

DECEMBER 2025

# *Illinois* **Field & Bean**

A PUBLICATION OF THE ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

**FORECASTING  
2026**

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# Beyond the Label: Soybean Oil



**RYAN FRIEDERS | DISTRICT 1 DIRECTOR |  
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION**

Growing up, I always loved living on our farm. Being part of a farm family meant my grandparents lived right next door. Aunts, uncles and cousins were around and part of everyday farm life, helping with work and joining in the fun. And even though I loved the spring and fall and looked forward to all the fieldwork, my favorite time of year was always the holidays.

From Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve, my life was full of one family gathering after the next. At the time, I believed the best part of the holidays was the gifts. But looking back, I realize what I remember the most about all the family gatherings are the meals we shared together. Sharing a meal is a special way to nourish your body and feed your spirit. Today, I'm fortunate that my wife, Deanne, feeds our family with food that is not only delicious but also nutritious.

As a farmer, I am proud to cultivate one of the most nutrient dense and versatile foods grown on the planet: soybeans. Soybeans are unique in the plant kingdom because they contain all nine essential amino acids, which aid in everything from protein synthesis to digestion and mineral absorption to mood regulation and appetite levels. And when it comes to cooking, soybean oil is an amazing ingredient because it is rich in omega-6 fatty acids, which are heart-healthy unsaturated fats.

Soybean oil also contains isoflavones, compounds that might help lower "bad" LDL cholesterol and reduce a person's risk of heart disease. In fact, soybean oil is recommended by the American Heart Association as being part of a healthy diet. Keep reading this issue of *Illinois Field & Bean* to hear from my wife, the creator and heart behind "This Farm Girl Cooks" recipe blog, as she shares some of our family's favorite meals that are made using soybean oil.

Of course, soy's benefits go far beyond oil. Soy milk is an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D, which are vital for bone health, is cholesterol free and has a low glycemic index for moderating blood-sugar levels. Packaged soy flour and soy protein powders are packed with B vitamins, iron, potassium and magnesium.

When the harvest is complete and the equipment is put away in the shed, I hope you take a moment and remember some of your favorite holiday dishes growing up. If you are the chef in the family, try to recreate them using soy – the protein powerhouse. If you love the chef in your family, like I do, thank them for feeding you nutritious and tasty meals.

This holiday season, may your meals be made with soy, shared with those you love and remembered for years to come.



# Forecasting 2026



JOHN LUMPE | CEO |  
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

Let's call it like it is: 2025 has been a challenging year.

Lack of market demand and trade-related market losses have made it difficult to budget. Commodity prices are down, while input prices have continued to increase. As usual, the weather has been unpredictable. Too much rain here, not enough there. Some of you likely faced equipment breakdowns when you needed your functioning equipment the most.

Still, you kept going. That's what Illinois soybean farmers do. You don't fold. You adapt, plan and move forward.

This issue of *Illinois Field & Bean*, "Forecasting 2026," shares insights from our industry colleagues to help you get ready for the coming year. Our team sat down with leadership from ISA's Corporate Partners – ADM, Bayer, Beck's, John Deere and others. They talked with us about what they're working on and what trends they see for agriculture in 2026. They addressed topics such as new seed varieties, artificial intelligence, infrastructure upgrades and other tools that could help you save time and money.

You'll also read about a family that has been paving a path toward future soybean success. John Reichman and his family have been advancing soybean research and production innovation for years. They're not loud about it, but their work's been key to what Illinois soybean farmers can do today. It's a good reminder that progress sometimes happens quietly, so as we prepare for a new year, we wanted to shed light on the dedicated work this family conducts on your behalf.

On the global front, markets are shifting. This will continue into 2026. Some of our biggest buyers are changing, and new markets are opening. ISA Trade Analyst Eric Woodie breaks it all down: where Illinois soybeans might be going, what the numbers look like, and how Illinois fits into the bigger picture.

Of course, it's hard to talk about markets without addressing how we move Illinois' crop. We're keeping the pressure turned up to secure funding for critical lock and dam projects. You'll read more about this from Tracy Zea, President and CEO of the Waterways Council. Our access to waterways is a clear advantage, but quality soybeans need dependable infrastructure to make the biggest impact in the marketplace.

One thing that will not change in the New Year is the spirit of the Illinois farming community, and that theme carries a story that hits a little too close to home. When Illinois farmer Tom Ritter died in a grain bin accident this year, his neighbors and farming community stepped up to bring in his final harvest. It was heartbreaking, humbling and truly inspiring to see his fellow farmers rally to pay a final tribute to a great man and respected farmer.

For many reasons, 2025 hasn't been easy. But it reminded us of what matters: being informed, anticipating what's next and sticking together.

ISA is here to back you up, through the good years and the tough ones. We're fully engaged in issues such as trade and market development, production research, transportation and everything else that drives this industry forward. We're not resting on our laurels, hoping 2026 will be better – we're working to ensure it is. Together, we will meet 2026 head-on and with well-informed confidence.

Wishing you and your loved ones good health, peace and prosperity in the New Year.



# Top Trends for Agriculture in 2026



*Told by ISA's  
Corporate Partners.*

By Ashley Rice-Haddon, *Illinois Field & Bean Magazine*, Lead Writer

It goes without saying—this past year was one for the books. Anyone who farms, works in the agriculture industry, or knows someone who does, knows that 2025 held many challenges, including droughts, trade wars, low commodity prices, high production costs and a government shutdown. These have both short- and long-term effects that will continue to play out.

And as we wrap up the 2025 calendar year and look ahead with optimism, it makes sense to ask: What's in store for farmers in the new year? To answer that question, *Illinois Field & Bean* chatted with some of Illinois Soybean Association's Corporate Partners to find out what they're anticipating in 2026. Those partners, including Beck's, HELM Crop Solutions, John Deere and Valent BioSciences shared a variety of technologies and trends to keep an eye out for. Let's see which trends made the list.

### Artificial Intelligence & Data

Valent BioSciences, with headquarters in Illinois, develops research-based biological and biostimulant solutions. They shared that artificial intelligence, precision technology and data are a trend they expect to continue in 2026.

"Farm operations are evolving into powerful data engines," said Drew Harmon, Midwest Technical Agronomist, Valent BioSciences. "Every piece of equipment, from planters to combines, can now generate real-time information through onboard sensors, satellites, drones and localized weather stations. Artificial intelligence can help translate that flood of data into actionable insights."

For example, AI can help by flagging early signs of disease or crop stress, optimizing irrigation schedules and guiding variable-rate seeding and fertilization by zone.

Drones and autonomous implements are increasingly used for field scouting and targeted pest control, applying products only where needed. Together, these tools help growers navigate tight margins by improving efficiency and precision, resulting in fewer wasted inputs, more consistent yields and stronger returns on investment across the operation.

"Of course, harnessing that technology and the data it produces requires time, energy and capital—all of which are typically at a premium on a busy, successful farm," said Harmon. "Growers must learn how to use new digital tools to leverage complex datasets and insights. These are completely new skill sets compared to those most growers have relied on for decades."

For those willing to invest, though, data-driven farming stands to unlock a new era of productivity and precision for farmers in the coming seasons.

### Tight Margins & Profitability Pressures

Valent BioSciences notes that, unfortunately, the farm economy outlook points to another year of

tight margins, with commodity prices expected to be far from spectacular. Profitability will once again depend on extracting more bushels from the same acres and ensuring that every dollar invested in crop inputs delivers a measurable return on investment.

"In this environment, success hinges on making informed, data-driven decisions that minimize waste and maximize performance," said Harmon. "Growers must rely on credible, trusted partners who can provide science-driven solutions, replicated field data, in-season agronomic support and transparent economic insights."

Looking ahead, the days of relying solely on market luck are behind us.

### Red Crown Rot

Red crown rot is rapidly emerging as a serious soybean threat across the Midwest. Beck's Hybrids, based in Indiana, flagged that some growers have seen 40% to 60% yield loss. In some cases, entire fields have dropped from 60 bushels per acre to bushels in the mid-teens. The disease progresses quickly

during the late season, is difficult to identify early and is even more difficult to manage. As is the case with many soilborne pathogens, there is no simple solution for management.

That's why Beck's is investing in research to better understand this disease, working with industry partners to evaluate seed treatment combinations, monitoring field spread and connecting with soybean pathologists and research groups across multiple states.

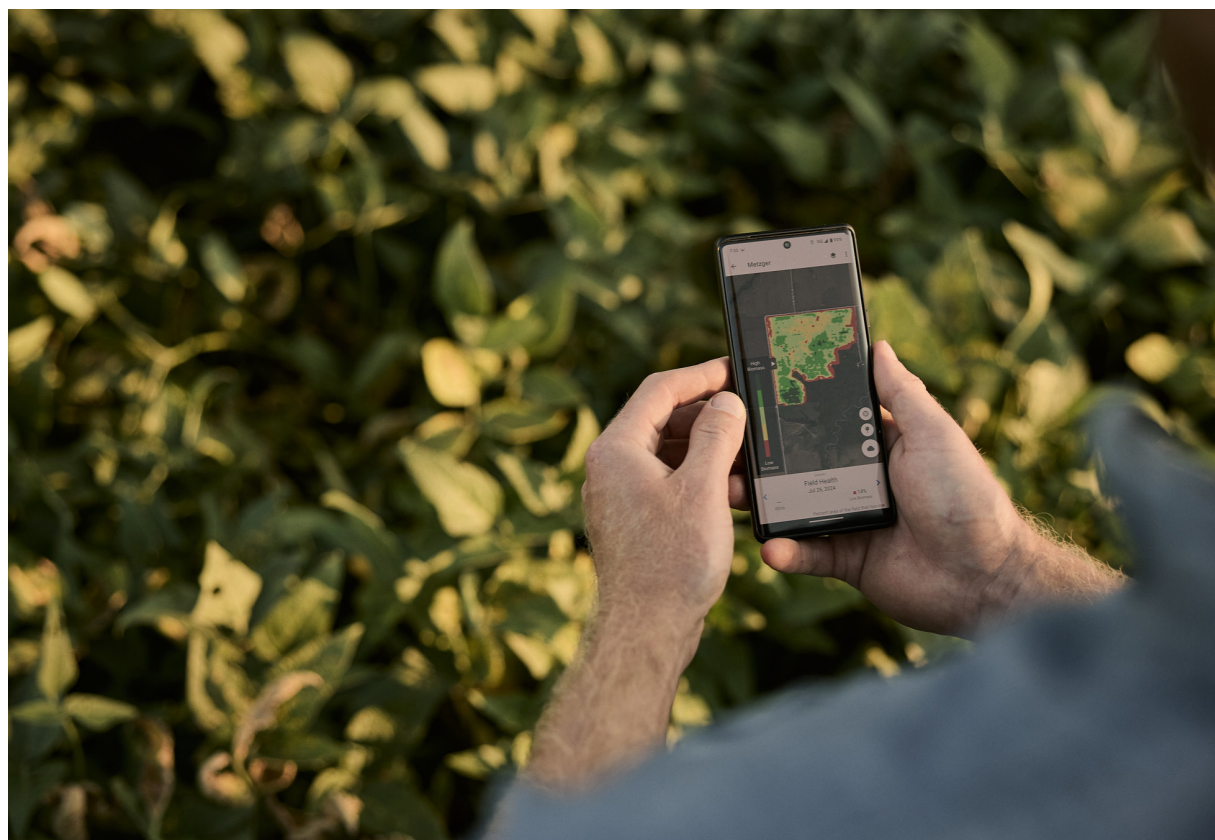
"True management of this disease will ultimately come from a combination of methods including varietal tolerance, enhanced seed treatments and improved agronomic practices," said Matt Montgomery, Beck's Agronomy Education Lead and Illinois Soy Envoy.

"Beck's is committed to learning more about this disease to help farmers protect yield as this challenge expands."

### Machine Learning & Computer Vision

A team of researchers at

(See Top Trends for Agriculture in 2026, page 8)



# Top Trends for Agriculture in 2026

(continued from page 7)

Beck's is using machine learning and computer vision to measure soybean seed size at harvest time for new experimental soybean varieties. This is being conducted with a camera system that collects images and phenotypic characteristics to help select high-performing soybean varieties.

The image datasets are used to train computer-vision models to measure and count plants and pods to further understand experimental soybean varieties.

## Emerging Crop Protection Technologies

Beck's is utilizing public funding to advance the deployment of

Verdant Robotics' Sharpshooter™, a cutting-edge computer-vision spraying technology, in organic and conventional soybean production. This system precisely identifies and targets weeds in real time, aiming before it shoots and applying an approved non-selective herbicide with pinpoint accuracy.

"The initiative is designed to significantly reduce the need for costly and labor-intensive hand-weeding while improving the efficiency and consistency of weed control," said Will Hirschfeld, Beck's Innovation Project Manager. "By demonstrating this scalable, autonomous approach, Beck's aims to show how technology can enhance profitability and sustainability for organic farmers across the Midwest."

## Biologicals

HELM Crop Solutions, based in Florida, anticipates the "bi-

ologicals boom" continuing in 2026. "Biologicals have the ability to lower input waste, increase return on investment and provide resilience in uncertain times," said Mark Heineman, HELM Technical Sales Agronomist.

Biologicals and biostimulants help crops absorb and use nutrients more effectively, reducing the need for excess fertilizer and minimizing losses to leaching or volatilization. This doesn't mean that you need less fertilizer. Instead, HELM advises focusing on creating a more efficient plant to uptake available nutrients.

By improving nutrient uptake, stress tolerance and crop quality, biologicals help growers achieve better yields and marketability without increasing input costs. Nutrigenomics, the study of how genes interact with food, is one area that HELM said allows it to validate the effectiveness of product performance.

With commodity prices under

pressure, biologicals offer a way to protect yield potential and profitability, even when cutting back on traditional inputs.

"It's important to find the right biostimulants for your on-farm goals while simultaneously getting more out of the inputs you're already using," said Ben Runge, HELM Plant Advantage Marketing Manager. "As we continue to experience an overwhelming number of products to choose from, growers should educate themselves and evaluate these products so they can be practical in how they incorporate them into their program."

## Precision Technology

"There are increased pressures for farmers to produce more with less—less time, fewer resources, and tighter margins," said Ryan Stien, Precision Ag Marketing Manager, John Deere. "John Deere recognizes this challenge and offers precision ag technologies



and precision upgrade solutions that help farmers maximize their existing equipment and improve operational efficiency.”

One example is John Deere’s Precision Essentials kit, which gives farm operations of all types and sizes the tools they need to meet today’s challenges and take hold of tomorrow’s opportunities, helping them ensure long-term success in an increasingly competitive and diverse ag market. Precision Essentials offers farmers more ways than ever before to get started in precision ag technology or upgrade the aging technology they have on their farms.

John Deere noted that Precision Essentials is a tool for those farmers who are looking for a low-upfront-cost technology package that gives them the latest core technology components, a G5 or G5Plus display, Starfire 7500 receiver and a JDLink modem. JDLink connects farmers to their entire operation through their John Deere Operations Center™ account.

Another resource, the John Deere Operations Center, exists to help farmers make faster, more informed decisions throughout the growing season by seamlessly connecting data from fields and machines to operators and advisers. For example, growers can share yield data with a seed representative or receive prescriptions wirelessly from an agronomist. The Operations Center not only provides valuable field data but also gives farmers real-time insight into machine performance, helping them monitor equipment health, make informed adjustments and manage the logistics of their entire farm.

“More farmers are leaning into these kinds of technologies for the return on investment they can deliver,” noted Stien. “Precision Essentials and the Operations Center work together to simplify data management, improve machine performance and support improved planning and analysis across the entire farm.”



# Want the highest ROI in agriculture?

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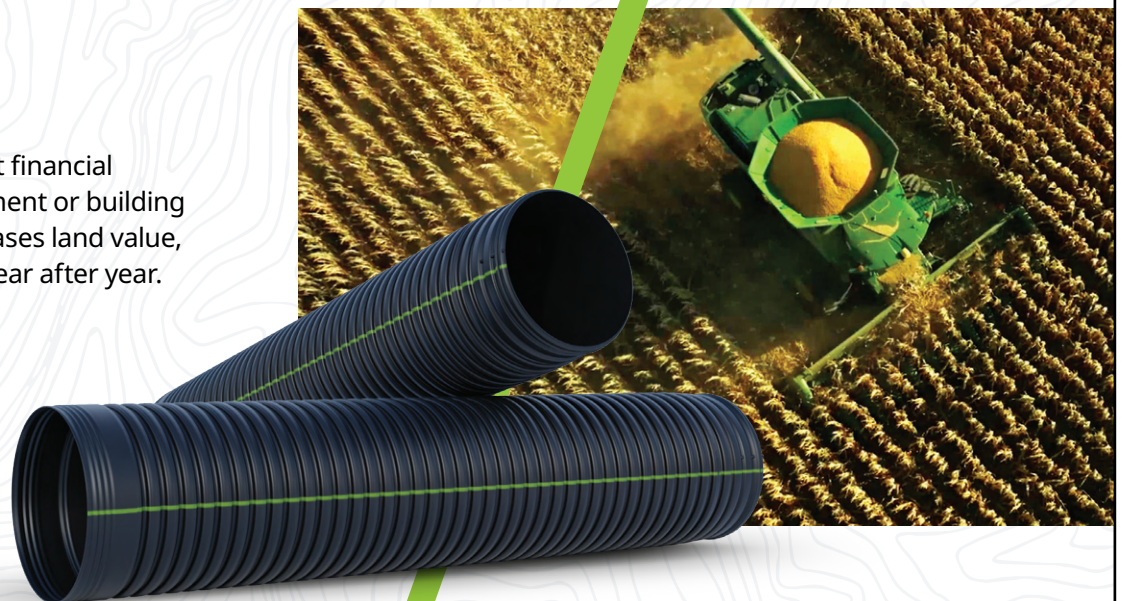
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*Deanne Frieders is a popular blogger at [www.thisfarmgirlcooks.com](http://www.thisfarmgirlcooks.com) and the creator of hundreds of easy, farm family-tested meals.*

# Farm Family Meals Made with Soy

By Deanne Frieders,  
*This Farm Girl Cooks*

**T**he holidays for a farm family aren't much different than the holidays for an average American. We visit with family, exchange gifts, take some time off work, reflect on the past year and prepare for the new one. There may be a few differences, such as the amount of time we *actually* take off work,

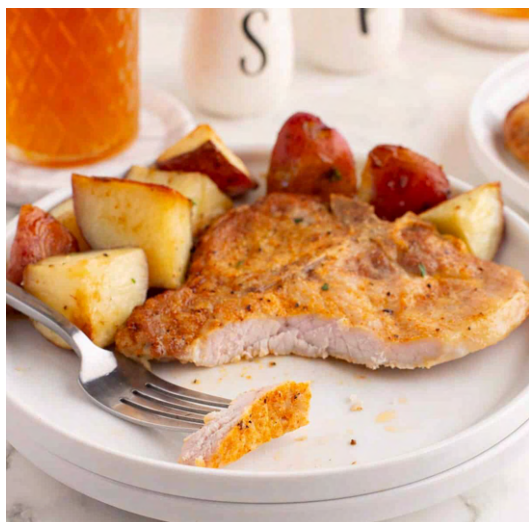
but one thing's for certain: The food is always the star of the show.

As a food blogger and wife of a soybean farmer, I've come to appreciate just how big a role soybeans play in my kitchen, especially in the form of soybean oil. Commonly referred to as vegetable oil, soybean oil has been a staple in kitchens across the U.S. and the world for generations – and for good reason.

Soybean oil is a homegrown, sustainably produced ingredient that is rich in essential heart-healthy fats, vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids that all play an important role in supporting our overall health. And unlike other oils with a lower smoke point, such as extra-virgin olive oil or canola oil (350°F to 410°F), refined soybean oil has a smoke point of approximately 450°F. This,

coupled with soy's neutral flavor profile and health benefits, makes soybean oil perfect for virtually any recipe.

I'm excited to share with you a few of my favorite recipes featuring soybean oil that are perfect for this holiday season. You can find these and hundreds of more easy, farm family-friendly meals on my blog, [www.thisfarmgirlcooks.com](http://www.thisfarmgirlcooks.com).



### Oven Baked Pork Chops and Potatoes

#### Ingredients:

- 4 pork chops ¾" thickness
- 2 ½ pounds red potatoes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 ½ tablespoons vegetable oil

#### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. In a small bowl, stir together 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon garlic powder, ½ teaspoon black pepper and ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika.
3. Pat 4 pork chops dry with a paper towel, place on a clean plate. Season both sides of the

chops with half of the seasoning mix (about 1/8 teaspoon per side).

4. Wash 2 ½ pounds red potatoes to remove any debris. Cut into 1" pieces and place in a large bowl. Add 1 ½ tablespoons vegetable oil to potatoes and toss to coat.

5. Sprinkle potatoes with remaining seasoning.

6. Add potatoes to a large cast-iron skillet or sheet pan. Bake potatoes for 20 minutes.

7. Remove pan from oven and carefully mix potatoes. Place chops on top of the potatoes in a single layer. Return pan to oven and bake an additional 15 to 18 minutes, or until chops are cooked through to a temperature of 145°F.

### Beef and Vegetable Soup in the Slow Cooker

#### Ingredients:

- 2 pounds stew meat cut into 1" squares and trimmed of visible fat
- 3-4 tablespoons flour
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ½ cup onion diced
- 1 cup carrots diced
- 1 cup celery diced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ cup dry red wine
- 24 ounces beef broth
- 1 can Italian style diced tomatoes
- 1 can cannellini beans
- 4 ounces tomato paste

#### Instructions:

1. Combine flour with salt and pepper.

Lightly sprinkle stew meat with the mixture.

2. Heat a large skillet to medium high heat.

3. Add oil. When oil is heated, add half the stew meat and cook on all sides until brown (meat does not need to cook entirely).

4. Remove beef and transfer to slow cooker.

5. Brown the other half of the stew meat the same way (add more oil if needed) and transfer to slow cooker. 6. Add onions, carrots, celery and oregano to the pan. Cook for 3-4 minutes until fragrant.

7. Add ½ cup red wine to deglaze the brown bits from the bottom of the pan. Add mixture to the slow cooker. 8. Add the beef broth, tomatoes, beans and tomato paste to the slow cooker. Stir to combine.

9. Cook 7-8 hours in the slow cooker on low.



### Funfetti Cake Mix Cookies

#### Ingredients:

- 2 large eggs, room temp.
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- 1 16-ounce box cake mix (white or confetti)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ cup confetti sprinkles

#### Frosting Ingredients:

- 6 tablespoons butter room temp
- 4 ounces cream cheese room temp
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup confetti sprinkles
- Food coloring of choice (optional)

#### Instructions:

1. Heat the oven to 350°F and line a cookie sheet with parchment paper or a silicone mat. Spray with cooking spray.

2. In a large bowl, combine the eggs and vegetable oil. Stir in the cake mix and baking powder until combined.

3. Fold in the confetti sprinkles.

4. Use two tablespoons to make large cookies. Space the cookies out so they don't touch as they bake.

5. Bake for 9 minutes and remove. Cool on the pan for 5 minutes, then place on a cooling rack until completely cooled.

6. While the cookies cool, make the icing. In a large bowl, beat the butter and cream cheese together, then beat in the powdered sugar and vanilla.

7. Place the icing in a ziplock bag and snip off a little bit of the corner. Start at the center of the cookie and go in a circle out. Add sprinkles to the top of the cookies.

*For me, cooking and baking with soy products serves as a reminder that what we grow on our farm helps feed families like ours across the world. This holiday season, I hope these recipes inspire you to gather around the table, share good food and make lasting memories.*

# Calcium Clarified: Why Calcium is Vital for Your Soybeans



As growers continue to push the envelope to increase yields and improve ROI on soybean acres, a shift is underway in how the crop is managed, particularly with crop nutrition. The quest for higher yields is no longer just about nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. It's about a balanced crop nutrition program that includes often-overlooked secondary nutrients like calcium. While calcium may not be considered a primary driver of yield, this essential nutrient plays a crucial role in growing a healthy and productive soybean crop.

## The Role of Calcium in Soybeans

Calcium is an important player in numerous physiological processes within the soybean plant. Calcium helps soybeans form healthy nodules on their roots, which are needed to turn nitrogen into a form the plants can use. It helps facilitate cell division and elongation to ensure proper growth from the root to the top of the plant. Calcium also contributes to cell wall strength, which is essential for the plant's structural integrity and its ability to withstand environmental stress. Beyond its structural contributions, adequate calcium levels help the plant manage abiotic stress and improve disease resistance. In addition, calcium helps promote better soil structure, which drives nutrient availability and uptake, and increased microbial activity to foster an environment for vigorous plant growth.

## Addressing the Calcium Needs of Soybeans

Today's high-yielding soybeans require more calcium than ever before. However, even when soil tests indicate high calcium levels, it does not guarantee optimal plant availability of the essential nutrient. In most cases, less than 5% of measured calcium shown on a traditional soil test result is plant-available. Therefore, it is often necessary to provide soybeans with a supplemental calcium source to meet the crop's nutrient needs. Supplemental calcium sources can also vary in plant availability. Choosing a plant-available calcium source helps ensure nutrient uptake is maximized during crucial periods of growth and development, in turn delivering a stronger ROI on the fertilizer application.

## Get More from Every Acre with SUL4R-PLUS

SUL4R-PLUS granular calcium-sulfate fertilizer is an excellent choice for helping crops meet their calcium needs. In fact, a recent trial demonstrated that an application of SUL4R-PLUS resulted in a 0.34 increase in percent tissue calcium content in soybeans, compared to the untreated check (Figure 1). Plants treated with SUL4R-PLUS also showed increased tissue content of sulfur, boron and zinc.

### % Tissue Ca

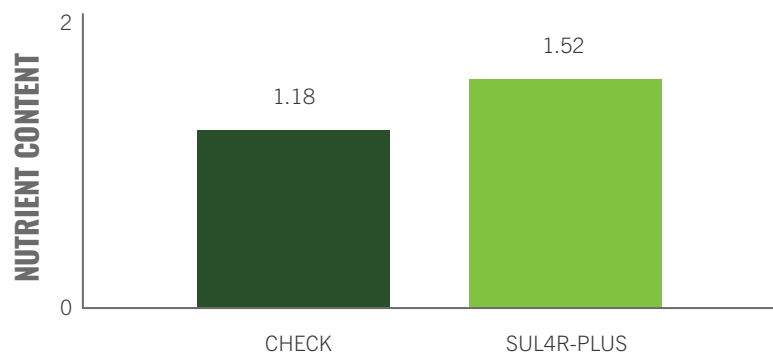


Figure 1.

With a controlled-release, water-soluble formulation, SUL4R-PLUS provides immediate availability and season-long uptake of calcium and sulfur to help crops maximize yield potential. Recent trial data demonstrates SUL4R-PLUS can increase soybean yields up to 12.2 bu/ac, depending on application rate, compared to the untreated check (Figure 2).

### Grain Yield

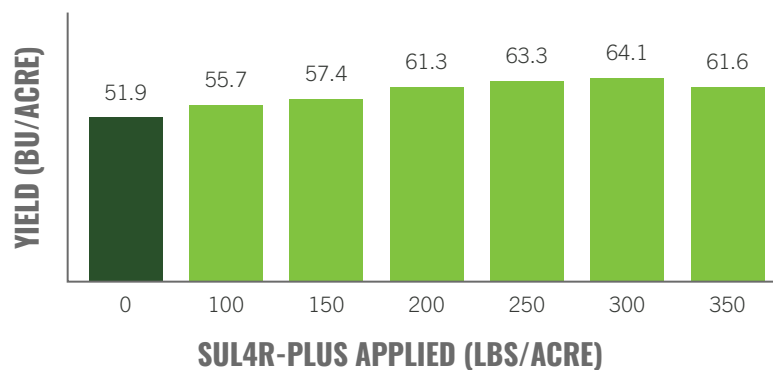


Figure 2.

## Secure SUL4R-PLUS from HELM

HELM, a leading name in agricultural logistics and distribution, is the exclusive distribution partner of SUL4R-PLUS to ensure efficient delivery to growers across North America. Together, HELM and SUL4R-PLUS are committed to offering innovative solutions that boost productivity and contribute to soil health and sustainability.

To secure your SUL4R-PLUS for the upcoming growing season, contact your local retailer.

**For more information about SUL4R-PLUS, visit [sul4r-plus.com](https://sul4r-plus.com).**

# THE POWER OF YOUR SOY INVESTMENT



Global demand. Local return. The value of your state and national soy checkoff is stronger than ever. In the last 5 years, your investments have...

  
CREATED JOBS AND  
GROWN THE ECONOMY

**\$9.8B**

added to the U.S. GDP

**~\$1B**

generated in tax revenue  
in 2023 alone

\$36M county | \$244M state | \$655M federal

**30,932**

U.S. jobs created

**\*\$2.6B**

in U.S.  
employment  
income

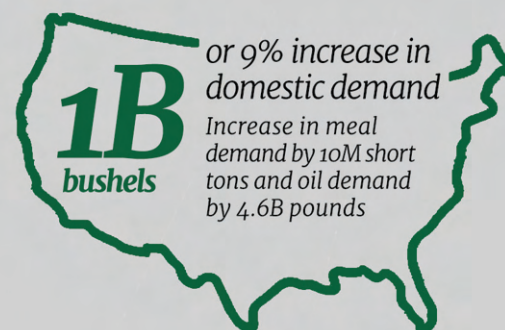


## DRIVEN DEMAND FOR U.S. SOY

**\*1.8B**  
bushels



or 18% increase in U.S. soybean exports  
Increase in meal exports by 5.2M short tons and oil  
exports by 3.4B pounds



or 9% increase in  
domestic demand  
Increase in meal  
demand by 10M short  
tons and oil demand  
by 4.6B pounds

## DELIVERED VALUE TO YOUR FARM

**\$12.30**

return for every \$1 invested

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- 2 Domestic demand-enhancing research
- 3 On-farm production research
- 4 Soybean promotion

Learn more at [unitedsoybean.org](https://unitedsoybean.org)

\*Export initiatives supported by United Soybean Board, Qualified State Soybean Boards, the U.S. Soybean Export Council and USDA Foreign Agricultural Service. Source: Kaiser, H.M. 2024. An Economic Analysis of the United Soybean Board and Qualified State Soybean Boards' Demand- and Supply-Enhancing Programs. Cornell University.



# Every Farmer Has a Story

**O**ld Valmeyer was a small town like any other. It had a bustling school, gracious neighbors and beloved businesses. In 1993, the Illinois town faced a devastating flood from the Mississippi River. The extensive damage caused by a 16-foot wall of water forced the town to higher ground.

Although many consider the site a ghost town, it remains home to a soybean field owned by John Reichman. To the untrained eye, this field appears to be like any other. But it's actually home to decades of groundbreaking soybean disease research.

## The SDS emergence

Farming is a tradition in the Reichman family. John's great-grandfather settled in the Mississippi bottoms and started farming. That legacy was carried on by John's grandfather, his dad, himself and now his son. Today, the Reichman family raises corn, soybeans and wheat.

"Farming's in our blood," Reichman said. "I grew up helping Dad and enjoyed being out in the fields. It's a nice scenic area where we farm, out in the open."

The flood did not leave the Reichman farm untouched, as it dumped heavy deposits of silt and sand onto the productive field. With no way to remove it, the soil types had to be incorporated into his land. Unbeknownst to John, the soil would become a determining factor in the prevalence of Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) in his soybeans.

After planting the first round of Roundup Ready soybean germplasm in the mid-1990s, John's crops were heavily affected by SDS, a fungal disease that can lead to significant yield loss. The disease presents symptoms such as yellowing and browning of leaves that tend to develop in late July or early August.

The new seed variety was unexpectedly susceptible to the disease. That susceptibility, combined with the favorable SDS conditions on the Reichman farm, created a perfect storm.

## Forming research roots

John sought help from the late Oval Myers, a retired plant breeder at Southern Illinois University (SIU) Carbondale.

John knew Myers had Illinois Soybean Association funding to develop management options for SDS. According to John, Myers came to the farm soon after and left enthusiastic about the favorable conditions the field offered for SDS research. Soon after, John partnered with Myers, and the university's research on plant breeding and disease resistance began.

Although John has farmed for much of his life, research is his second language. In 1971, he graduated with a degree in zoology from SIU and later received a master's in research from the University of Missouri.

"I always liked research," John said. "It has always been in the back of my mind as something I wanted to take part in."

Upon Myers' retirement, Myers' trainee and fellow plant breeder Mike Schmidt took over the research on the farm before passing the torch to SIU plant pathology professor Jason Bond in the early 2000s.

"He (John) got burned real bad by SDS in a lot of his fields," said Bond. "That was the impetus for him allowing people to come and do research on

his farms, because he needed solutions, too."

Back then, fields conducive to consistent SDS development were hard to come by. The Reichman farm held favorable conditions for testing the disease: consistent moisture from the Mississippi River, the use of center pivot irrigation and accessibility for early planting.

A major concern of the research team was negatively impacting other land near the research site. John kept in close communication with the team to avoid overlapping applications, maintaining appropriate proportions on the research field and aligning on schedules.

"A lot of those early days were like training wheels," Bond said. "We were figuring out how to set up experiments to get consistent SDS, when water is most important and the best planting dates to nurture the disease."

## Research contributions and industry impact

It didn't take long for the research to make waves in the industry. In the first years of

testing, researchers identified seed varieties that were highly susceptible to SDS. It had an immediate impact on soybean breeders who used the data to refine their portfolios and build better offerings.

Another key area of research involved studying how pathogen inoculation contributes to the introduction of SDS into a field. Although inoculation is a clear way of introducing SDS into a field, its propagation depends more on hot, damp field conditions than it does the basic introduction of the disease itself given the importance of those field conditions as a vector for the disease.

While conducting research at the Reichman field, the SIU team built a rating scale to determine the severity and incidence of SDS in a field, which in turn helped plant breeders compare the susceptibility and resistance of various seed varieties and treatments.

It starts by calculating the percentage of plants showing symptoms and determining the severity of an infection based on those host-plant conditions. After that information is collected, it's cross-referenced with SDS disease data to create an index that indicates the potential plant damage based on different infection levels. In the case of SDS, this rating scale is used today to inform plant breeders of SDS susceptibility of each soybean variety.

The Reichman family's contribution also led to the training of many students in SDS research. Bond said many of those students continued to pursue careers in the agriculture industry and SDS research.

"The most important aspect of the research on Reichman's land is to ensure companies and farmers have the tools they need," Bond said. "That's probably the overriding success of that location."

### **Partnership and collaboration**

At the core of every piece of research such as what Bond and the Reichman family have conducted is a shared mission to help farmers. Bond said good research partners embody tolerance of research objectives, even if they contradict industry trends.

Over the decades, Bond said, John's consistency and reliability made their research partnership easy and impactful. There's always a chance that SDS breeding research could negatively impact the farmer's other crops, but constant communication and transparency helped prevent those issues.

"He's always been generous with his time," Bond said. "That's the mark of a great relationship. We know they have some constraints, and they know we have some constraints, and we just work together. We're not doing this just for his benefit or our benefit.

We're doing this for the greater benefit."

### **Looking ahead**

Current SDS research focuses on identifying resistant seed types and testing traditional fungicide and biocontrol agents as disease control mechanisms. As John's son takes on a bigger role in the family farm, Bond said he is hopeful that the research partnership will continue.

As the years go on, the core of the Reichman operation - family and research - hasn't changed. John says he is looking forward to watching his grandkids play a more active role on the farm.

Through quiet diligence and persistence, John has helped turn a year of crop loss into a decades-long research partnership, one that continues to help farmers across the country.

"It's been a good run," John said. "They've always been good to me, and I hope I helped them out with their research a little bit."





# Navigating a Cloudy Global Soybean Marketplace

## With China Sidelined, Other Export Markets Are Picking Up

*By Eric Woodie, Trade Analyst,  
Illinois Soybean Association*

**T**he global soybean trade is a cloudy, uncertain world right now, with geopolitical tensions and tariffs. Relationships with some of our largest trading partners

are stalling, and disrupted grain movement dominates the headlines.

As the marketplace slowly digests the bad news, there are silver linings: U.S. soybeans are being exported to other markets, starting to restore hope that U.S. soybean farmers will

see restored market access and a restoration of the crop's price at the farm gate.

For the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA), this volatile, shifting landscape drives home the critical need to aggressively pursue new export destinations while maintaining

relationships with traditional customers. And that's what I wake up thinking about every morning.

It's a rough time. We're in a really tough part of the commodity cycle anyway. But you add the trade tensions, and it's a full-on mess. Right now,

uncertainty is really what's driving the market overall.

### **China's Looming Absence in the U.S. Soybean Market**

Chinese soybean imports ramped up sharply in the 1990s and skyrocketed in the 2000s to meet growing domestic demand. But in the past year, geopolitical tensions have sidelined the massive buyer from the U.S. supply chain, and China has replaced most purchases with soybeans from South America.

The void left by lack of Chinese buying seven weeks into the marketing year is undeniable. This MY24/25 hiatus was predictable. The trend began in January. For the first eight months of the year, U.S. soybean exports to China were just about 218 million bushels, down from the same timeframe in 2024, when Chinese buyers purchased about 985 million bushels.

This has the entire U.S. soybean export value chain shaken, with a lot of concern about long-term competitiveness. The Chinese market is the driver of the global soybean market. They're just that big.

Nevertheless, global demand for soybeans is strong, and the U.S. is a critical piece of the puzzle.

### **Opportunity in Other Export Markets**

We're seeing many of the markets in which ISA has worked and invested ramp up U.S. soybean purchase this past fall. Markets such as Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan will continue to positively impact U.S. soybean exports.

### **Soybean Meal Export Strides Continue**

As soybean exports face headwinds, the soybean meal market is seeing histor-

ic strength. An uptick in U.S. crush capacity had dramatically increased the availability of soybean meal for export. And trading partners have responded.

We're in our third record year of soybean meal exports and headed toward a potential fourth year of the same trend. Meal is finding homes in Latin America and Southeast Asia. In the past, availability has prevented more U.S. soybean meal from getting to Southeast Asia, but we now see consistent offers of competitively priced U.S. soybean meal.

### **Ways to Differentiate on the World Market**

Illinois soybeans must capitalize on their superior quality and existing infrastructure advantages and better match crop attributes to those most desired on the export market. Such steps — aided by policy action promoting Illinois soybeans' quality to overseas markets — will keep

Illinois soy at least in sight of major burgeoning soybean export competitors in the Southern Hemisphere.

#### **▪ Soybean amino acid profiles.**

U.S. soybeans meet the 48% protein specification demanded by buyers, and they have a complete amino acid profile that has higher digestibility and metabolizable energy.

**▪ Resilience and infrastructure.** The U.S. supply chain is highly resilient, able to leverage shipping options including the Pacific Northwest (PNW), the Gulf, East Coast and container markets.

**▪ Sustainability.** U.S. soy shipments offer the SSAP certificate and boast the lowest carbon footprint score.

Illinois soybean farmers are resilient. We will continue connecting with buyers to ensure strong trading relationships and leveraging Illinois soy advantages to markets around the world.





# WCI and ISA: Advocating Together for Inland Waterways System Funding

By Tracy Zea, President & CEO,  
Waterways Council, Inc.

**I**ndependent of varying soybean crop yields each year, the inland waterways remain the stalwart transportation option and smart supply chain link to soybean farmers and agriculture producers across the Midwest, particularly in Illinois. Ranked 8th in the nation with 1,100 river miles running through and along the state, Illinois houses 26 lock-and-dam locations within or along its borders.

Barges offer the most cost-effective, fuel-efficient, environmentally sound and safest mode to move soybeans and other bulk commodities via the many rivers that comprise the Illinois Water-

way, as well as Mississippi, Ohio and Kaskaskia rivers, eventually reaching export terminals in the Gulf of Mexico. The inland waterways ensure food security, promote energy security, lower the transportation carbon footprint and reduce congestion on our roadways. Our plan to recapitalize the lock-and-dam infrastructure will create tens of millions of work-hours for the skilled jobs in America's building trades.

But key to Illinois soybean farmers, transport on the inland waterways facilitates competitiveness in global markets, particularly against South American producers. Agricultural exports are responsible for 25.5% of U.S. farm income that drives rural economic activity

and supports more than 1 million American jobs on and off the farm. The linchpin to maintaining this critical conduit to the world market is modernization of the waterways' lock-and-dam infrastructure.

The bad news is that according to 2024 data from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — the agency that maintains the inland waterways system — more than 80% of locks on the inland system are operating beyond their 50-year expected design life. The good news is that overall funding for the Corps of Engineers has risen 64% over the past 10 fiscal years, from Fiscal Year (FY) 2017's \$6.04 billion to FY2026's \$9.88 billion.

The President's FY2026 budget

recommended no (\$0) funding for ongoing and new inland construction and major rehabilitation projects. But in FY2026's Energy & Water Development (E&WD) appropriations bill that passed out of the House Appropriations Committee on July 18 and awaits Senate action, inland waterways construction projects received funding of \$396.8 million. And with the return of limited earmarks (now called Community Project Funding), inland waterways construction received 68% of the \$583.8 million requested in earmarks. This is a testament to the strong advocacy efforts of the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA), Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI) and our other members on Capitol Hill.



Among the construction projects funded in the FY2026 E&WD appropriations bill were \$2 million for the Navigation & Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP), the integrated, multi-purpose, long-term program authorized by Congress in 2007 to modernize navigation and restore ecosystems along the Upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers. The Community Project Funding request was made by waterway champions Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski, D-Ill., 13th District, and Congressman Eric Sorensen, D-Ill., 17th District.

The low level of funding (\$2 million) for NESP was allocated for ecosystem projects, but next fiscal year (FY2027), Lock & Dam 25 (Upper Mississippi River, near Winfield, Mo.) will need at least \$250 million to maintain its current construction schedule. If such a budget is successfully approved, it would significantly increase the overall amount of funding NESP receives.

In Illinois, nearly 262,000 jobs are connected to the inland waterways. Fully 70.3 million tons of freight valued at \$17.9 billion, with agricultural products as the top commodity by value (\$5 billion), are moved on Illinois' inland waterways per 2021 statistics, underscoring this system's importance to the state's agriculture shippers and producers.

And while constructing modern NESP locks is important to Illinois, a U.S. Department of Agriculture study in 2019 indicates rebuilding the NESP locks could inject \$72 billion into the national economy through increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Education about the importance of the inland waterways system and investment in its modernization and improved efficiency remains vital. WCI is grateful to ISA for its significant funding provided for our public education efforts that highlight the many benefits our nation's inland waterways bring.

That education can lead to advocacy. We've partnered with ISA to create a petition anyone can sign to show support for upgrading the locks on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers. It takes less than a minute and goes a long way in telling Congress this is a priority they should get behind. You can access it at <https://www.advocacy-waterwayscouncil.com/lock-25> or scan this QR code on your smartphone's camera to access:



Improving our nation's lock infrastructure, the backbone of the transportation logistics system, is why the strong partnership between WCI and ISA is invaluable and enduring.

*Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI) is the national public policy organization whose mission is to advocate for reliable, efficient, and modern lock-and-dam infrastructure.*

# Peace of mind that somebody's got your back.

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- ✓ Exploring diversification
- ✓ Building a legacy that lives on

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**pinion**



Dozens of friends, neighbors and new acquaintances helped take out Tom's 1,000-acre corn crop in about 12 hours. "It was so emotional," son Cory recounts.  
Photo credit: Cory Ritter

# A Farmer's Final Harvest

## Illinois Community Rallies After Tragic Grain Bin Accident

**F**amily and friends remember Blue Mound soybean farmer Tom Ritter, 73, as a kind and generous man who gave his best to everyone, expecting nothing in return. So when Tom died Aug. 20 in a tragic grain bin accident, it shocked his community—and rallied them to help his family bring in his final crop.

"I just picture Tom's smile and his wry grin, his ornery nature," recalls Jeff Kraft, who grew up friends with Tom's son, Cory, and also farms in the area. "He always loved to pull a prank or make a dad joke. He was not a loud outspoken man. Not at all. He wasn't a guy that had to control the room other than with his presence."

Tom's life, and his neighbors' affection for him, reflects a bright silver lining in agriculture.

"In ag right now, there's a lot of negative things, and spirits and profitability are low," says Cory, the oldest of Tom's three sons. "But the fact that so many people gave up their time, their labor, the use of their equipment, it was a beautiful day."

He's referring to an incredible feat: In about 12 hours—with roughly 13 combines, 10 parallel harvesting operations, and 70 pounds of pulled pork for lunch—dozens of fellow farmers, church friends, neighbors

and new acquaintances gathered Tom's entire 1,000-acre corn crop.

### A Dark Day

In many respects, Tom's final day was a perfectly ordinary one given the fall season.

Late on Aug. 20, "he was cleaning out our last bin of corn, something he's done hundreds of times before," Cory explains. He was using a grain vac, and something on the system had come apart. Tom entered the bin to fix it, probably thinking it would take two seconds. That's when some corn slid down and trapped him.

A tree-trimming crew drove past and noticed the auger

running and the grain truck overflowing. They knocked on the door of Tom's home and alerted his wife, Diana, who contacted Cory. They couldn't find Tom and alerted emergency officials. Soon, eight or nine fire departments were onsite along with fellow farmers, employees of the local coop and others.

It took rescuers two and a half hours to recover Tom. They'd cut holes in the side of the bin, spilling a bunch of corn onto the ground. By noon the next day, friends and neighbors cleaned up the area.

"It was just a relief knowing that was not something I had

to go down there and relive that close to when the accident happened," Cory says. He also applauds the team at Farm Rescue, a nonprofit that helps farm families in crisis. They provided a driver—now his friend—and a truck for Tom's harvest.

As the farm's sixth generation, Cory is hopeful Illinois soybean farmers learn from this experience.

"Think twice before doing some of the dangerous things we do," Cory says. "We run very hard, especially in the spring and fall. We get tired. That's when mistakes happen."

### A Bright Rally

The immediate shock of Tom's passing gave way to something more hopeful: A fiercely loyal community ready to do whatever the Ritter family needed.

Duane Noland raised his hand to help bring in Tom's harvest along with dozens of others. He and Tom, a few years his senior, grew up across a section from each other out in the Illinois countryside. They attended the same school and church and worked together in various community and farm organizations.

Among other leadership roles, Tom served over decades as a trustee and elder at Central Christian Church in Decatur, as a Trustee and former President of Richland Community College and as member of a school merger board. He was an ag advocate instrumental in bringing Farm Progress Show to Decatur. This year's show included a moment of silence in his honor.

"He was not engaged in an organization for prestige or the limelight," Duane reflects. "He

was just a good servant, a good Christian man that believed in giving back and improving his community."

For Tom's harvest, Cory and Diana "did a nice job of dividing up fields, giving each farm family one or two fields here and there," Duane recalls. "In one day, we pretty much handled all of the corn crop, which is remarkable."

That morning, as Duane and others prepared to get started, Cory came out to thank the workers.

"All I knew to do was to give him a big hug," Duane says. "Your heart just grieves for him. But yet, at the same time, there's a sense of pride that you could help and knowing that you've paid respects to Tom as a man and a farmer."

For Jeff, another family friend, Tom's harvest felt surreal. He knew Tom and Cory should be the ones gathering the crop,

not him. It brought back memories: Tom's family taking Jeff on vacation and teaching him how to ski. Tom taking him to his first University of Illinois football game. Traveling with Cory in Tom and Diana's car to board the school bus so they could play in out-of-town basketball games during high school.

"It sounds cliché, but you take for granted the things you had around you your whole life, and I sure was lucky to have Tom be an influence on mine," Jeff says.

Cory wants the story of his dad and of this year's harvest to remind Illinois farmers about what's right in U.S. agriculture.

"The community is almost like a family, and they want to help," Cory says. "I encourage people to not only accept the help but to reach out and help others, too."

Just like Tom would have done.



LEFT: Tom Ritter, 73, proudly served as a fifth-generation corn and soybean farmer in Blue Mound. "It was his passion. He loved the act of putting in a crop, taking out a crop," says his oldest son, Cory. "There's always stuff everybody doesn't enjoy about a job, but he loved the whole process of it. I also think he was very proud. It allowed him to stay close to the whole community." *Photo credit: Cory Ritter.* RIGHT: Neighbors help the Ritter family harvest Tom's corn.



# The Optimization Window

## Maximizing Crop Potential with Next-Generation Biostimulants

**F**or more than 60 years, Valent BioSciences has been driving innovation and adoption of biological crop inputs around the world. Every single day, we're driven by our desire to help growers solve challenges and get the most out of their crop inputs. Next-generation biostimulants are one

category of tools that can help growers maximize their crop potential.

Biostimulants create many different desired benefits in plants. Biostimulant effects such as larger leaf area, increased root growth or enhanced nutrient storage can ultimately result in healthier, more productive and

more resilient crops. Enhancing plant physiological functions often yields good results; however, we must remember that during these periods of enhanced function, the plant is allocating its resources toward the new growth initiated by a biostimulant application — a brief period of heightened physiological

function commonly known as transient deficiency.

For the highest-performing crops, this temporary period of resource allocation is an opportunity. We call it the Optimization Window. The Optimization Window is a period of time after applying the biostimulant during which the crop has the oppor-



tunity to increase its potential for crop quality and yield and improve its performance as long as it has the proper resources. Next-generation biostimulant programs not only initiate the Optimization Window but are designed to help crops fully capitalize on it through synergistic technologies and complementary nutrition.

### The Science Behind the Optimization Window

Nutrients are essential for plant growth. Different crops and environments demand nutrients in unique ways. Uptake of nutrients can be altered by changes to the plant physiology, transporter systems and the soil itself. The three main factors that can alter a plant's nutrient uptake are:

1. Root morphology changes
2. Regulation of the plant's transporter systems
3. Alterations to the rhizosphere

### Root Morphology Changes

Take arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (AMF) as an example of how resource allocation can improve the plant's performance. AMF expands the root zone by up to 50 times, improving access to water and nutrients. To support the fungi, plants release root exudates—an energy investment that creates an Optimization Window. This symbiotic relationship boosts plant performance, resulting in increased nutrient and water uptake, improved soil structure and, ultimately, improved plant performance.

### Regulation of the Plant's Transporter Systems

Some biostimulants can influence how plants regulate transporter systems. These effects

typically fall into two categories: nutrients and water.

**Nutrients:** Biostimulants that increase leaf area can trigger higher demand for iron and manganese to sustain photosynthesis. Supplying these nutrients during the Optimization Window supports stronger growth and canopy development.

**Water:** During heat or drought, potassium helps regulate stomatal function. If a biostimulant enhances stomatal performance, adequate potassium levels are essential to sustain that improvement.

### Alterations to the Rhizosphere

Biostimulants can directly influence the rhizosphere through biochemical and chemical pathways. For example, some biostimulants can unlock nutrients that are usually tied up in the soil, making them available to plants, while others can help increase plant access to the nutrients.

### Dig Deeper into the Optimization Window: Explore the Science Driving Tomorrow's Biostimulant Performance

Recognizing and supporting the Optimization Window is key to helping crops reach their full potential. By understanding when plants are reallocating resources and how next-generation biostimulants support enhanced function during that time, growers can help their crops reach the highest potential performance and yield. To learn more about the Optimization Window, visit us at Commodity Classic booth #1443 and join our Learning Center session from 12:30 to 1:15 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27, 2026, where we'll explore the science behind the Optimization Window and share how you can put it to work in your operation.

# NOT YOUR GRANDDAD'S BIOSTIMULANTS

At Valent BioSciences, these aren't your granddad's biostimulants. They're built on good, solid science and designed to keep your fields thriving for years to come. Whether you're a seasoned hand at biostimulants or just dabbling for the first time, Valent BioSciences' biostimulant experts are here to help you find what'll work best on your farm.





**Illinois Soybean Growers is saving you a seat at the policy table where farmers negotiate and win. Become a member today!**

## 1-YEAR MEMBERSHIP | \$75

- **NEW - AGI BinManager 20% MSRP discount (equipment only, does not include installation, freight and tax)**
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**SCAN to Join**





# Connecting Research to Your Field

## Join Us at the 2026 Field Advisor Forum

By Kelsey Litchfield, Agronomic Outreach Manager/Editor, Field Advisor, Illinois Soybean Association

In recent issues of *Illinois Field & Bean* magazine, we introduced a new Field Advisor column in which researchers share updates from projects funded by the Illinois Soybean Checkoff. Our goal isn't just to tell you what your checkoff dollars support, it's to show the results of that work and how those findings can make a difference on your farm.

Recent articles highlighted the kind of practical, data-driven information these projects deliver. Dr. Andrew Margenot and Heidi Allen studied soil health in "Is Your Soil Breathing? What CO<sub>2</sub> Can Tell Us About Soil Health," while Dr. Nathan Schroeder's "Phantom of the Field: Soybean Cyst Nematode" detailed soybean cyst nematode test results from Illinois fields and encouraged farmers to take advantage of free sampling offered through the checkoff-funded program. The October issue featured a comprehensive list of projects being funded through 2025-26, highlighting our continued commitment to transparency and practical impact.

But the conversation doesn't stop there.

For those who want to dig deeper into agronomic data, learn from top researchers and sharpen their management strategies, mark your calendar for the Field Advisor Forum coming Thursday, Jan. 15, 2026, at the Atkins Golf Club at the University of Illinois in Urbana.

You might think, "It's just another winter meeting." It's not. The Field Advisor Forum is designed to bridge the gap between research plots and farmer decision-making. Funded by the Illinois Soybean Checkoff, this event connects farmers, industry and researchers who are all working toward the same goal: turning data into better production decisions.

This year's agenda is packed with expertise from across the Midwest and the country, including:

- Dr. Shaun Casteel, Purdue University, will share his latest soybean research and management strategies.
- Dr. David Kohl, Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech, will help attendees understand how to "thrive in economic chaos."
- Stephanie Porter, CCA and Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) Outreach Agronomist, will present results from the 2025 ISA On-Farm Trial Network sulfur trials.

▪ An integrated pest management panel with Dr. Nick Seiter, Dr. Boris Camiletti and Dr. Aaron Hager will unpack 2025 growing season observations in plant diseases, entomology and weed management.

▪ Dr. Andrew Margenot, University of Illinois, will discuss updated liming recommendations for Illinois soils.

▪ Dr. Rachel Vann, University of Illinois, will explore late-season soybean management.

▪ Jacob Dickey, WCIA meteorologist, will share weather observations and long-range outlooks relevant to Illinois producers.

The Field Advisor Forum is your chance to hear directly from the experts, ask questions and walk away with actionable takeaways to use on your operation next season and beyond.

Can't make it to Urbana? No problem. Select presentations will be streamed live on Field Advisor's YouTube channel, allowing you to participate from your home, shop or office.

Registration is open now at [FieldAdvisor.org](https://FieldAdvisor.org). Just scroll to the event section and sign up. Join us for a day of learning and connection. Because when it comes to soybean management, the Illinois Soybean Checkoff is making sure research doesn't stay in the lab, it reaches the field.

# Making Membership Work for You



ASHLEY BARRY | ENGAGEMENT MANAGER |  
ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

Illinois Soybean Growers' (ISG) core strength is representing growers' interests in both Springfield and Washington. ISG has set the stage, educating legislators on issues that strengthen farmer operations and increase soybean market access. ISG ensures advocacy readiness to address issues as they arise.

Having this advocacy in place means you're not just reacting when legislation or issues arise. Instead, you are proactive before the negotiation starts. As an ISG member, you have a collective voice that works on behalf of soybean farmers to protect not just you and your neighbors' farm but also your freedom to operate.

ISG is governed by a group of 24 elected soybean farmers with operations across Illinois and is funded voluntarily (separate from the Illinois Soybean Board checkoff program). Farmers control the message and drive our advocacy.

When you join, you receive access to resources you might not otherwise have. Growers receive member-only content, which includes tools for decision making, marketing updates, trade developments and stay-in-the-know about legislation and regulation that can impact your farm. Members also receive *Illinois Field & Bean* magazine which provides key updates on what ISG and your checkoff are working on.

This information helps provide a steady flow of resources and information to assist you in making choices for your operation and determining how to mitigate your risks. Remaining engaged is the best way to advocate for the future of agriculture, and your membership sustains that engagement.

## Networking Events and Tangible Benefits

ISG exists to elevate farmer voices and increase advocacy. We also have added benefits you can immediately use in your operation:

- Opportunities to connect with other farmers, industry professionals and policymakers at networking events, policy dinners, meetings across the state and, occasionally, in Washington.
- Coupons toward seed purchases at Beck's Hybrids.
- Discounts from AGI, including AGI BinManager equipment and technology and rebates on AGI bins, equipment and sentinel buildings.
- Complimentary membership in the American Soybean Association.
- Discounts on gift cards from retailers such as Cabela's at 10% off, customized with ISG branding.

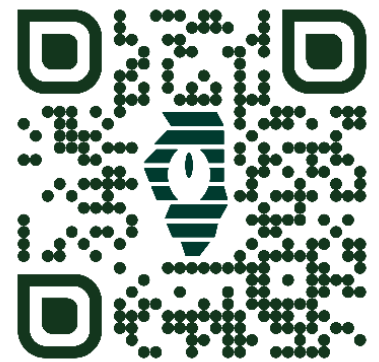
- Scholarship opportunities for children and grandchildren of ISG members pursuing agricultural degrees.
- Discounts of \$100 off your annual Commodity Classic registration.
- Free entry to the annual ISG Membership Dinner at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026, at the I Hotel & Convention Center in Champaign. Engage with fellow members and industry leaders.

Whether you join ISG to gain greater awareness of regulatory changes, tap into best-practice tools, connect with other growers or support legislative efforts that matter to your farm, this organization has a seat at the table waiting for you when you're ready.

Sustain agriculture and maintain your ISG membership today. Share your voice even as this year of uncertainty comes to a close—knowing that you have a line of defense prepared and ready to fight for you and your farm!

Email [ashley.barry@ilsoy.org](mailto:ashley.barry@ilsoy.org) to place membership or for more information about membership opportunities, events and benefits.

Join ISG at [www.ilsoy.org/illinois-soybean-growers/](http://www.ilsoy.org/illinois-soybean-growers/)





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