

# AMERICAN soybean

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People. Policy. Profitability.

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION



## Advocacy From the Farm



### SOY FACES

New Soybean Yield  
World Record

### SOY FORWARD

How Policy Advocacy  
is Evolving

### INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

Soy Partners for  
Policy Progress

### ISSUE UPDATE

Endangered Species  
Storm Brewing

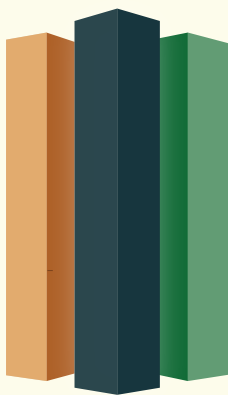




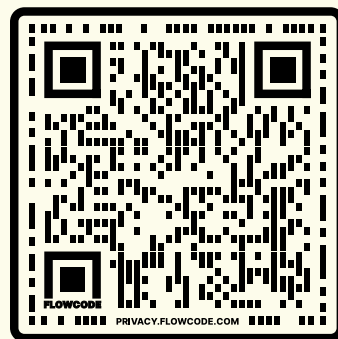
## Make Moves with U.S. Soy

Our founding farmers took action **22 years ago** to launch ASA's World Initiative for Soy in Human Health so WISHH could grow new markets for U.S. Soy. Today, WISHH is working with strategic partners that use soy for food or feed in **28 countries** across Asia and Latin America to sub-Saharan Africa.

Find out how WISHH's three pillars of trade, development and food security cultivate new markets for U.S. Soy protein.



**Trade. Development. Food Security.**



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The American Soybean Association (ASA) represents U.S. soybean farmers on domestic and international policy issues important to the soybean industry. ASA has 26 affiliated state associations representing 30 states and more than 500,000 soybean farmers.

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# ASA leadership corner

Hello and Happy New Year to you all! New years are always filled with promise, and we certainly hope 2024 is filled with promise for soybean farmers. Two words come to mind: farm bill. But there are so many issues affecting your livelihoods that remain important—and others that will, undoubtedly, crop up throughout the year.

Along with the promise of a new year is an age-old exercise in which many of us choose to participate: making resolutions. According to Oxford, “firm decisions to do or not to do something.” But for ASA, there is no need each year to ponder our resolutions, for here, we have only one resolution that remains our keystone year after year: to advocate for U.S. soybean farmers on policy and trade (this is, in fact, ASA’s formal mission).

Whether issues affecting soy farmers are ongoing or unexpected, domestic or international, the list of policy priorities potentially impacting your farms is long and unending. We remain diligent not just starting Jan. 1, but year-round, working in tandem with affiliated soy states and maximizing the volunteerism of our farmer board members.

This is not to say we do not thoughtfully consider each year—and on an ongoing basis—ways in which our organization can improve. As part of our five-year strategic plan, our departments set annual goals that must be approved by our board and then measured quarterly to ensure they

are not only implemented, but also that our staff, me included, are held accountable for their success.

Similarly, your executive committee and senior staff meet annually immediately following elections, held during our December board meetings, to rethink ASA’s policy priorities. This “out with the old, in with the new” process assures we are ready for the new year and all it will bring—and that, in line with ASA’s guiding “resolution,” we remain nimble, innovative and collaborative in response to the changing needs of U.S. soybean farmers. ASA’s 2024 policy priorities are:

## Farm Economy

**2024 Farm Bill:** Support a comprehensive, meaningful farm bill that addresses ASA priorities

**Regulatory:** Promote regulatory modernization of biotechnology and protect against legislative, regulatory and litigation threats to pesticides

## Markets

**Trade:** Prioritize market access and address current challenges

**Biofuels:** Promote policies that increase investment, production and domestic crush

**Livestock and Aquaculture:** Support efforts to expand soy in these markets

**Biobased:** Promote federal investments to advance soy-based products

**Checkoff:** Protect ability for farmers to invest in the checkoff to maintain research and development opportunities

## Movement To/From Market

**Infrastructure:** Support an efficient transportation and infrastructure system, including waterways,

rail, trucking, and pathways for increased exports

Whether it is within a political, economic or environmental context, we remain, one could say, *resolute* in our commitment to ASA’s core mission: advocating for policies benefiting U.S. soybean farmers. Thank you for your support, year after year, and again, Happy New Year to you all!

Stephen CENSKY



Stephen Censky, ASA CEO



## Farmers for Soil Health Provides Payments for Cover Crops Planted This Fall

Farmers in a 20-state program can now receive incentive payments for planting cover crops—including cover crops that have already been planted this past fall—by enrolling in Farmers for Soil Health. The program also provides dedicated technical advisors to offer guidance and answer questions about transitioning fields to successful cover crop adoption.

“This program is unique because it was built by farmers for farmers, and it assists with the cost and learning curve of adopting cover crops,” says Ben West, executive director for Farmers for Soil Health. “We built flexibility into the timing, allowing farmers to enroll their fields before or after planting cover crops.”

The program provides incentives for adopting cover crops, which have many benefits, including water and nutrient retention in the soil. If the field was planted to cover crops for the first time in fall 2023, it is eligible for a three-year contract payment of \$50 per acre. This is structured as \$25 the first year, \$15 the second year and \$10 the third year.

Enrollment is a simple online process that also positions farmers to take advantage of a future marketplace, providing a direct channel between farmers and end users. Enrollment for cover crops planted in fall 2023 must be completed by Feb. 28, 2024. Enrollment for cover crop planting in 2024



will be available from March 1, 2024, through Dec. 31, 2024.

Farmers for Soil Health is a collaborative initiative led by the Soy Checkoff, Pork Checkoff and National Corn Growers Association in partnership with state commodity groups and conservation organizations. The program aims to improve soil health by doubling the adoption of cover crops to reach 30 million U.S. acres by 2030. Incentive payments are supported by a \$95 million USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities grant.

Visit [FarmersforSoilHealth.com](https://FarmersforSoilHealth.com) for more information about eligible states and how to enroll online for cover crop payments.

Source: *Farmers for Soil Health*

## Soy's Youngest Consumers

The global baby food market value is expected to reach about \$98.9 billion by 2024, with North America accounting for approximately a third of the market. In 2019, China represented the largest market, with India ranking second and the U.S. in third place. Trends in baby food products mirror food trends in general—clean label ingredients (i.e., recognizable ingredients, and fewer of them), low sugar content and plant-based innovations.

Plant-based innovations for children can include pockets of growth, such as milk formula for those over 12 months of age (also called “follow-on” or “growing up” formulas) in the Americas. Other categories of opportunity include special milk formulas for Europe, Asia and Latin America and snacks for babies.

And while the global infant formula market worldwide is well established, new opportunities may



exist in arenas ranging from school lunch choices to affordable, high-quality protein for undernourished children. Blending ground meat with soy ingredients such as textured soy protein (TSP, also known as textured vegetable protein, or TVP), for example, can extend it to reduce the cost without lowering nutritional value.

Learn more about these trends at [ussec.org](https://ussec.org).

Source: *U.S. Soybean Export Council*



**Josh Gackle**  
President  
Kulm, ND



**Caleb Ragland**  
Vice President  
Magnolia, KY



**Daryl Cates**  
Chairman  
Columbia, IL

## ASA Elects 2024 Executive Committee, Welcomes 14 New Board Members

During its annual December meeting in St. Louis, the American Soybean Association elected the new board and executive committee members who will lead the organization through the coming year's top advocacy priorities, including farm bill, regulatory issues, importance of the soy checkoff, conservation, and other top policy issues for U.S. soybean farmers.

Josh Gackle (ND), who previously served as ASA vice president, will serve as 2024 ASA president. Gackle began serving on ASA's board of directors in Dec. 2017. He farms 2,800 acres of soybeans and produces corn, wheat and barley.

Immediate past president Daryl Cates (IL) moves to the role of ASA chairman. Former chairman Brad Doyle (AR) rotates off the nine-member executive committee.

The ASA board elected Caleb Ragland (KY) as ASA vice president, a role that puts him in line to serve as the association's president in 2025.

In addition, the board elected Scott Metzger (OH) as ASA secretary; Dave Walton (IA) as treasurer; and Alan Meadows (TN), Ronnie Russell (MO), Heather Feuerstein (MI) and Jim Kukowski (MN) as at-large members of the executive committee.

ASA celebrated the efforts of and said goodbye to several other directors who retired, including Kendell Culp (IN); Wayne Fredericks (IA); Brooks Hurst (MO); Jeff Jorgenson (IA); Monte Peterson (ND); Bill Raben (IL); Joel Schreurs (MN); Pam Snelson (OK); and Bill Wykes (IL).

ASA welcomed 14 new directors who began their nine-year terms, including Tom Adam (IA); Rob Baker (MS); Paul Casper (SD); Wade Cowan (TX); Renee Fordyce (MO); Ryan Frieders (IL); Ron Kindred (IL); Keevin Lemenager (IN); Kody Leonard (OK); Randy Miller (IA); Denise Scarborough (IN); Jeffrey Sorenson (MN); Robert Stobaugh (AR); and Brad Thykeson (ND).

## 2024 DIRECTORS



**Tom Adam**  
Harper, IA



**Charles Atkinson**  
Great Bend, KS



**Rob Baker**  
Leland, MS



**Jamie Beyer**  
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**Steph Essick**  
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**Denise Scarborough**  
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**Rob Shaffer**  
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**Pat Swanson**  
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**Jimmy Thomas**  
Timberlake, NC



**Brad Thykeson**  
Portland, ND



**Andy Winsor**  
Grantville, KS



# 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**Scott Metzger**  
Secretary  
Williamsport, OH



**Dave Walton**  
Treasurer  
Wilton, IA



**Alan Meadows**  
At-large  
Halls, TN



**Ronnie Russell**  
At-large  
Richmond, MO



**Heather Feuerstein**  
At-large  
Belding, MI



**Jim Kukowski**  
At-large  
Strathcona, MN



**Stan Born**  
Lovington, IL



**Ken Boswell**  
Shickley, NE



**Paul Casper**  
Lake Preston, SD



**John Comegys**  
Hartly, DE



**Wade Cowan**  
Brownfield, TX



**Brad Doyle**  
Weiner, AR



**Janna Fritz**  
Bad Axe, MI



**Dennis Fujan**  
Prague, NE



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**Rusty Goebel**  
Stryker, OH



**Adam Guetter**  
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**Jeff Harrison**  
Ontario, CAN



**Tanner Johnson**  
Prairie Farm, WI



**Ron Kindred**  
Atlanta, IL



**Jeff King**  
Corydon, KY



**Mike Koehne**  
Greensburg, IN



**Keevin Lemenager**  
Monrovia, IN



**Kody Leonard**  
Stillwater, OK



**Randy Miller**  
Lacona, IA



**Nick Moody**  
Blackstone, VA



**Andrew Moore**  
Dalton, GA



**Michael Petefish**  
Claremont, MN



**Phil Ramsey**  
Shelbyville, IN



**Ryan Rhoades**  
Radnor, OH



**Jimmie Lee Shaw**  
Newberry, SC



**Justin Sherlock**  
Dazey, ND



**Roberta Simpson-Dolbeare**  
Nebo, IL



**Fred Sipes**  
Ekron, KY



**Jeffrey Sorenson**  
Morgan, MN



**Robert Stobaugh**  
Atkins, AR



**Brandon Wipf**  
Huron, SD



**Russell Wolf**  
Syracuse, MO



**Casey Youngerman**  
Lexington, TN

## EXECUTIVE STAFF

**Stephen Censky**  
ASA Chief Executive Officer



Don Molino from the Voice of Louisiana Agriculture Radio Network interviews then-ASA Vice President Josh Gackle (ND) at the National Association of Farm Broadcasters' annual "Trade Talk" media event in Kansas City, Missouri.

Then-ASA Chairman Brad Doyle (AR) (left) represented U.S. soy farmers at the FeedInfo Summit in Vienna, Austria, in September. USSEC was a gold sponsor of the annual event, which brings together stakeholders from the global feed community to explore industry innovations and trends.



## TRADE TALK



## GLOBAL FEED



## FARM TOUR

USSEC hosted a trade team of Korean Soy Food Masters consisting of eight participants from the Korean foodservice industry and two media representatives. The team visited Scott Metzger's farm to learn about growing non-GMO soybeans, technology used in precision farming, sustainable farming practices and conservation planting for future generations.



## EPA CAUCUS

ASA Director of Government Affairs Kyle Kunkler (second from left) participated in the Congressional Western Caucus briefing on EPA's Vulnerable Species Pilot Project and Herbicide Strategies. Photo Credit: Congressional Western Caucus





ASA CEO Stephen Censky chats with Spencer Chase, Agri-Pulse Managing Editor, during a visit to ASA's D.C. office.

## ASA D.C. CHAT



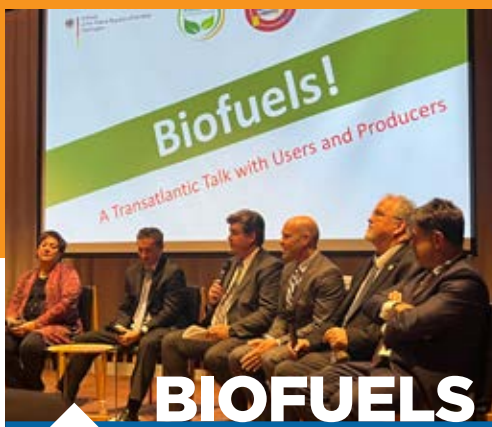
## BIDEN VISIT

Minnesota Soybean Growers Association Executive Director Joe Smentek had an up-close look at President Biden's visit to Dutch Creek Farms in Northfield. During his speech, the president touted his administration's commitment to investing in American farmers and rural communities. Photo Credit: Minnesota Soybean Growers Association



## BIOFRY

ASA Senior Director of Marketing & Communications Wendy Brannen (right) and State Policy Communications Coordinator Blair Shipp (second from left) joined Clean Fuels Alliance America and the North American Renderers Association to serve Hill staff chicken fingers, fries and biofuels knowledge at the annual BioFry event in D.C.



## BIOFUELS

ASA Director Dave Walton (IA) (third from left) participated in a panel discussion at the German Embassy titled, "Biofuels: A Transatlantic Talk with Users & Producers."

# Do you know the function of SoyPAC?



**Tax Issues**



**Biotechnology &  
Crop Protection**



**Trade**



**Transportation &  
Infrastructure**



**Biodiesel**



**Farm Economy &  
Crop Insurance**



**Regulatory  
Issues**



**Conservation &  
Sustainability**



**Food Aid**



**Budget &  
Appropriations**

## **SoyPAC is an important national soy advocacy tool.**

The ASA SoyPAC is the only political action committee representing the interests of solely soybean growers. SoyPAC provides ASA with resources that help support candidates who champion soybean farmer priorities.

The list of issues affecting agriculture and soybeans is long and diverse. ASA staff work year-round to respond to these issues.

**For more than 100 years, ASA has led efforts to  
advocate for U.S. soybean farmers on policy and trade.**

Learn more about how SoyPAC advances ASA's mission  
by visiting **[SoyGrowers.com/soypac](http://SoyGrowers.com/soypac)**



SoyPAC funds raised are for the benefit of political candidates and activities on a national level that support the soybean industry. Contributions to SoyPAC are voluntary and you have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Your contribution to SoyPAC must be personal—not corporate. Maximum annual individual contribution to SoyPAC is \$5,000. Contributions to SoyPAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Any suggested amounts are suggestions only and not enforceable; more or less than the suggested amount may be given; the amount given by the contributor, or the refusal to give, will not benefit or disadvantage the person being solicited. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of the employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year. Under federal law, only U.S. Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (i.e., green card holders) may contribute to SoyPAC.



By Kyle Kunkler,  
ASA Government  
Affairs Director

## An Endangered Species Storm is Brewing



We often can look to the horizon and know when a storm is imminent. And, we have modern forecasting tools that can predict strong weather systems well in advance to help us prepare. However, some storms for which we must prepare are not of the weather variety but are instead on the policy or regulatory fronts. Consider this your advanced warning and buckle up, because things are about to get rocky.

Most who follow U.S. agricultural policy have heard something over the past couple of years about how the Environmental Protection Agency is incorporating Endangered Species Act protections into pesticide registrations. To be clear, this by itself is not a bad thing. Federal judges are losing patience with the agency on ESA. If EPA does not take steps to become ESA compliant, the agency will continue to be sued and the agricultural community will likely lose pesticide registrations to court rulings.

While we want EPA to be compliant, the devil is in the detail on

what “becoming compliant” means. Unfortunately, EPA has offered some very complex, burdensome proposals to meet its ESA responsibilities. The proposals, including the Herbicide Strategy and Vulnerable Species Pilot Project (VSPP), would lump together, respectively, 1. herbicides, and 2. endangered species the agency contends are uniquely vulnerable to pesticides. They would then establish a common set of protective restrictions for species and their habitats. Insecticide and Fungicide Strategies will also be offered in the months ahead.

Both current proposals aim to reduce pesticide runoff and spray drift risks, by which these proposals direct farmers or applicators using herbicides (or pesticides in general in VSPP areas) to implement several costly conservation practices and adopt large downwind spray drift buffers. As a result, nearly every pesticide user would have new regulatory obligations, which vary depending on where you are, what you farm, and your proximity

to species or habitats. Some conservation practice options include reduced tillage, cover crops, vegetative filter strips, riparian buffers and irrigation management, to name a few. The downwind spray drift buffers can be as large as 200 feet for ground applications and up to 500 feet for aerial.

The concerns are many. First, it is unclear whether these restrictions are even necessary to protect species. EPA uses very conservative assumptions and models in assessing exposure risks to species, which likely overstate risks. These assumptions include that farmers are spraying at maximum label rates and that no protective conservation is currently taking place. The conservation practices EPA offers can be costly, and in many cases, there are insufficient options for farms. Assuming someone has enough options to comply, the cost to do so could be in the millions for an individual operation. USDA estimates Herbicide Strategy compliance costs for corn farmers in Iowa, Illinois, and Nebraska could run as high as \$5.5 billion, as an example. This would likely be true for soy.

If there is good news, there were warning alarms, and we do have some time to prepare. EPA will not finalize the Herbicide Strategy until May 2024 and the VSPP later in the year. In addition to directly engaging EPA, USDA and other regulators, we are working with Congress to conduct oversight. We are also carefully studying the legal defects of the proposals, of which we believe there are many. Make no mistake though, there is a species storm brewing and the time to prepare is now.



# SHOW AND TELL

## Farm visits advance advocacy with real-world connections



ASA Director Alan Meadows (TN) hosted EPA and state pesticide regulators on a farm tour last summer as part of the State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) meeting in West Tennessee. Meadows discussed the Endangered Species Act implementation and ensuring growers have the tools they need to maintain conservation practices and protect their crops from herbicide-resistant weeds.

By Allison Jenkins

Farm-to-table took on a whole new meaning for American Soybean Association Director Alan Meadows this past fall.

When he and other members of the ASA executive committee walked into the room to visit with EPA administrators in Washington, D.C., sitting at the table was Jan Matuszko, director of the Environmental Fate and Effects Division within the agency's Office of Pesticide Programs. Just a few

months before, she had been sitting at a table on Meadows' farm in Halls, Tennessee, where his family hosted a tour for EPA and state pesticide regulators.

"We had an instant connection," Meadows says. "All of a sudden, I went from being just somebody from an association to the guy whose farm she had recently visited. She knew what I was talking about when I said, 'the fields around my shop.' She had

laid her eyes on those fields. It gave our entire discussion more credibility."

Such real-world connections are critical to farmer advocacy efforts, says Christy Seyfert, ASA executive director of government affairs. Whether it is educating regulators and legislators about agricultural issues, promoting American-grown soybeans to foreign trade delegations or enlightening consumers about



*ASA Director Jordan Scott hosts an annual Farm to Fork event on his South Dakota operation, where influencers, policymakers, lobbyists, business owners and others gather for dinner and discussion. Jordan farms with his father, Kevin.*



how their food is produced, these relationships help connect people and policies in meaningful ways.

"We employ a lot of tools to advance policy priorities for soybean growers—lobbying, letter-writing, using social media—but I believe the farmer voice, that grassroots engagement, is the biggest and most effective tool we have," Seyfert says. "When farmers share their concerns, their interests and their needs, and

shape those messages in a way that is meaningful and relevant to policymakers, it truly makes a difference."

The EPA's summer visit wasn't the first time Meadows had hosted a tour of his family farm, but he says it was one of the most impactful, due to the timeliness and gravity of the topics at hand.

"I was focused on the Endangered Species Act and the need to preserve access to crop protection products," says Meadows, who raises soybeans, corn and winter wheat with his father, Roger. "We talked about the measures we are already taking on our farm and how far we've come during the past 30 years in sustainability, pointing out that they can't fail to take those things into account when coming up with new regulations. I believe getting face to face with EPA and then bringing it full circle later was very beneficial. Ultimately, we'll see how it all turns out, but I think we did some good."

## Farm-to-table

For ASA Director Jordan Scott, the "farm-to-table" concept takes on a literal form. For the past three years, Scott has invited a diverse group of influencers, policymakers, lobbyists, business owners and others for an annual dinner and discussion on the South Dakota farm where he and his father, Kevin (who served in recent years as ASA president, among other leader roles on the ASA board), grow soybeans and corn. These events, dubbed "Farm to Fork," are organized through the South Dakota Soybean Association's Hungry for Truth initiative.

"We have approximately 200 people here, serve a meal, tour the farm and engage in conversations," Scott says. "Fewer and fewer people are farmers, but everybody eats. Getting out to a farm, seeing how food is produced and meeting the people who grow it is a big deal."

(continued on page 14)





*Drew Peterson hosts Gov. Kristi Noem on his South Dakota farm to view damage from a derecho storm in 2022.*

Like Meadows, Scott says he finds the relationships formed and cemented during these events pay off when it comes time to promote ASA priorities.

“When I have people such as [U.S. Rep.] Dusty Johnson come out to our farm and then see him later in his D.C. office, I know he can picture my operation and think about how policy decisions might affect farmers like me,” Scott says. “It’s all about building relationships and showing that what we’re doing on our farm is important, especially to our families and our future.”

And that future is important to Scott, who is a multi-generational farmer on both sides of his family. He and his wife, Sam, are raising another generation with their two sons, Lincoln, 4, and Dane, 2. The entire family, including Scott’s five siblings, are usually involved in the farm’s advocacy

activities, especially when foreign delegations visit to talk trade.

“Some of the different cultures like to see more than just fields and farm equipment. They want to see how we live—go inside the house, learn about the farm’s history and meet the family,” Scott says. “Those connections help build international relations, and that’s important, especially when you consider 50-60% of our soybeans are exported.”

## Stop-bys

Fellow South Dakotan Drew Peterson describes the Scott family as “pro’s” when it comes to planning farm tours, adding that “they’re wonderful advocates and good friends.” While Peterson personally hasn’t hosted many official delegations, he often has one-on-one interactions with legislators and government officials on the Salem farm where

he and his father, Steven, raise soybeans, corn and cattle.

“We tend to get a lot of ‘stop-bys,’ which might happen during pheasant hunting season or a spur-of-the-moment visit on a statewide tour,” Peterson says. “Regardless of whether it is official or unofficial, farm visits are a great way to bring attention to our issues. You don’t have to set the stage, so to speak. The farm itself frames the conversation around our challenges, as well as our successes and hopes for the future.”

Sometimes the visits are under unfortunate circumstances, such as when South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem toured the Peterson farm in 2022 to view the devastation caused by the straight-line winds of a derecho storm.

“She could feel the effects of the damage by being there on the farm,” Peterson says. “It allowed

(continued on page 15)



(continued from page 14)

her to walk in our shoes a little bit and really experience what we and so many other farmers were going through.”

As vice president on the South Dakota Soybean Association’s board of directors, the fifth-generation farmer brings a dual perspective to agricultural advocacy, having just spent his first year as state representative for the 19th District. In this role, Peterson says he has learned firsthand about the importance of constituent contacts to influence policy decisions. And he has a precious new incentive to protect the legacy of his family farm. He and his wife, Lauren, welcomed their first child, Michael, in April 2023.

“When elected officials have an issue come across their desks that relates to agriculture, they’re going to think about the farmers they know, and I believe it will impact their decisions,” Peterson says. “I have had senators and representatives quote things to me that they have heard and seen on these farm visits. The memories of those experiences have a lasting impact.”

## Your story

In neighboring North Dakota, the newly installed ASA president, Josh Gackle, also has personal knowledge of how advocacy impacts agriculture from both sides of the spectrum. He worked as a legislative staffer at the national and state levels before returning to the family farm, where he now works alongside his brother, Jordan, and their father, Fred, to produce soybeans, corn, wheat and barley.

“Having worked in D.C., I can tell you there’s nothing more effective than a constituent of an elected official making a phone call, sending an email or making a visit,” Gackle says. “Sure, lobbyists are super effective, and ASA has

a great team that works for the American soybean farmer every day, but constituent engagement is one of the most effective ways to get policies enacted. That’s why membership in our state and national organizations is so important.”

In particular, Gackle says he believes farm visits tell the soybean producer’s story better than anything.

“When I was a staffer, I’d travel with my bosses and see the impact those in-person visits have,” he says. “The thing is, they really want to do it, too. They want to get out from behind their desks in D.C. It gives them a sense of what’s actually happening with a real-world, person-to-person connection, which is powerful when it comes to them voting on legislation.”

## Just do it

Such influence can only happen if there are farmers willing to host these visits, points out Meadows. The prospect may seem daunting, he admits, but the rewards are well worth the effort.

“My best advice is to just do it,” Meadows says. “You may not feel like you have the time or energy to do what it takes, but here’s how I look at it: If you’re not out there telling your story, somebody else is going to tell it for you, and they’re probably not going to tell it the way you want it told.”

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*Read tips from soy leaders for hosting successful farm visits on page 16.*



*ASA President Josh Gackle, a North Dakota farmer who worked as a legislative staffer at the national and state levels before returning to the family farm, knows the effectiveness of farm visits by policymakers and legislative staff.*

# Farm Tour Tips

## Soy leaders share advice on what makes a successful farm visit

By Allison Jenkins

Just as there are no one-size-fits-all farms, there are also no universal rules for hosting farm visits. The agenda and activities will depend on the attendees, the season, the purpose and, of course, what the operation itself can showcase.

Keeping those variables in mind, here are some considerations that can help make a farm visit more successful:

### Plan hands-on activities

When ASA Director Alan Meadows hosted EPA and state pesticide regulators on his Tennessee farm this past summer, he made sure there were plenty of relevant, interactive elements to the tour, including a sprayer they could climb in and see its high-tech features.

“Give your visitors a piece of equipment they can crawl around on and ask questions about,” Meadows says. “You have to realize most of these people have little or no experience with anything like that.”

### Don't forget the staffers

For maximum impact, look beyond the top-level officials and connect with their staff members. That is the advice of Kaleb Little, CEO of the Kansas Soybean Association, who says farm visits are an important advocacy tool for the state's producers.

“That staff level engagement is critical to building relationships,” Little says. “Any time we get a legislative staffer who is either



*EPA and state pesticide regulators listen to Tennessee farmer Alan Meadows during a tour he hosted on his farm last summer.*

new to an office or may be new to agriculture, we try to get them out to Kansas to see soybean and corn farms and our livestock industry. They may have background in the policy, but to see these operations firsthand pulls theory down into reality.”

### Make it real

Although the season will dictate what the visitors will experience, incorporating actual farm work into the tour can help hammer home the realities of agriculture, says ASA President Josh Gackle, who farms in North Dakota.

“If you can, let them see the day-to-day, hour-to-hour chores and activities, everything that goes into making that particular part of the season work, whether it's planting, harvest or any of the other times of the year,” Gackle says.

### Stress the message

While showing off the farm may be the fun part of the visit, the most important aspect is the story you need to tell, says South Dakota's Drew Peterson, who raises row crops and cattle

in addition to serving as a state representative.

“Worry less about how perfect your grass looks and be more worried about the conversation,” he advises. “There's a reason you are hosting this farm visit, and you should take that opportunity to tell your unique story.”

### Focus on family

No matter the audience, bring the message back around to the importance of family and the future of agriculture, says Meadows, a fifth-generation farmer who, with his wife, Jami, is raising a sixth generation—daughters Kate, 14, and Jill, 12, and son Trip, 9.

“In my presentations, my last slide is usually a photo of my kids,” he says. “And my message is, ‘Look, guys. This is our future. If the ag industry is going to exist in the years to come, it is up to us to make sure those three kids of mine have the opportunity to come back and do this for a living.’ There is nothing more powerful than that.”



## FOR SOY FARMERS

With so few people in Congress—and society, in general—being familiar with farming in the U.S., it is important for soybean farmers to be their own advocates and represent the issues important to their livelihoods and way of life. There are many advocacy tools available, so you can choose the ones that are right for you when the times comes.

### 12 WAYS TO ENGAGE AND ADVOCATE







## Rhinstone Cowboys for SoyPAC

Join us for the 2024 ASA SoyPAC Auction in the eclectic city of Houston, Texas. The “Rhinstone Cowboy” theme is sure to make it an entertaining evening. Fit right in by wearing your own western attire or your best gem-bespeckled accessories—or a combination of both.

Don't miss this fun-filled event to benefit ASA's SoyPAC.



# SoyPAC

**Thursday, February 29, 2024 | 6:00 – 9:30 p.m.**  
**Houston, Texas | Hilton Americas Hotel**

The auction is held during Commodity Classic, February 28–March 2, in Houston.

For more information and to register to attend the SoyPAC Auction, visit [soygrowers.com/soypac/](http://soygrowers.com/soypac/).

SoyPAC funds raised are for the benefit of political candidates and activities on a national level that support the soybean industry. Contributions to SoyPAC are voluntary and you have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Your contribution to SoyPAC must be personal – not corporate. Maximum annual individual contribution to SoyPAC is \$5,000. Contributions to SoyPAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Any suggested amounts are suggestions only and not enforceable; more or less than the suggested amount may be given; the amount given by the contributor, or the refusal to give, will not benefit or disadvantage the person being solicited. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of the employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year. Under federal law, only U.S. Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (i.e., green card holders) may contribute to SoyPAC.



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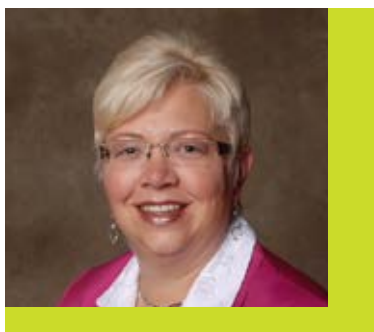


# INDUSTRY

## perspective

### Partners for Policy Progress & U.S. Soy Growth

American Soybean Association industry partners look ahead to critical policy issues in 2024 and discuss how their partnerships with ASA bring value to advocacy efforts.



#### **Bayer Crop Science North America, Jackie Applegate, President**

Bayer is dedicated to supporting farmers on and off the field—including advocacy on behalf of their interests. We are proud to partner with ASA, a powerhouse in ag policy advocacy, to champion the needs of American farmers in the halls of Congress, in statehouses, with regulatory authorities, and beyond. ASA leads on many issues that affect farmers' businesses and the value chain's ability to deliver the food, feed, fiber, and fuel that Americans rely on—and we are grateful for their steadfast dedication and strong track record for success.

We anticipate continued efforts to limit or restrict access to technologies farmers need to run their operations productively and sustainably, particularly pesticides, in 2024. Advocacy related to a workable approach to the Endangered Species Act, the Agricultural Labeling Uniformity

Act, and policy initiatives at the state level will continue to need our collective attention. We advocate for an open-minded debate, science-based policy, and efficient regulatory systems that enable innovative solutions to strengthen farm economies. Bayer is committed to advancing dialogue to foster trust and help society understand the value of modern agriculture innovation.



#### **ADM, Bryan Dierlam, Director of Government Relations**

ADM appreciates the opportunity to work with ASA and our nation's soybean growers on public policy issues that protect and enhance the livelihood of soybean farmers, create new markets and new uses for soybeans and soy products, and find new customers at home and abroad for these products. On a regular basis, members of ADM's federal and state government relations team coordinate and collaborate with ASA personnel and leaders on policies of mutual interest. These relationships lead to progress on the policy front that advance growth and success for the entire soy industry.

Some of the policy issues and shared priorities include:

- **Trade:** ADM exports soy and soy products around the world to our global customers. Growing sales opportunities to current, new and emerging customers is a top priority for ADM. This is the key reason ADM supports expansion of the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development program in the pending farm bill.
- **Biofuels:** We have long engaged on a stronger, more robust Renewable Fuel Standard and the biodiesel tax credit. As that credit transitions to the Clean Fuel Production Tax Credit, and with the advent of Sustainable Aviation Fuel, we certainly have policy issues to continue addressing together in Washington, D.C., and state capitals.
- **Sustainability and Conservation:** We have long supported USDA conservation efforts that are voluntary and producer-led so farmers have access to programs that recognize the critical role that conservation plays in food production.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure:** ADM supports the repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction of our nation's aging inland lock and dam system. We also support funding for the Army Corps of Engineers to regularly dredge our rivers, channels and ports to make certain our vessels and barges can move soybeans to market.
- **Animal Agriculture:** We support expanded exports for animal protein, which benefits soy farmers because of the consumption of soy in the animals' diets.

(continued on page 20)

- **Biobased Products:** ADM's research team is continually looking for ways to incorporate soy-based ingredients into new products. This is why ADM supports expansion of USDA's Bio-preferred program and biobased research in the pending farm bill.
- **Food Aid:** We support U.S. agriculture products like soy being a part of USDA and USAID Food Aid programs and have worked with ASA to support Food Aid in the farm bill and throughout the agriculture appropriations process.

These are the many priority issues ADM has in common with ASA's farmer members and why we are proud of our support and value our continued collaboration.



### **Corteva Agriscience, Karis Gutter, North America Government & Industry Affairs Leader**

ASA is among the most respected and effective advocacy groups in agriculture today. Its farmer leadership and staff are well known and instrumental—at the state, federal and international levels—when it comes to driving policies to improve farmer productivity, sustainability, and profitability. Corteva Agriscience has long been fortunate to work closely with ASA to ensure farmers have access to the latest tools and innovations to address the new and emerging challenges they face on their farms. We look forward to continuing to build on this relationship into the future.

- Even with the recent extension of the farm bill, the work to maintain and improve this

important legislation will be front and center through most of 2024. Carrying out that work in an election year will pose additional challenges requiring strong collaboration from all parts of the agriculture industry.

- **New breeding technologies** like gene editing offer amazing promise for seed productivity and plant health, with benefits extending to farmers, consumers, and the environment. Working with farmers and international trading partners to clarify and align on science-based regulations will be critical to bringing the newest tools to farmers.
- **Input suppliers and farmer organizations** have been weighing in with EPA about needed revisions to its recently proposed strategies to address the Endangered Species Act. This advocacy issue will be front and center throughout 2024 to ensure farmers are able to remain productive and profitable while complying with ESA regulations.



### **Nutrien, Renée Munasifi, Director of Global Government & Industry Affairs**

In 2024, passing a new five-year farm bill will be critically important to maintaining a strong safety net for our U.S. farmer customers and those who depend on the food they provide.

At Nutrien, we appreciate the opportunity to partner with the American Soybean Association in supporting policy initiatives, like adding potash and phosphate to the critical minerals list, that bolster the U.S. agriculture industry and global food security.



### **Nobell Foods, Magi Richani, Founder & CEO**

Nobell's collaboration with ASA has been extremely valuable. Nobell is developing innovative traits in soybeans, and we have been able to leverage the regulatory expertise that ASA's Government Affairs team brings to the table. The team at ASA has spent time getting to know Nobell and its priorities, and their proactive approach to addressing those priorities on the Hill has been very valuable to our progress. ASA has also been a great partner in crafting and conveying Nobell's story effectively.

Beyond the Government Affairs team, the insights shared with Nobell from ASA's grower leaders have played a vital role in ensuring that we are able to maintain our commitment to a "grower-first" mentality as we build our business, supply chain, and R&D pipeline.

Looking ahead to 2024, the most critical issue for Nobell is ensuring that the U.S. regulatory system for innovative biotech traits is science-based, consistent and efficient. It is critical for all U.S.-based developers and growers to ensure that the U.S. regulatory system remains one of the most competitive in the world so that innovation stays in the United States, and so that U.S. growers are reaping the benefits of that innovation.

In 2024, it will also be critical for key legislation to be renewed and passed that supports growers and fosters climate-friendly agricultural practices.



# ASA Leadership & Education Continuum

ASA's leadership training programs provide soybean farmer-leaders with tools and training designed to increase advocacy effectiveness and strengthen relationships with key legislators, regulatory bodies and media. The programs are designed to provide a training path from introductory to advanced leadership development—an education continuum.

## 5 ASA Board of Directors

**Audience:** ASA board and executive committee members

**Purpose:** Provide current ASA leaders with additional training to increase overall effectiveness.

## 4 Soybean Leadership Academy

**Audience:** Senior board leaders and staff CEOs; elected officers/board members and managerial/lead staff

**Purpose:** Provide general sessions and track-based training by top leadership trainers and industry experts.

## 3 Leadership At Its Best

**Audience:** State and national soybean association board members

**Purpose:** Present intermediate leadership, communication, issues and advocacy training.

## 2 Young Leader Program

**Audience:** Growers/grower couples interested in leadership

**Purpose:** Present basic leadership, communication and issues training.

## 1 Ag Voices of the Future

**Audience:** College students

**Purpose:** Provide an introduction to the soybean industry, advocacy and career opportunities related to ag policy.

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ASA and BASF offer an annual \$5,000 scholarship to an eligible high school senior planning to pursue a degree in agriculture.

For more information on these ASA programs, visit  
**SoyGrowers.com**



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## Georgia Grower Alex Harrell Topples Soybean Yield World Record

When the scales tipped 206 bushels per acre of soybeans on Aug. 23, 2023, everything changed for Lee County, Georgia, farmer Alex Harrell. His official verified yield was 206.7997 bpa, which soundly beat the previous world record of 190.23 bpa set in 2019 by fellow Georgian and friend Randy Dowdy.

For a month afterward, Alex's phone did not stop ringing. He continually answered questions from journalists representing television, radio, podcasts and magazines—sometimes four or five interviews per day. Seed company Asgrow even flew him to the Farm Progress Show where he did a media day. "It's been fun," he says.

Alex, 33, and his dad farm 3,000 acres of mainly corn, wheat and soybeans. He farmed his first soybean crop of 50 acres at age 18.

He wasn't really trying for a world record. "I never checked the yield before now," he says. But when he sensed that he would be close to a record, he sought yield verification with the University of Georgia.

His tenacious approach to farming is likely what drove his notable results. "My No. 1 goal is to raise the overall farm yield average to be more profitable," he says. He aims to average 120 bpa on soybeans and 300 on corn across the board.

He credits his success to two key factors. First is the combination of input products and timing, beginning with the right seed variety for the soil

type and the geographic location. Regarding all the inputs, "The difference between good and great results is two or three days. It's all in the timing," he says.

The other key is the dedicated team that shares his vision, from his seven full-time employees to the University of Georgia grain specialist who answers all his questions, to the product suppliers who eagerly work with him to understand and support his focus and goals.

Focus is everything. "I pull tissue samples every Monday religiously," he says. He sends them to the lab for a quick nutritional analysis, then he and a crop consultant look at the results to determine the inputs to apply pronto. Of course, weather and water play their parts. Alex also owns an irrigation company.

"If I was giving advice to a farmer trying to push yields, I would say to take part of the farm and make it a research plot. Don't go with university trials," he says. "Select a percentage of crop to test yourself."

Giving advice to other farmers is another of his goals. After spending years going to classes and seminars taking notes and admiring his hero speakers, "now I'm thrown in the same category as those I grew up listening to." His advice on that, "Don't imitate just any farmer. Find one you like and listen to him and copy what he does."

A month before his world record, Alex posted on Twitter, "David Hula is the undisputed king of corn on this planet. Having him come on our farm today and walk my corn and soybean fields with me and pass on his advice was definitely one of the coolest things I've had happen on the farm."

Now Alex has a new "coolest thing."



Alex Harrell (left) with Doug Collins, county agent for the University of Georgia, who was on hand to help verify Harrell's world record soybean crop.



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## Study Finds U.S. Soybean Industry Has \$124 Billion Impact on the U.S. Economy

The National Oilseed Processors Association and the United Soybean Board have made available a new study, *The Economic Impact of the U.S. Soybeans & End Products on the U.S. Economy*, which examines the value of the American soybean industry. To develop the study, NOPA and USB commissioned LMC International Ltd., an independent economic consulting firm specializing in global agricultural commodity and agribusiness sectors.

NOPA's president, Thomas Hammer, observes, "As indicated by this study's findings, the economic contributions of the soybean processing and refining sectors to the U.S. economy are substantial, connecting soybean farmers with end users. Soybean processors convert soybeans into meal and oil. These value-added products are used in food, feed, industrial products and biofuels, supporting billions of dollars in domestic wages and tens of thousands of good paying jobs in the United States."

This 33-page study analyzes the soybean value chain's impact on the U.S. economy based on data from crop years 2019/20 to 2021/22. As highlighted in the report summary, during this period:

- The total economic impact on the U.S. economy from the soybean sector averaged \$124 billion, including \$85.7 billion from soy production and \$9.8 billion from soybean processing—the U.S. soy sector



*A study examining the value of the U.S. soybean industry finds an economic impact of \$124 billion.  
Photo Credit: United Soybean Board*

accounts for approximately 0.6% of the U.S. gross domestic product.

- There are more than 500,000 individuals involved in soy farm decision-making. This includes 223,000 paid, full-time equivalent jobs and an additional 62,000 family members, beyond growers, who reside on farms and are integral to soybean farming operations.
- The total wage impact of the sector averaged \$10 billion.

"It's reaffirming to see that the U.S. soybean industry has such a tremendous impact on U.S. farmers and the economy overall," says immediate past USB Chair and Missouri farmer Meagan Kaiser. "When we think about soy's role in food security, renewable energy and more than 1,000 products on the market, it may be surprising to the everyday consumer how our product extends across multiple sectors.

This report, funded by our U.S. soybean farmers, allows soy, as an often-invisible ingredient, to become a visible contribution and sustainable solution for our future."

Economic impacts highlighted in the study are quantified in terms of revenue, wages, jobs and the number of people dependent on the sector—all focused on the production, distribution and use of soybeans and soybean products. These impacts span across the value chain, from soybean farming and production to consumers and exports. Findings are presented with educational intent at the national and state level and by congressional district. The study also includes one-page summaries for key states where the soybean industry primarily operates.

A copy of the complete study and related national and state summary sheets are available for download from NOPA's website at [nopa.org](http://nopa.org).

*Source: United Soybean Board*

## Health and Nutrition Priority Area Works Hard to Better U.S. Soy Industry

Growing the best possible crop that meets a variety of end-user needs is a top priority for U.S. soybean farmers. Many of those end users rely on the diversity of the soybean to meet health and nutritional needs, which is why USB formed the Health & Nutrition Priority Area. USB farmer-leader Gary Berg from St. Elmo, Illinois, serves as the coordinator of this priority area, which works to identify investments and opportunities to create and add value to U.S. soybean meal.

The U.S. soybean industry has strong ties to animal agriculture, its largest customer, and U.S. soy works to ensure the world's producers of poultry, pork, aquaculture and livestock have access to nutrient-rich U.S. soy.

"This past year, we have worked closely with the Animal Nutrition Working Group. They provide information and influential recommendations that increase the animal agriculture industry's awareness and understanding of U.S. soybean meal's benefits in poultry and pork rations," said Berg.

The ANWG was formed to open constructive dialogue between animal nutritionists and farmers about soybean meal. Through this group, farmers and animal nutritionists have been able to collaborate and improve the quality of U.S. soybean meal to meet the needs of domestic animal agriculture.

"Ninety-seven percent of the U.S. soybean meal produced



*Ninety-seven percent of the U.S. soybean meal produced annually is used as value-added nutrition in animal feed.  
Photo Credit: United Soybean Board*

annually is used as value-added nutrition in animal feed. Most people are unaware that the poultry and pork industries consume the largest portion of soybean meal in the U.S.," said Berg. "One of our investment projects includes working with these producers to show the many benefits to their animals if they increase the amount of soybean meal in their animals' diets. We have made that case through research, where we can show producers the data and not just take our word that soybean meal is good for their animals."

Soybean plant health is also an important area falling under this priority, and farmer-leaders invest in research to improve soybean plant health by offering the latest data-based pest and disease recommendations to farmers.

"The Health & Nutrition Priority Area is coordinating with leading agronomists and extension

researchers to deliver these recommendations in real-time because production environments can change quickly," said Berg.

Data has become an invaluable asset to farmers. Whether it is data generated by equipment on their farms to data generated through research, today's farmers are making management decisions leading to resilient and value-added crops more than ever before.

Berg affirms that the soybean checkoff is making a difference. He sees it firsthand.

"The United Soybean Board invests checkoff funds wisely. Those efforts return \$12.34 for every dollar invested in research, promotion and education. I don't know of any other place where you can invest your money to bring that kind of return to your farm," Berg said.

*Source: United Soybean Board*



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# #soy SOCIAL

Check out what's trending in U.S. soy on social media



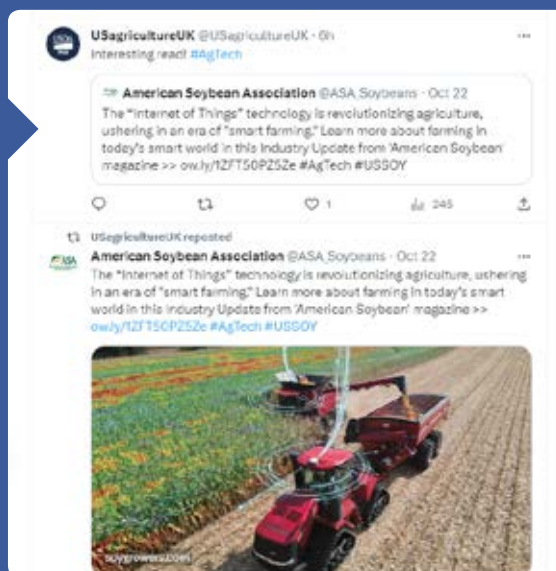
ASA Director Jamie Beyer (MN) discusses the farm bill and other critical ag issues with Rep. Michelle Fischbach in this post from Minnesota Soybean Growers Association.



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service reshared one of ASA's posts, highlighting a story from a past issue of our magazine.



After NAFB's Trade Talk show with trade media, Agri-Pulse shared a link on social media to its interview with incoming ASA president, Josh Gackle.



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# WORLD soy

## WISHH Builds Soy Trade in East Africa

Building trade for U.S. soy protein is important to American soybean farmers. That is why Daniel Adams, a soybean grower from Kentucky, was willing to take six days out of his September harvest to travel more than 7,500 miles to Uganda in East Africa to speak about the benefits of soy. Uganda's population of 49 million is already more than 10 times that of Kentucky and is doubling every 16 years. Ugandans are interested in soy protein both as a means to boost health and to promote as business opportunities for their growing nation.

"It is very true that you don't know what it is like until you go [see a country]," says Adams. He is part of ASA's World Initiative for Soy in Human Health's program committee and recommends the WISHH trade team experience to other soybean farmers.

This past fall, Adams and WISHH Executive Director Gena Perry were key speakers at WISHH's 2023 Soy Foods Festival in Kampala, Uganda's capital city. Other speakers included government representatives from the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports, the city of Kampala, and a representative of Ghana's school feeding program.

United Soybean Board funding supported WISHH hosting a variety of festival events, including television and radio interviews in advance of the festival that featured food experts and government officials who acknowledged the power of soy protein for nutritious and delicious foods.

Both Adams and Perry noted how WISHH's strategic partners



*WISHH strategic partner Charles Nsubuga (middle) promoted soy as a healthy food choice on T.V. with WISHH Executive Director Gena Perry (right) and Kentucky soybean grower Daniel Adams.*

work together with WISHH to create win-wins for both Ugandans and U.S. soybean growers.

For example, SESACO Limited, a food company, joined WISHH at the festival to showcase the benefits of soy for both human and animal nutrition, as well as trade and development, in Africa. Ugandan-based SESACO is a strong supply chain partner and longtime importer of U.S. defatted soy flour, making it a major player in the region. Partnerships with companies like SESACO offer value to WISHH as it works in 29 countries to leverage these relationships to meet the protein needs of 8 billion consumers—the reason global food security remains a key pillar of WISHH's work.

SESACO CEO Charles Nsubuga has partnered with WISHH

since 2011, and the company is a champion for soy foods and feeds. It signed a memorandum of understanding that led to WISHH providing SESACO with a container of U.S. soy through the USDA Quality Samples Program. The nearly 10,000 pounds of U.S. soy was instrumental in SESACO's efforts to introduce U.S. soy's benefits to African markets.

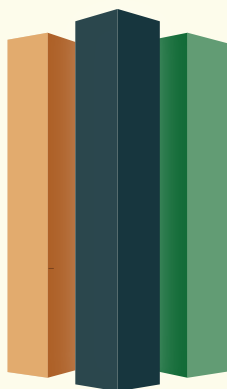
Recognizing the strategic value of a relationship with WISHH, partners like SESACO go the extra mile to extol the virtues of U.S. soy in East Africa. For example, Nsubuga continues to share what he learned from WISHH with other entrepreneurs and organizations in his country. Meanwhile, WISHH continues to support SESACO's growth with technical trainings and partnerships on educational programs.



# Make Moves with U.S. Soy

WISHH connects Trade, Development & Food Security in Cambodia where **fish account for 61% of households' animal protein** intake. We cultivate trade with Cambodian feed mills that are buying U.S. soybean meal for the growing aquaculture industry that WISHH is developing. Our trade and development work makes protein more available in the country where **45% of Cambodians live in moderate or severe food insecurity**.

Find out how WISHH's three pillars of trade, development and food security cultivate new markets for U.S. Soy protein.



**Trade. Development. Food Security.**





## Three Advocacy Trends Worth Watching

By Laura Brigandi, Manager,  
Digital & Advocacy Practice,  
Public Affairs Council

Technology and a deepening political divide have transformed the advocacy landscape in recent years, but some tried-and-true tactics never go out of style. Here are three ways policy advocacy is evolving.

### Email advocacy is easier than ever—but becoming less valuable

Advancing technology creates an advocacy “arms race.” Advocacy groups adopt new tools to increase engagement. The resulting flood of constituent communication devalues each individual contact. Advocacy groups must then find a new way to break through the noise, leading to newer, more advanced tools.

Email action alerts, which were groundbreaking 20 years ago, have now become so commonplace—and so overwhelming in volume—that legislators now use tools to aggregate identical emails. Most aren’t even read, only reported as a total number. And now that sending an email is as simple as a few clicks, policymakers put less weight on form messages. Customization is key: A customized email requires more effort to write and is more likely to stand out.

Soon, the incorporation of generative AI into action alerts will enable unique message creation without any additional advocate effort. The algorithm can tweak a standard message, producing endless distinct iterations to slip past mass email filters. Expect this auto-customization to result in further changes as offices continue to adapt to the influx of emails.

### Relationship building is critical—but it doesn’t have to happen in person

Because of the time and commitment required, building relationships with elected officials is still the best way to influence policy. Legislators value personal interaction, so tactics like fly-ins, district meetings and site visits remain effective.

However, COVID-19 reshaped how and where we advocate. With traditional in-person activities constrained, virtual meetings, tele-town halls and social media emerged as alternative strategies—and they are not going away. Congressional staff appreciate the convenience of virtual; they can meet constituents where they are, rather than requiring advocates to travel to D.C. or wait for recess periods when members of Congress are back home.

Social media platforms are also powerful tools for influencing policymakers. With elected officials themselves on social media, advocates can speak directly to their representatives by tagging them in a post—or responding to one, since members of Congress increasingly make statements, post videos or even livestream on social to communicate with constituents.

### Omnibus bills are on the rise—so strengthen your “grasstops”

As the national political divide deepens, it is increasingly difficult to achieve bipartisan consensus to pass legislation. Consequently, legislatures are trending toward larger, more



comprehensive omnibus bills, such as appropriations packages or reauthorizations like the farm bill. These complex negotiations happen largely behind closed doors rather than in public debate and committee meetings.

In these cases, a campaign targeting key policymakers is often more effective than a nationwide grassroots campaign, but it requires grasstops engagement. Advocacy organizations should invest in cultivating relationships with community leaders and other high-profile individuals who can use their influence and existing connections with elected officials to sway policymaker positions.

Whether it is grassroots or grasstops, building relationships remains the timeless principle at the core of effective advocacy.

*Laura Brigandi has over 15 years of experience in government affairs and advocacy, as well as a long track record of grassroots program management. In her current role as digital and advocacy practice manager for the Public Affairs Council, she oversees all programs, resources and member services related to grassroots and digital advocacy.*



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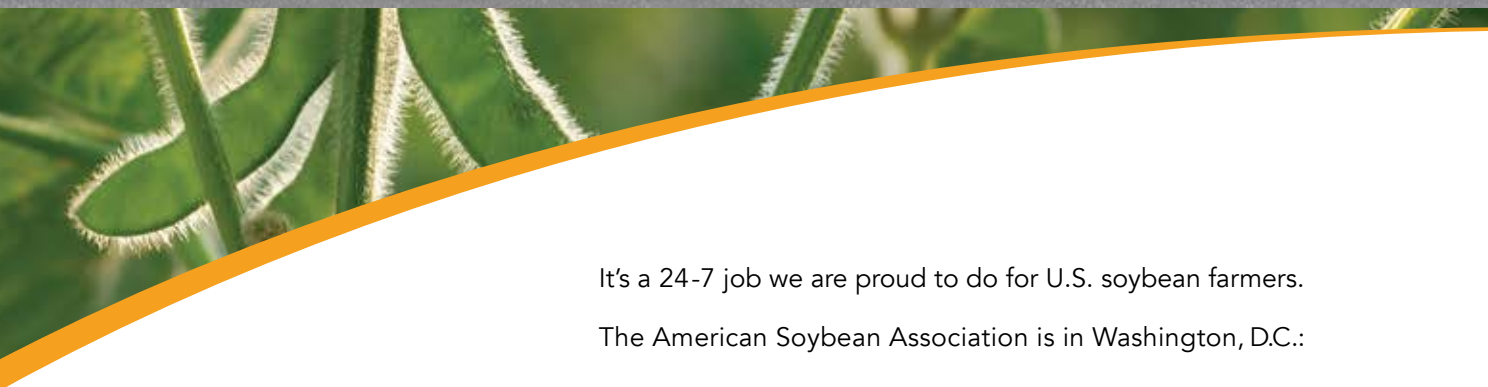
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## Policy makers take notice of ASA.



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- Protecting soybean interests in the farm bill
- Fighting against burdensome EPA regulations
- Growing soybean trade opportunities

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