BIODIESEL

Biodiesel creates a valuable domestic market for soybean oil, while at the same time helping to bring down the cost of soybean meal for animal feed. The industry has the capacity to increase production of biodiesel to 2 billion gallons by 2017, and ASA is committed to encouraging the growth of the biodiesel industry by protecting the Renewable Fuel Standard.

1. ASA is opposed to any legislative efforts to repeal or reduce the RFS for biodiesel.
2. Soybean farmers support extending the biodiesel tax incentive for 2017 and beyond, and shifting it from a blenders to a production credit.
3. ASA calls on EPA to continue to build on the increasing RFS biomass-based diesel volume requirements beyond 2017 and optimize the potential to further expand biodiesel demand through robust volume requirements for the overall Advanced Biofuels category of the RFS.
4. Biodiesel, half of which comes from soybean oil, is the country’s most prevalent advanced biofuel, and is the first and only EPA-designated Advanced Biofuel to reach 1 billion gallons of annual production. We have met or exceeded our volume requirements each and every year.
5. Soy-based biodiesel uses only the oil portion of the soybean, leaving all of the meal protein available for livestock feed.
6. Biodiesel provides a market for surplus soybean oil, and prevents it from becoming a drag on soybean and soy meal protein production.
7. To the extent that it bolsters or supports soybean demand, biodiesel increases soy meal protein supplies, which results in lower costs for livestock feed.
8. Biodiesel also benefits livestock producers by providing the 2nd largest market for rendered animal fats, which is a feedstock for biodiesel production.
BIOTECHNOLOGY APPROVALS

Biotechnology is an essential tool in farmers’ quest to produce enough to meet the needs of 9 billion people by 2050, producing safe and affordable food while placing less of a strain on our natural resources. To maintain that progress, though, farmers need to have unencumbered access to this technology, which means both the U.S. government and the governments of our trading partners need to address delays in the framework for approving new biotech traits.

1. Farmers demand an efficient and science-based approvals process for new biotech traits, both domestically and in each of our export markets.
2. Traits are waiting too long in the approvals pipeline which negatively impacts our competitiveness, the ability to manage weed resistance, and uninterrupted exports.
3. A global low-level presence policy that would enable importers to accept shipments with trace amounts of a trait not yet approved in their country is necessary to facilitate trade and innovation domestically as well as internationally.
4. China’s position as a major buyer of U.S. commodities means that the current, arbitrary Chinese approval system is effectively preventing U.S. farmers from adopting the new technologies needed to increase yield, fight pests and weeds, enhance quality and improve sustainability.
5. The ability to efficiently and consistently produce our crops depends on commercializing new biotech traits that can increase yields, improve quality, and ultimately provide consumers with more affordable and healthy food and fiber.
6. ASA maintains our policy that our biotech partners must wait to commercialize new traits until those traits have been approved in our major export markets.
GMO LABELING

The discussion about GMO labeling is an emotional one. We embrace our role in it and recognize that we need to do a better job of communicating to consumers about what we do. The state-by-state approach to labeling would create a conflicting patchwork of regulation and add $1000 to the average family’s grocery bill. Instead, we support a national solution that provides full transparency to consumers, while avoiding stigmatization of GMO technology.

1. ASA is opposed to any efforts at the local, state or national level to require a warning label on food products that include a genetically modified ingredient.
2. ASA’s goal is to ensure that biotechnology must remain an available and affordable tool for farmers to use, and any policy regarding GMO labeling cannot denigrate or stigmatize biotechnology.
3. The Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act gives consumers better access to accurate information about their food.
4. A study from the Corn Refiners Association shows that the Vermont labeling law will cost families more than $1,000 in added grocery costs each year.
5. Anti-GMO activists cherry pick their data when they contend that 90 percent of Americans want GMOs labeled. In fact, when asked unprompted what consumers want to see labeled on food products, Rutgers University found only 7 percent volunteered GMOs.
6. The companion bill introduced by Chairman Pat Roberts keeps groceries less expensive for Americans by establishing a national standard for GMO labeling and avoiding an unnecessary state-by-state patchwork of conflicting laws.
7. ASA recognizes that Democratic support is needed to pass the Roberts bill, and encourages a compromise that would secure that support.
TRADE

Soybeans are the global leader in agricultural trade, and trade is the most important single issue ASA focuses on. Trade helps to build demand for soybeans in three ways. First by opening markets for American beans, meal and oil; second by creating demand for meat, which drives demand for meal; and finally by developing foreign economies, resulting in more buying power and long-term demand for meat protein.

1. Each dollar invested in agricultural trade yields $1.27 in economic activity here at home, and very $1 million invested in trade supports 6,600 jobs.
2. ASA is committed to achieving new market access for U.S. soy and meat in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and US-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations.
3. ASA supports the TPP and calls on Congress to pass it as quickly as possible.
4. The economies within the TPP represent great potential for American soybean exports, primarily in the form of soybean oil, and secondarily because of those markets’ increasing demand for meat protein that utilizes soybean meal for feed.
5. TPP represents 40 percent of the global economy. ASA supports it because it will further our access to these markets, boosting American exports and creating jobs here at home.
6. TPP countries represent 42 percent of U.S. farm exports, and the TPP will grow our farm exports by $4.4 billion each year.
7. Under a potential TTIP, ASA supports reforming EU policies on biotechnology to make them science-based, and we expect the EU’s Renewable Energy Directive (RED) to be resolved to include acceptance of U.S. conservation laws as equivalent to RED sustainability requirements.
8. ASA supports the normalization of trade relations with Cuba, as a promising market with a growing demand for U.S. soy and meat.
9. ASA opposes any reduction in funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) and the Foreign Market Development program (FMD).
TRANSPORTATION

The transportation network that carries American soybeans from the farm to the consumer is the competitive advantage of U.S. farmers over our South American counterparts. It is critically important for Congress to fund the maintenance and improvements needed in the highway, rail and waterways infrastructure system to help keep us ahead of our competition.

1. ASA first and foremost supports investment in our port, inland waterways, rail and highway infrastructure as a means to strengthen the competitiveness of American farmers.
2. ASA supports reauthorization of the Water Resources Reform & Development Act (WRRDA) that accelerates implementation of reforms included in WRRDA of 2014 and improves the potential for major upgrades to locks and dams on the Mississippi River.
3. ASA supports timely implementation of reforms included in the Surface Transportation Board reauthorization enacted in 2015 that aim to improve rail oversight and provide a more balanced playing field for shippers with rail rate disputes and service issues.
4. We support an FY2017 Energy and Water Appropriations bill that fulfills WRRDA commitments for increased funding for projects and operations & maintenance of our ports and inland waterways infrastructure.
ASA STRATEGIC PLAN

ASA’s new strategic plan will enhance our effectiveness as a national policy and trade advocacy association for soybean farmers. These changes will strengthen ASA’s advocacy work, as well as enhance those focus areas of ASA that allow us to be effective.

1. ASA will add more policy resources to our Washington office by shifting resources currently devoted to membership recruitment; partnering with states to invest in leadership development; and restructuring board representation formulas.
2. ASA will provide flexibility to states to structure and conduct membership how they believe will be most effective in their states by replacing national membership dues with state investment levels.
3. ASA will restructure the Board of Directors and its committees to focus on policy and trade issues, and revise meeting formats to accomplish this.
4. ASA will establish, with states, a Soy Regulatory Issues Coalition to provide analysis and actionable information on regulatory issues.
2016 Commodity Classic is the largest show to date, with plenty of new things to see and experience in our exciting new host city of New Orleans.

1. We have a record number of attendees:
2. We have a record number of exhibitors:
3. It’s the first year for a new affiliate as Commodity Classic welcomes the Association of Equipment Manufacturers and its members.
4. The 2016 Classic trade show area is nearly 50 percent larger than 2015, with lots of new cutting-edge exhibitors, and longer hours to give attendees the opportunity to take in the newest and most innovative products and services.
5. In addition to a wide range of learning sessions, early risers and “what’s new” presentations, we’ve added a Main Stage on the trade show floor, where attendees have easy access to informative and educational presenters while the show is open.
6. Saturday’s Evening of Entertainment will feature the award-winning country band Sawyer Brown.