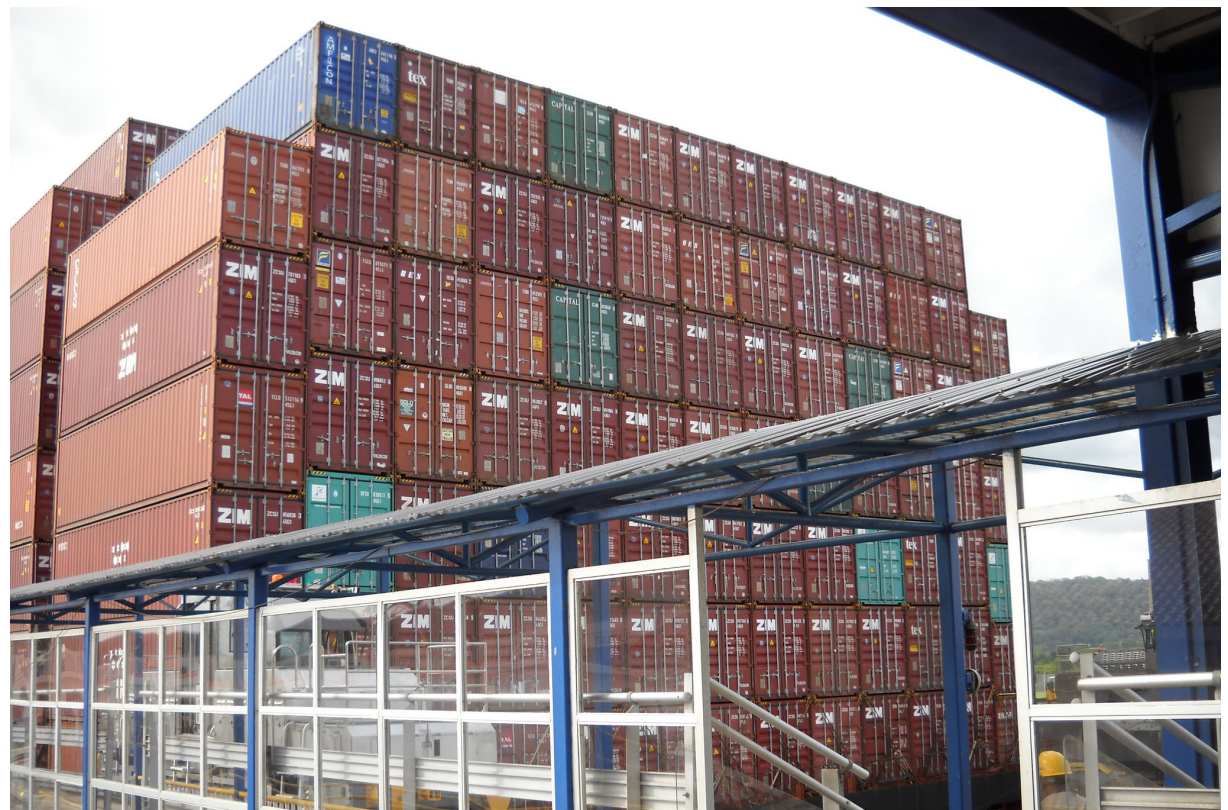
Each stage, beginning with farming and continuing through exporting, involves stringent quality controls and adherence to standards. This ensures that



Eric Woodie, Trade Analyst,
Illinois Soybean Association

the soy products are not only safe and high-quality but also meet the specific requirements of various global markets.

In summary, Illinois soybeans travel a unique path from farm to international markets, reflecting an efficient supply chain. The commitment to quality at every stage underscores the importance of Illinois soy products in the global agricultural landscape. Their journey highlights the interconnected nature of modern agriculture and the critical role that Illinois soy farmers play in bringing this essential crop to markets around the world.





The Road Ahead: Shaping an Ag-Centric Transportation System

Key points on the path to supporting agriculture's growth

Ever since Kevin Costner heard a voice from his cornfield whisper, "If you build it, he will come," businesses from every industry have used this memorable movie quote to underline an important idea: If you make an investment - if you build something of value and indelible meaning - eventually, the idea will pay off.

Our transportation infrastructure is one of Illinois soy's most vital global competitive advantages—and in turn, that infrastructure's aging is one of our most critical issues.

How do we make investments now, so we have not only a resilient transportation system but one

that also maintains our competitive advantage?

ISA already has begun to map out what needs to be implemented to create an ag-centric transportation system and how we best support those initiatives.

You already know Illinois is the largest soybean producer in the U.S. We grew 677 million bushels in 2022. But here's something you might not know: "Ag is the No. 1 sector of the Illinois economy reliant on the transportation network," says Todd Main, ISA Director of Market Development.

That kind of volume puts pressure on an aging infrastructure. And ISA is working hard to

ensure soybean production numbers keep increasing while the transportation system becomes more resilient so ag output and infrastructure move forward together.

ISA has a goal of 15 percent growth in exports year over year. Today, Asia dominates the export market, but North American destinations are growing the fastest.

Currently, China is by far our biggest market, but domestic policies have experts projecting a population decrease of as much as 720 million over the next two decades. That means demand in that market is likely to decline. It is imperative that we develop

new markets for our agricultural output. Our growth potential there for the long term does not match the near term.

ISA has already begun cultivating new markets, including Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Bangladesh, Thailand); Africa (sub-Saharan and Indonesia); and South Asia, specifically India, where the ISA co-funded Soy Excellence Center recently opened. And we'll also continue to see growth in South America and Mexico.

Illinois agriculture is some of the most productive in the world. The combined efforts of ISA and others translate to an anticipated 15 percent to 30 percent increase

in Illinois agricultural productivity over the next 20 years. Will our current transportation system meet the needs of our growth? How do we ensure that we can continue to get our products to these new markets?

The answer: Our transportation system in the future will need to be more resilient and adaptive in its capacity.

As part of our growth strategy, ISA has commissioned a series of studies analyzing the state's transportation infrastructure. Civil Design Inc. in St. Louis recently completed the first study, "Transportation Network Evaluation of Soybean and Soy Product Movements." It focused on examining transportation conditions, capacity and networks able to support soybean production growth and resilience.

The results will allow us to identify transportation network gaps and opportunities to improve how Illinois soy producers get their products to market. Future studies will identify opportunities to optimize transportation modes and maintain and even increase the competitive advantage for Illinois producers.

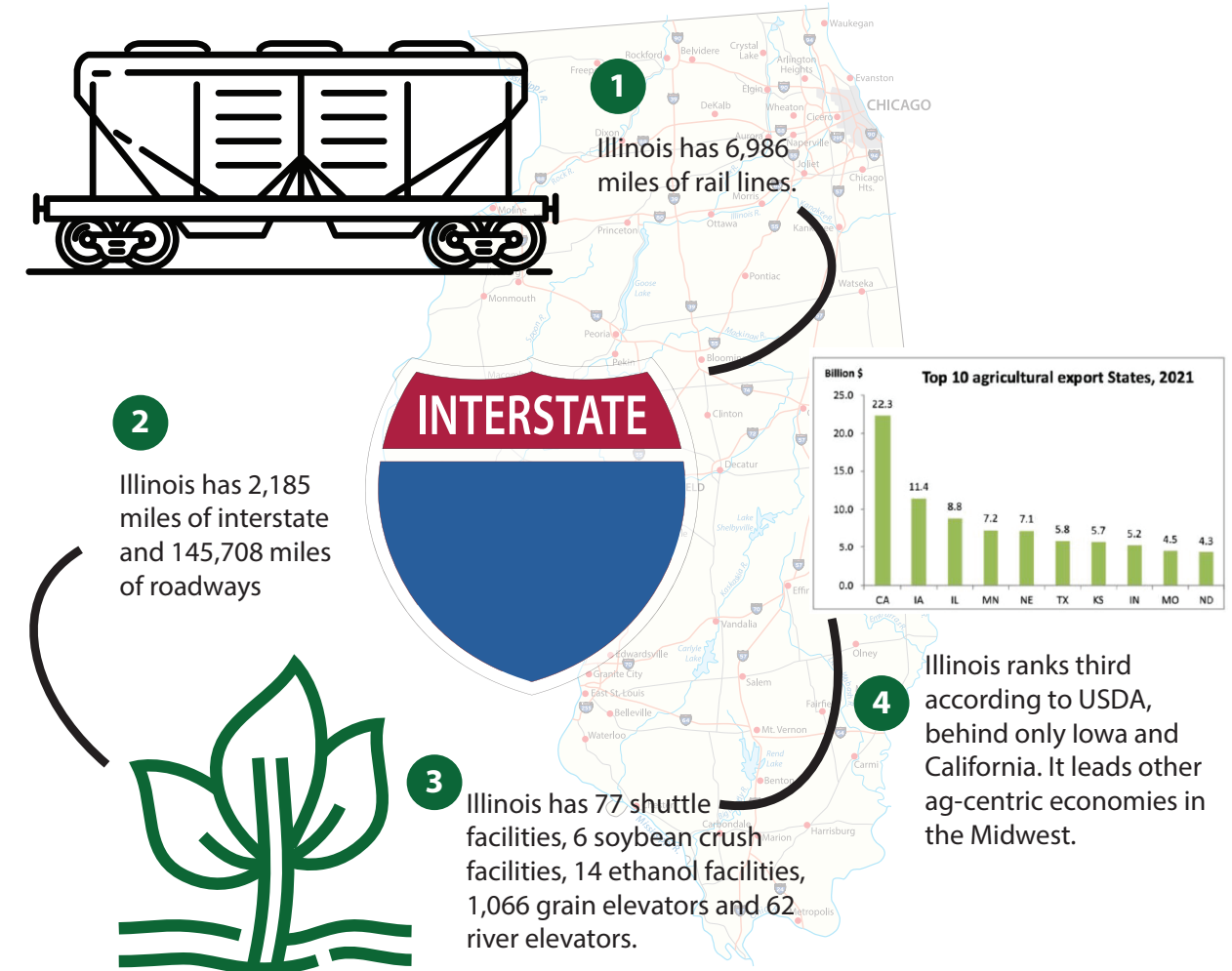
These are key questions for building the ag-centric transportation system we need. Here's a look at what we've found so far.

Road

At the crossroads of the nation, Illinois ranks third in highway miles (behind California and Texas). The 2022 Report Card for Illinois from the American Society of Civil Engineers assigned the state roadways a grade of D+. Bridges are a particular concern, with 52 percent in poor or fair condition.

Thankfully, \$1.4 billion in bridge-specific funding is now available for Illinois from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. ISA launched a Bridge Bundling toolkit to help identify the most effective way to move forward.

Those highways and bridges are the critical first step in soy-



bean transportation—the initial mode from the farm. An estimated 86 percent of Illinois soybean production is accessible in a 30-minute drive to roadways the state has identified as a Primary Freight Network (PFN).

Maintenance on those key roadways is critical, but equally important is how to access the remaining 14 percent that are too far away from the PFN.

A complicating factor: The freight supply chain that utilizes the PFN is complex and contains many moving parts. Added to that, many different parties own and operate across the supply chain.

ACTION: The study suggests a key first step: Form coalitions to identify transportation challenges and opportunities as they arise. Then develop a strategic plan, incorporating local bridge projects, to provide economic benefits to soy industry stakeholders within host communities across the state.

Rail

Illinois has not only the most track miles of any state but also the most railroads, and we lead the country in originated tonnage.

The state is at the heart of the North American rail network—it is the primary hub where eastern, western and Canadian Class I railroads meet and exchange cargo. In fact, each of the six Class I railroads serves Illinois.

Single carrier routes directly connect Illinois with the Pacific Ocean via Vancouver, British Columbia, in Canada, and Michoacán (de Ocampo), Mexico. This provides a competitive advantage compared to California or Washington ports. Multiple single carrier routes connect Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico between Alabama and Veracruz, Mexico.

Trains are critical to soybean movement, especially from grain elevators. A train can handle the cargo of 400 trucks, but to do so, it would have to load and unload in 24 hours. Very few soybean

freight corridors can load and unload that much freight.

We must bolster and sustain our rail system advantage.

ACTION: Maintain an ongoing dialogue with Class I railroads to leverage individual railroad development, such as the renovations and improvements to the rail yard in Dupu, Ill., by Union Pacific Railroad. Support and expand Class II and III railroad service and the infrastructure conditions plus other mode connections on a case-by-case basis. Specifically:

- Increase funding to improve access to the North American rail-served industrial parks, e.g., Savannah Industrial Hub and the Port of Kaskaskia. This will support host communities and reduce the cost of soybean first- and last-mile transportation cost.
- Explore the selective modification of fracsand unit train loading facilities and repurpose

(See The Road Ahead, page 14)



The Road Ahead

(continued from page 13)

this infrastructure to load beans directly to unit trains. (A site is available in Rochelle.)

River & Ocean

Illinois' inland waterways, especially the locks and dams on the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio and Kaskaskia rivers, are critically important to bulk soybean movement. "Investing in waterways is critical," says Main.

The state's waterways have seen dramatic, 30- to 40-ft. swings in water levels thanks to extreme weather events. This, along with increased freight volumes and heightened time sensitivity, makes our locks and dams a priority.

Simply put, they are aged and in desperate need of restoration and selective upgrading. Their condition, as well as the channel dredging and channel conditions, are considered sub-standard by American Society of Civil Engineers evaluations.

Port developments both on inland waterways as well as Great Lakes and oceans heavily influence how soy products move to market. Product con-

tainerization will expand the shipping options, as long as the carrier schedule and ship-loading criteria can be met.

ACTION: Engage stakeholders to build support for funding while mitigating any adverse impacts that may arise. Monitor the transportation sector's effectiveness in moving soybeans and products to market, domestically and internationally, where data is available. Specifically:

- Expand the modal choice options and route diversity by increasing awareness of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway ports in the U.S. and Canada. Spotlight directly connected ports on the Atlantic Ocean.

- Explore the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence Seaway network as an option to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for export products. This body of water can be accessed by barges from the Illinois River and moved to the Port of Milwaukee's new handymax vessel hub for export.

Sustainability

Sustainability remains a key benefit for Illinois soybeans, and we can leverage that to

our benefit, especially as global buyers and customers increasingly call for transparency in environmentally conscious production and sourcing.

Our soybeans have a distinct advantage—the lowest carbon footprint compared to soy from other global origins.

For generations, we've been using sustainable techniques such as crop rotation and nutrient management to produce our soybeans, and we continue to find new ways to advance our practices with precision ag technology, data monitoring and other advanced solutions.

We can combine sustainability and transportation to communicate those benefits to potential global customers.

ACTION: Educate, educate, educate. Create tools to tell the story of Illinois soybean benefits, and factor sustainability into transportation options. Specifically:

- Create an Illinois soybean exports carbon calculator that buyers can use to see the estimated carbon footprint for our products.

- Focus exports on shorter, green trade routes, which will reduce overall greenhouse gas

emissions and boost North American trade volumes.

What's Next?

Illinois' placement at the center of the North American and U.S. road, railway and waterway networks compounds the effect of our aging transportation infrastructure. We need to act quickly and proactively in order to be ready for as much as 30 percent more volume for those systems to move.

In addition to evaluating the options we've reviewed in this article, the second study in the series is underway and will continue through August 2025. With it, we're taking a deeper dive into our transportation infrastructure and network configurations. We're asking questions including:

- What soy transportation corridors emit the least carbon?

- How can we best achieve economies of scale?

- Is containerization an opportunity for select production areas?

- Are there deficient roads, rail or marine corridors that are essential to exports?

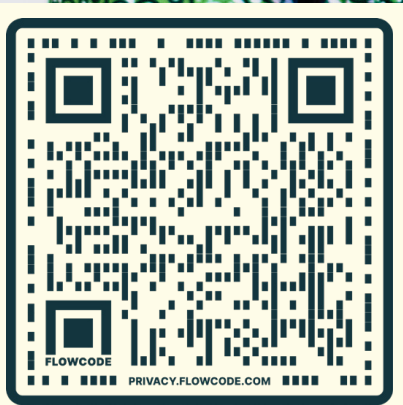
- Are resources available to help rural areas, and their residents and freight communities, improve access or address decarbonization, including grant funding?

- Are there opportunities to repurpose and restore former freight facilities and networks, as well as former industrial and commercial facilities, to enhance soybean and soy product movements to end markets?

Illinois' transportation infrastructure leads the way in soybean exporting and logistics, and we need to make sure ag is top of mind in any plans for improvement and upgrades. That's why ISA is leading the way in actively engaging leadership and spotlighting the fundamental issues agriculture faces as a whole. This will ensure we continue to grow the value of soybeans at home and around the world.



WISHH leverages partnerships *for U.S. Soy to help meet the protein needs of 8 billion consumers*



wishh.org



Investigating the Bio-Based Lubricant Market

Whether they are working on tractors in the shop or on chainsaws and weed eaters in the garage, Illinois soybean growers are no strangers to the intricate workings of heavy equipment.

But what if the lubricants you purchase to keep your equipment in top shape could also increase the demand for the commodity you work hard to produce year after year?

Bio-based lubricants, which are lubricants derived from renewable feedstocks, provide a green alternative to traditional petroleum-based lubricants.

"A lot of companies are looking to improve their sustainability, and so using certified bio-based products are a way to achieve that goal," said Todd Main, Director of Market Development for the Illinois Soybean Association.

Not only do these lubricants offer a green alternative for companies, they also create an opportunity to put more money in soybean growers' pockets.

Supply and Demand

According to Industry Arc, as of 2023 the bio-based lubricant market was valued at more than \$26.5 billion and is expected to grow to \$38.2 billion by 2030.

Several factors can be attributed to the anticipated growth in this sector of the lubricants market. They include increased concerns about environmental sustainability. Other contributing factors include the drive to lessen reliance on fossil fuels and the benefits that bio-based lubricants provide such as biodegradability, reduced carbon footprints and lower toxicity.

The good news for Illinois soybean growers is there's a healthy

demand for soy-based lubricants driven by a variety of industrial uses.

An Alternative to "Total-Loss Lubricants"

"Most greases are petroleum greases, and the whole idea here is to replace them with bio-based greases because that's where the market is going and that's what consumers are wanting," said Barry McGraw, Chief Lab Officer for Airable Research Lab.

"We've done a ton [of work] in lubricants," he added. "Companies refer to petroleum-based lubricants as a 'total loss lubricant' because you're using it and then it goes into the ground and environment."

Increased pressure to produce environmentally friendly products makes soy-based lubricants a perfect alternative.

"We do a lot of lubricant work in the oil and gas [industry]. If you think of oil and gas drilling for pipelines, you need lubricants for down-hole drilling so that things don't break. We developed a lubricant for LFS Chemistry, and they develop bio-based chemistries for the oil and gas industry. We licensed that technology to them, they've had two field trials, we will scale this up. It will start to be sold in the industry within the next month or two," said McGraw.

The automotive, mining, construction, gas and oil and, of course, agriculture industries are all large consumers of lubricants like the ones being developed at Airable.

Whether it's engine oil, hydraulic fluid or grease, the demand for these products is not going away. Neither is the pressure to continue to improve sustainability mea-

tures. That's where soy-based lubricants come into play.

Experts in Soy-Based Chemistry

"We're the only research and development company in the world that's only focused on one raw material, so we are becoming experts in soy-based chemistries with respect to consumer and industrial uses," said McGraw.

Airable is a business line of Ohio Soybean Council and while it started there, "we thought 'why not get other states involved?' So half of our budget is funded by Ohio, while the other half is funded by six other Qualified State Soybean Boards (QSSBs), including Illinois Soybean Association," said McGraw.

The lab boasts several commercialized soy-based products, including a DeWalt bar and chain oil that can be found in big box stores across the U.S. including Ace Hardware, Lowe's and Home Depot.

"Airable only works with commercial industrial companies," McGraw explained. "Dynamic Green Products (DGP) is one of our key clients, which is the manufacturer for Stanley Black & Decker products."

Their role in production of soy-based lubricants begins with research and development and extends through to product commercialization and licensing.

"When we develop these technologies, we don't manufacture them, we license the technology to companies like DGP or Stanley Black & Decker," he explained. "Once they start selling that product, then Airable gets a percentage of royalty back, and because we are a nonprofit, that money goes right back into research."

Not only does the licensing of a technology put more money toward research for soy products, but it also benefits the QSSBs that are part of Airable, including ISA.

"The QSSBs get a percentage of that royalty and get to do what they wish with it," McGraw added.

Weighing the Pros and Cons

When it comes to a soy-based lubricant, McGraw has found that, "it's not going to be less expensive than petroleum-based lubricants, but consumers are willing to pay more for it."

He added, "in grease there's potential to be competitive with pricing, and the performance is comparable. In the oil and gas market, the customers love it. The price is close to what they were already using, and it performs really well."

When it comes to the DeWalt bar and chain oil, "it has shown better performance than petroleum-based products. There's less gumming on the chain, people have said that the sharpness of their chains last longer, it doesn't give off fumes like petroleum-based lubricants and it's biodegradable."

Although the case for soy-based lubricants is strong, McGraw noted that there are still obstacles to overcome.

The Biggest Challenge

"The value chain," said McGraw.

Grav. "Companies have been using petroleum in the grease market for as long as petroleum has been around."

He explained that companies are "used to using different feedstocks, so trying to convince them to convert to different feedstocks," there are several barriers. "It's not only the cost, but also about sourcing. Sometimes it's a lot of education and helping them to understand that soy is a commodity, and there is a lot of it."

Unsurprisingly, companies "want to know how they can be guaranteed a sustainable amount of product."

On more than one occasion, McGraw has found himself going beyond his duties in the lab to connect buyers with suppliers.

"A lot of customers come to us and have no clue what's available. Sometimes they ask for something that's already available, so we will connect them to the value chain."

The other obstacle for soy-based lubricants in the market is price.

"Before you do any chemistry, you are starting with a higher price," said McGraw. To be competitive, Airable must find other

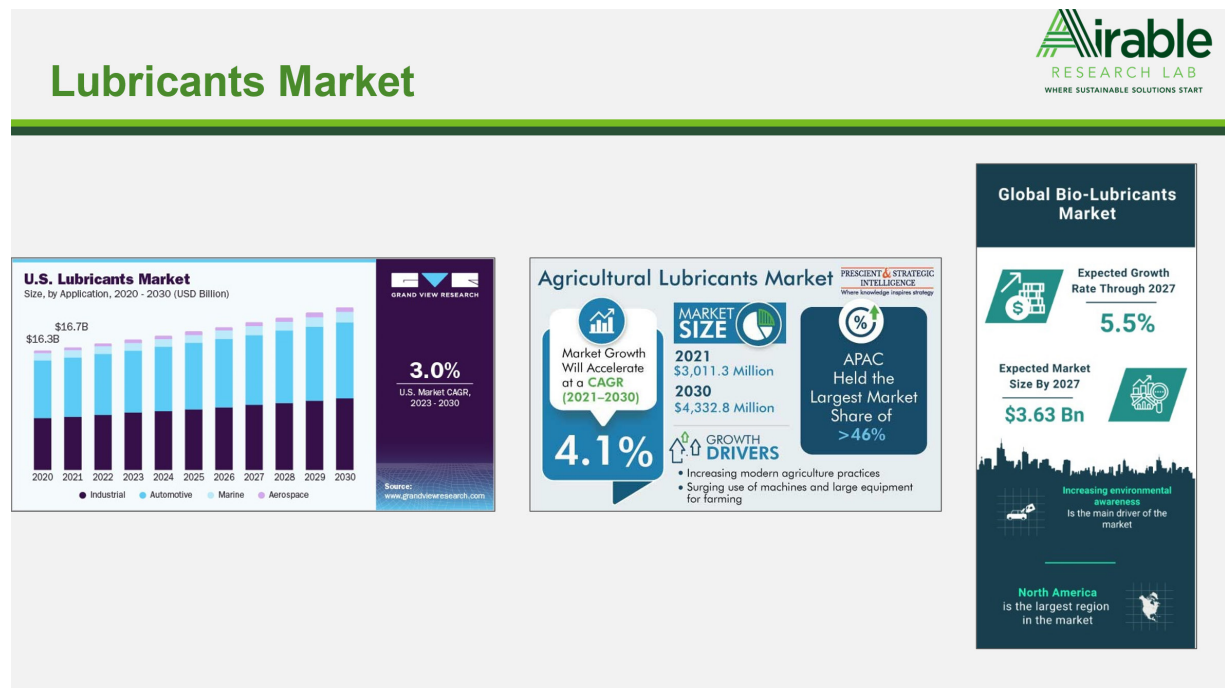
ways to add value to overcome the cost barrier.

"You have to figure out whether it will last longer because that can make up the price difference. Or does it have an added functionality? Those are the challenges to prove to a potential client."

At the end of the day, McGraw puts it this way: "OK, it costs more but it lasts longer, it's better for the environment and consumers are wanting it. Your tools can last longer, for example with the bar and chain oil, which is also saving equipment costs."

At ISA, "our objective is to expand opportunities for people to purchase more soybeans, and we think that this soy-based lubricant market is worth exploring to help increase demand for Illinois soybeans," said Main. "In March of 2023, we launched the Soy Innovation Center to support our stated goal of increasing demand for soy and expanding the uses for soy in everyday products."

To learn more about the Soy Innovation Center and ISA's efforts to increase new uses for soybeans, visit [SoyInnovationCenter.com](https://www.SoyInnovationCenter.com).



Source: Airable Research Lab, Ohio Soybean Council



What the EPA's Final Herbicide Strategy Means for Illinois Growers

By Corey Lacey, Ph.D.,
Environmental Policy Manager,
Illinois Soybean Association

In late August, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the final Herbicide Strategy. In their own words, this was an “unprecedented step in protecting over 900 federally endangered and threatened (listed) species from the potential impacts of herbicides.” Unfortunately, the strategy is also an unprecedented first step in overhauling established U.S. pesticide policy - requiring Illinois farmers to rethink how they use pesticides over the coming years.

Question: Why are the changes coming?

In recent years, the EPA has come under a multitude of lawsuits about pesticides and protection of listed species. This culminated in 2023, when the EPA bent to legal pressure, settling a lawsuit brought by the Center for Biological Diversity. It committed to come into compliance with its Endangered Species Act obligations.

Question: What is the Endangered Species Act?

The Endangered Species Act is a federal law that, among other things, requires federal agencies to protect listed species when they take official agency actions.

The registration or re-registration of pesticide labels for use is one example of an agency action. In the 2023 settlement, the EPA admitted that it had not been meeting its ESA obligations for decades. As a result, it now must come into compliance rapidly.

Question: How will the final Herbicide Strategy impact Illinois farmers?

The final Herbicide Strategy does not create immediate regulation but sets the framework for which the EPA will evaluate future pesticide labels. The framework requires farmers to meet mitigation requirements to limit runoff and drift concerns from specific fields. For runoff mitigation, indi-

vidual pesticides will have specific “mitigation point requirements” that must be met to allow applications. In the example scenarios provided by the EPA (Table 1), some of these points may be met by existing field conditions such as tile drainage, field locations or low slope. However even when these situations are met, farmers will need to adopt other practices from a mitigation list. In some cases, this will create a pseudo-mandatory adoption of conservation practices such as cover crops and no-till.

To meet drift concerns, Illinois farmers could be required to implement drift buffers of up to 320 feet. However, drift mitigation

measures could allow farmers to reduce buffer size by adopting certain conservation practices such as: increasing droplet size, lowering boom height, planting hedgerows/windbreaks or reducing the area of a field being applied. Table 2 runs through three scenarios presented by EPA in which Illinois farmers could reduce the buffer size from 320 feet to 225 (Option A), 130 (Option B) or 50 (Option C).

The final strategy is an improvement over the draft strategy the agency released last year. For example, requirements for many Illinois farmers were eased because of permanent field features that reduce runoff risk. It's also clear that the EPA listened to some concerns from Illinois farmers. For example, based on the draft language, the Herbicide Strategy would have limited the ability of tile-drained fields to meet mitigation requirements. In a reversal, based on farmer feedback, the Final Strategy made tile drainage a mitigation practice – reflecting the science that drainage reduces runoff – easing the regulatory burden on these fields. However, Illinois soybean farmers should be aware of challenges to the practicality of the proposed mitigation measures. Often, meeting requirements would involve costly physical changes to fields. This could include adoption practices that reduce yields, add buffer zones and take land out of production. Additionally, to meet court-ordered timelines, the EPA is bypassing sound science, opting to force mitigation requirements on farmers without establishing an actual danger to endangered species. This could lead farmers to adopt expensive changes unnecessarily.

To be among the first to know about potential changes to pesticide regulations and other pressing issues, consider becoming a member of Illinois Soybean Growers. Your membership dollars directly support efforts to advocate for farm-friendly pesticide policy in Washington, D.C. and Springfield.

Field Location, Characteristic, or Mitigation Measure	# of Points	
	Reduced Tillage	Conventional Tillage, Tile Drainage
Pesticide Runoff Vulnerability	2	2
Flat Field (<3% slope)	2	2
Irrigation Water Management ¹		
<i>Non-irrigated</i>	3	3
Systems that Capture Runoff		
<i>Tile Drainage without Controlled Outlet</i>		1
TOTAL POINTS for FIELD LOCATION, SEMI- OR PERMANENT CHARACTERISTICS:	7	8
Reduced Tillage Management		
<i>Reduced Tillage</i>	2	
Cover Crop		
<i>Short Duration</i>		1
TOTAL:	9	9

Table 1: Non-irrigated soybean and corn on flat land, non-sandy soil
Adapted From: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OPP-2023-0365-1139>

	Buffer Size (feet)		
	Option A	Option B	Option C
Spray Drift Buffer Distance	320	320	320
Application parameters			
<i>Coarse droplet size</i>	-20%		
Other measures			
<i>Basic downwind windbreak/hedgerow</i>		-50%	
<i>Advanced downwind windbreak/hedgerow</i>			-75%
Reduced proportion of field treated			
<i>5-8 passes</i>			-10%
Relative humidity ≥60%	-10%	-10%	
Total % Reductions¹	-30%	-60%	-85%
FINAL BUFFER SIZE²	224	128	48
FINAL ROUNDED BUFFER SIZE³	225	130	50

Table 2: Aerial use of pesticides on corn and Soybean grown in Illinois
Adapted From: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OPP-2023-0365-1139>





Sustainable Synergy

The importance of sustainability in the agri-food supply chain and the need for better alignment between corporate strategy and farmers

By Tim Rendall, Domestic Markets Manager, Illinois Soybean Association

Society is at a critical inflection point. Driven by the challenges associated with climate change, environmental degradation and social equity, global corporations increasingly prioritize sustainability as a core component of their business strategies. Across various industries, companies are making ambitious sustainability commitments focused on reducing their environmental footprint, enhancing their social responsibility and ensuring long-term business viability. This global shift in corporate strategy to combat these sustainability challenges is particularly crucial within the agri-food system. We face the dual challenges of providing food and nutrition security for a growing global population while enhancing positive environmental outcomes. As agri-food companies embark on their sustainability journeys, it is imperative to align their strategies with the realities faced by farmers, who are the frontline stewards of the land and play a pivotal role in the success of sustainability initiatives.

Corporate Sustainability: Driving Business Decisions

Sustainability has become a central pillar of modern business strategy. Companies are recognizing that sustainability practices are not just about protecting the environment or donating to charity; they are also about protecting and ensuring long-term business viability, mitigating risk and future-proofing organizations. As a result, the past five years have seen a significant shift in corporate sustainability as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) teams have evolved both in name and scope. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is the latest evolution of corporate sustainability, and there are some distinct shifts compared

to previous strategies. ESG is a data-driven approach focused on creating a measurable impact on key significant areas of sustainability. The clearest example would be companies' goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Farmers and Sustainability: A Relationship Centuries in the Making

Although corporate sustainability efforts are gaining momentum, it is important to recognize that farmers have long been at the forefront of sustainability. For generations, farmers have understood the importance of maintaining healthy soils, conserving water and protecting biodiversity. These practices are essential not only for the environment but also for the long-term health and profitability of their farms.

Over the years, farmers have gained access to a growing number of tools and technologies to further enhance their on-farm sustainability. Precision agriculture combines data and technology to optimize the use of farming inputs (water, fertilizer, chemistries) to reduce waste and costs while mitigating environmental impact. Conservation tillage practices minimize soil disturbance, preventing soil erosion, improving water retention and increasing soil health. Integrating cover crops into existing cropping rotations supports biodiversity, increases soil health, sequesters carbon and improves water infiltration properties of the soil.

Despite the progress made related to tools and technologies to improve on-farm sustainability, farmers still face significant challenges in adopting more sustainable practices. These production system changes often occur with significant additional costs, such as the need for additional inputs and increased time and labor. Farmers often operate within tight profit margins, and implementing a

production system change is inherently risky. There is generally limited market incentive for them to adopt sustainability practices, as the market premium associated with increased sustainable on-farm practices does not always support the additional costs. This makes it increasingly difficult for farmers to invest in sustainability without the necessary support from the rest of the supply chain.

Connecting Corporate Sustainability Strategy with Farmers' Realities

The growing emphasis on sustainability in corporate strategy presents an opportunity to create a strong synergy between agri-food companies and farmers to meet sustainability goals. However, achieving this alignment requires a deep understanding of the realities faced by farmers and a commitment to supporting their sustainability efforts.

Farmers as Key Stakeholders

What's decided in a boardroom does not always make sense in the field. A key constraint in aligning corporate sustainability goals with farmers' practices is the disconnect between high-level objectives and on-the-ground realities. Farmers are key stakeholders in the agri-food system, and they play a pivotal role in the sustainability of the supply chain. Although companies set ambi-

tious targets for reducing their environmental footprint, farmers will not be able to implement the proposed changes without the right support and incentives. To ensure targets and goals are well-aligned in the design and ideation phase, it is imperative farmers are directly engaged in developing the strategy. This will ensure the strategy is designed with farmers' needs in mind and that companies adequately invest in these programs to support sustainable agriculture. Examples include providing adequate financial incentives, underwriting and mitigating risks, providing technical assistance/support and securing market access for sustainably produced goods.

Corporate sustainability goals are driving business decisions and shaping the future of the industry, so it is essential to ensure that these goals are grounded in the realities faced by farmers. The success of a corporate sustainability effort depends on strong partnerships with those farmers at the heart of agricultural production. By bridging the gaps between corporate sustainability strategy and farm-level realities, sustainability teams can create a situation where both businesses and farmers together create a thriving and prosperous tomorrow. By working together, companies and farmers can create a more sustainable and resilient food system that benefits everyone—from the farm to the table.





The Illinois Field of Beans BBQ Grand Slam, hosted by ISA and KCBS, provided a platform to highlight the crucial role soybeans play in animal agriculture.

The Illinois Field of Beans BBQ Grand Slam

By Olivia Key, Assistant Editor

This summer, the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) partnered with the Kansas City Barbecue Society (KCBS) to present the Illinois Field of Beans BBQ Grand Slam, a four-part pro-

fessional competition series that showcased the best of barbecue across the state. The events, held in Collinsville, Troy, Pierron and Murphysboro, brought together professional barbecue teams which competed in three categories: chicken, pork and ribs—all

proteins that are produced on soy-based diets.

KCBS competitions are renowned worldwide, attracting thousands of pitmasters and barbecue enthusiasts each year. Founded in 1986, KCBS is the world's largest barbecue organization, with

over 16,000 members globally. The Field of Beans BBQ Grand Slam was a significant event for Illinois, offering a platform to not only celebrate top-notch barbecue but also to highlight the pivotal role that soybeans play in animal agriculture.

"With a majority of U.S. soybeans produced being used as a high-quality protein source for animal feed, it's only fitting we sponsor Illinois' premier barbecue competitions," said ISA Domestic Markets Manager Tim Rendall.

Rendall, who spearheaded the competition series, says that the dedication and community involvement that radiated from the competitors, judges and attendees was unlike any other. "KCBS events are more than just barbecue competitions; they're a celebration of tradition, dedication and community. Each pitmaster pours their heart and soul into every dish, while the camaraderie among competitors and the support from community members create

a unique atmosphere where barbecue becomes more than food—it's a shared experience that brings people together."

The grand finale of the Illinois Field of Beans BBQ Grand Slam was held at the "Praise the Lard" BBQ Competition in Murphysboro on Sept. 21, where Triple H BBQ claimed victory, earning a \$1,500 prize and a legendary blown glass apple trophy.

Animal agriculture is soy's No. 1 customer, with swine and poultry being the top consumers. U.S. soybean meal is a vital component of feed, providing the essential protein and nutrients required for animal diets. As the demand for plant and animal protein continues to rise, U.S. soy is at the forefront, offering transparent and sustainable solutions for improved nutrition.

The nutritional benefits of soy are the primary driver behind its popularity among poultry and livestock producers. Packed with high-quality protein, essential amino acids, healthy fats, and a variety of vitamins and minerals, soybeans are a consistent and reliable feed option. This nutrient-dense package not only supports the growth and health of the animals but also enhances the quality of the meat, milk and eggs they produce. By contributing to both animal welfare and product quality, soy plays a crucial role in the success of animal agriculture.

"The ISA Market Development team is deeply committed to supporting the animal agriculture industry, which relies on the high-quality, sustainable nutrition that U.S. soy

provides," said Rendall. "Our partnership with organizations like KCBS reflects our dedication to showcasing the vital role soy plays in feeding the animals that produce the foods we all enjoy. We're proud to stand with the farmers and producers who work tirelessly to ensure a steady, nutritious food supply for consumers here at home and around the world."

Your Illinois Soybean Association is dedicated to growing market opportunities for you, our Illinois farmers, who are the providers of sustainable, locally sourced and high-protein soy products. Through events like the Illinois Field of Beans BBQ Grand Slam, ISA celebrates the vital connection between soy and animal agriculture.



The four-part series brought together pitmasters from around the state. They competed in three categories: chicken, pork and ribs - all soy-fed proteins.



A Sound, **Farmer**

Directed Wheat Program is Good Economically, Environmentally, Socially and Politically

Does the future involve a look back at where we came from? Probably, a good idea.

When I was growing up in South Central, Illinois, a corn-soy-wheat rotation was very common, particularly on livestock farms. As time changed, that rotation slowly and gradually became less popular. Illinois crop production changed and wheat acres were pushed aside for more corn and soybeans. Consolidation, technology and economics directed many producers into strictly corn and beans. Most Illinois wheat is now currently grown south of Illinois Route 16. In 2023, the latest records show just under 800,000 acres harvested.

Why look back? Why talk about wheat? Our 2024 agronomy vocabulary includes soil health, carbon, regenerative agriculture, water quality, gulf hypoxia, soil loss, erosion, nutrient loss reduction strategy. Couple those terms with economics, especially wheat-double crop soybeans or wheat-legume mix and one has a modern 2024 discussion.

The wheat double crop rotation has shown very good and competitive returns by University of Illinois ag economists. The environmental and soil health benefits of that old corn, soybean, wheat rotation are well worth examining.

Those thoughts set the stage for the current initiative to hold a referendum on a proposed Checkoff. The proposal for 1 ½ cents per bushel to support the wheat industry in Illinois would be refundable and managed by an elected board of nine producers.

The Illinois Wheat Association presently supports itself with dues, contributions from ag business and millers and grants. This method of support is unstable and very time consuming.

My opinion is that, in order for Illinois Wheat to have an effective program of research, promotion and educational outreach, a stable financial base is needed.

The days of a University of Illinois Extension Agent in each county doing these activities are long gone. Research, education and promotion have to become part of our cost of production. One and one-half cents on 100-bushel wheat is \$1.50 per acre, a pretty small commitment to support the future of our wheat industry here in Illinois.

Economics are tough in crop production in Illinois as I write this. The cyclical nature of agricultural production will continue to be a factor to deal with.

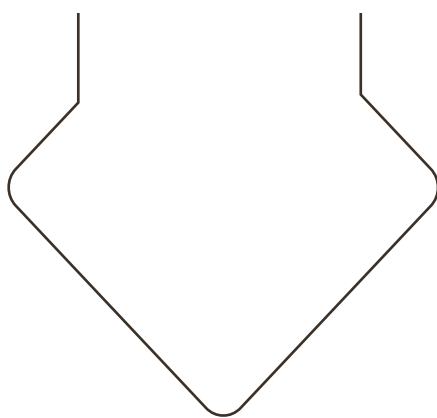
But we are in this for the long haul. A sound, farmer directed wheat program is good economically, environmentally, socially and politically.

Take a hard look around your neighborhood to see if the benefits of that third crop in a rotation would lead us towards a more positive agriculture in Illinois.

If you are willing to help, go online to illinoiswheat.org to sign the Wheat Checkoff Petition and advocate in favor of a better future for wheat in Illinois.

Don Guinnip, Clark County Farmer
Member NREC Council

(Originally published in FarmWeek 09/09/2024)



TODD MAIN | DIRECTOR OF MARKET DEVELOPMENT |
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

Reimagining Soy

As consumers and industries continue to prioritize sustainability, the Illinois Soybean Association's (ISA's) Soy Innovation Center is at the forefront of meeting the growing demand for environmentally friendly soy-based products. The Soy Innovation Center, which opened in March of this year, is dedicated to facilitating the research and commercialization of new and innovative soy-based products. It will focus on scalable solutions that can make a significant impact on the demand for Illinois soy.

In doing so, the Soy Innovation Center and ISA Market Development team are focusing on three primary product categories: textiles, bio-lubricants and industrial applications. These industries offer great potential for reducing reliance on petroleum by using soy-based inputs, thus lowering environmental footprints while meeting market demands.

The bio-lubricant industry, which you read about earlier in this issue, is currently the main focus of the Soy Innovation Center. Unlike traditional lubricants that rely on petroleum, bio-lubricants derived from soy offer a more sustainable and environmentally friendly alternative. One of the Center's objectives is to provide farmers with soy-based product alternatives they can use on the farm. Given that farmers typically use over 100 tubes of lubricant annually, this industry is a prime example of a scalable opportunity that will benefit both the environment and Illinois soybean farmers.

In the textiles sector, the Center aims to explore the use of soy as a sustainable alternative to synthetic fibers. Aside from cotton, most of the clothes we wear today are made of synthetic materials. Because soy-based textiles are more sustainable, we believe they can offer a lower environmental footprint. The Soy Innovation Center is working to understand the physical demands that materials need to meet in this sector, from hulls, meal, oil or a combination of the three.

As for industrial applications, there are many opportunities for soy to take its rightful place at center stage. For example, at both Farm Progress Show sites in Illinois and Iowa, soy-based polymers, or binders, and recycled asphalt have been used to pave sections of the sites. Additionally, the Soy Innovation Center is working to develop a soy-based coating for pipelines, which will help to reduce friction as materials flow through them.

Almost any product that relies on petroleum-based feedstocks can be replaced with soy oil. This product can offer the same performance and price competitiveness as existing products but with a significantly smaller environmental footprint. The challenge lies in narrowing our focus, as there are so many potential applications to explore.

So what makes soy such a versatile ingredient in these applications, especially as a petroleum alternative? The answer lies in its unique and organic characteristics. Soy oil, in particular, is valued for its adaptability, making it an excellent candidate for various industrial uses.

By focusing on these three key product areas—textiles, bio-lubricants and industrial applications—the Soy Innovation Center is poised to lead the way in sustainable product development. Ultimately, as former ISA Chairman Steve Pitstick once said, we will "move the pile" of soybeans for the benefit of our state's farmers.





Good for Your Land and Your Bottom Line

FARMER BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES



Per Acre

Financial Incentive

To help cover the start-up costs of cover crops, Farmers for Soil Health offers financial assistance of up to **\$50/acre** over a three-year period.



**INCREASE
Profitability**

Exclusive Marketplace

Enrollment in Farmers for Soil Health provides access to an exclusive future marketplace connecting farmers to top-tier supply chain partners that are focused on sustainability.

**LOCAL
TA Support**

Technical Advisor

Each state has dedicated on-the-ground technical advisors to provide research-based information and educational resources to aid in the transition of your field.



Learn more today! | FarmersforSoilHealth.com



Sent to you compliments of:

Illinois Soybean Association
1108 Trinity Lane
Bloomington, IL. 61704

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN
GROWERS



IT'S SUSTAINABLY
SOY

GET RECOGNITION FOR INVESTING IN **SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS**

The Illinois Soybean Association's It's Sustainably Soy Certification Program is designed to recognize organizations, companies, and executives for switching to sustainable soy-based solutions.

FOR COMPANIES

Today, a growing pipeline of products exist to help companies make the switch to soy. Companies and organizations using soy-based products for projects may apply.

FOR MANUFACTURERS

With parity in price and performance, organizations are switching to soy-based inputs in their products. U.S. soybean farmers, researchers, and industry partners are consistently pushing the limits of innovation to discover and deliver solutions to the biggest challenges the world faces. Manufacturers creating soy-based products may apply.



VISIT [ILSOY.ORG/SOYCERTIFICATION/](https://ilsoy.org/soycertification/)
TO LEARN MORE AND APPLY