AMERICAN soybean
FALL 2025
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People. Policy. Profitability.
A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

ASA Celebrates Important Wins in 2025, Focuses on Challenges Ahead

HIGHLIGHTS AND HURDLES

ASA American Soybean Association®

Do you know the function of SoyPAC?

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.

ASA American Soybean Association®

Learn more about how SoyPAC advances ASA's mission by visiting **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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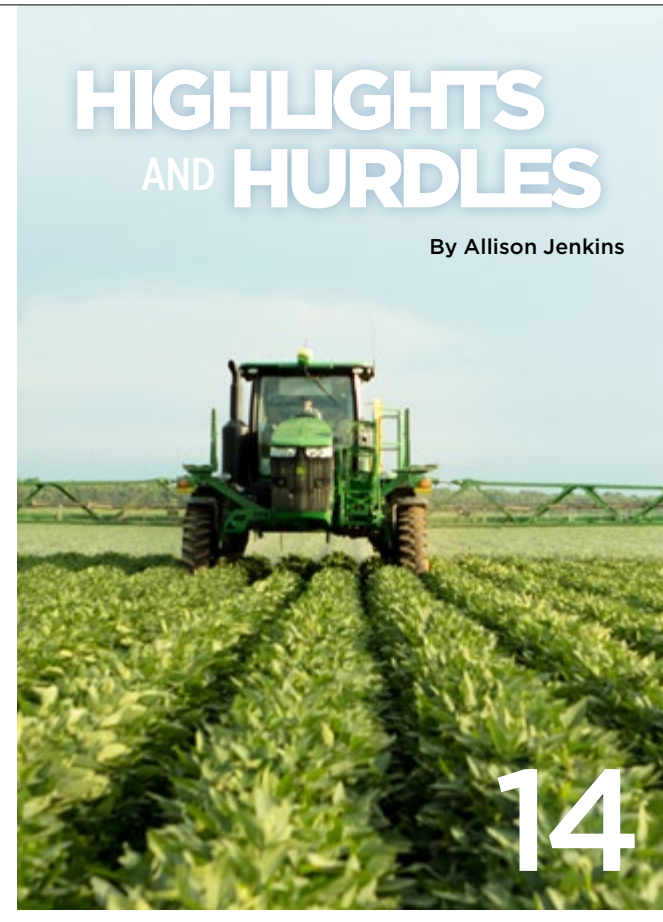

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ASA American Soybean Association®

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 nearly 500,000 soybean farmers.

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ASA leadership corner

Caleb RAGLAND

Caleb Ragland, ASA President

As farmers, we know no season is ever the same. Markets shift, weather changes and new challenges come at us faster than we'd like. But one thing that has remained steady is the strength of our farmer community and the leadership of the American Soybean Association.

Over the past turbulent year, ASA has stepped up to lead when others hesitated. On issues like the Make America Healthy Again Commission reports, renewable volume obligations and trade, ASA has not only had a seat at the table, but we've been the voice others look to for direction. That is no accident. It's the result of farmer-leaders and staff working side by side, day after day, to fight for the policies and opportunities that keep our farms strong.

We've all seen how uncertain the global marketplace can be, especially with challenges in China. But ASA has kept steady pressure to make sure soybean farmers' voices are heard. And our stance carries weight with policymakers because they know we represent real farm families.

This year also marked a turning point in how the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is impacting agriculture. ASA weighed in early and consistently with the MAHA Commission on the science behind the food we grow and the crop protection tools we need, and that persistence mattered. When other groups stepped back, we leaned forward and saw a shift in tone from the administration.

I cannot overstate how much of this is possible because of the dedication of our staff, our board of directors, and especially our Executive Committee. The past year has not been easy. But ASA's farmer-leaders never wavered in showing up. Our EC worked through hard conversations and long nights, always keeping one goal in mind: leaving the industry better than we found it. That commitment is what has allowed ASA to deliver real wins for farmers.

> **"I am proud of what ASA has achieved this past year. More importantly, I am proud of the example our farmer-leaders set when they stepped forward to lead."**

At the same time, the battles are far from over. We know every policy decision in Washington can have a direct impact on our livelihoods. That is why advocacy remains so critical. ASA can't do this work alone. We need farmers from every state to engage, to speak up, and to share their stories. Every letter written, every meeting attended, every call made to a legislator adds to the power of our collective voice.

I am proud of what ASA has achieved this past year. More importantly, I am proud of the example our farmer-leaders set when they stepped forward to lead. We have shown what can happen when farmers refuse to sit back and instead take a stand for what is right.

Together, with our staff, our board, our Executive Committee, and farmers across the country, we will continue shaping policies that protect our livelihoods and strengthen our future for generations to come.

Thank you for trusting ASA to be your voice. Let's keep leading, together.

Soy FACES

By Blair Shipp,
ASA State Policy Communications Coordinator

Janna Fritz – Connecting U.S. Soy to the World

Michigan farmer Janna Fritz has spent her career strengthening the link between U.S. soybean farmers and customers around the globe. As an ASA director and chair of the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), she brings both passion and firsthand experience to her leadership roles, rooted in a lifelong belief that strong markets start with strong connections.

Michigan soybean farmer and USSEC Chair Janna Fritz addresses attendees of the 2025 Soy Connext conference.

Fritz's involvement with ASA began while working for the Michigan Soybean Committee and Michigan Soybean Association, where she first saw how international demand shapes opportunity for farmers at home. That experience inspired her to take on leadership as a farmer representative.

"It was exciting to learn about the drivers of demand and how we must advocate, through ASA, to expand trade opportunities and increase international export demand," Fritz said. "U.S. farmers are the best at producing soybeans. We just need people willing to advocate for that product around the world."

Today, through her work with USSEC, Fritz helps lead outreach that connects global buyers directly with U.S. farmers. For her, the most rewarding moments come when those relationships take root. International customers often share stories about visiting American farms or meeting U.S. producers in their own countries. Those personal experiences, she said, create trust that strengthens trade ties.

"When we can make person-to-person connections, we can educate each other on our respective needs," she said. "That sharing drives a stronger business relationship."

Fritz believes those interactions matter because global buyers want to understand who produces their soy and how. "Many are surprised to learn I am a sixth-generation farmer and a woman in agriculture," she said. "Farmers can simply share their story and help foster connections internationally."

That message will resonate even more as the world prepares for 2026, the International Year of the Woman Farmer, a milestone Fritz is especially excited to champion. "Over half the world's food is produced by women farmers," she said. "It is important to highlight the role women play in agriculture today."

Balancing leadership with farm and family life requires planning and teamwork, something Fritz credits to her strong support system at home. Her husband, father-in-law, and now her youngest son all play key roles in keeping their farm running smoothly when she is traveling. "My family knows the value of the work I am doing to promote U.S. Soy," she said. "They are very willing to support my efforts."

Looking ahead, Fritz sees differentiation as the next big opportunity for U.S. soy in global markets. "We offer specialized, high-quality soybeans – non-GMO, high protein, high oleic. Whatever an international buyer needs, U.S. farmers can provide it reliably and at the highest quality," she said. "As demand for protein grows worldwide, U.S. Soy is ready to meet it."

From her family's farm in Michigan to markets across the world, Fritz continues to demonstrate the power of connection, advocacy, and leadership, showing that U.S. soybean farmers not only grow a crop but also relationships that feed the world.

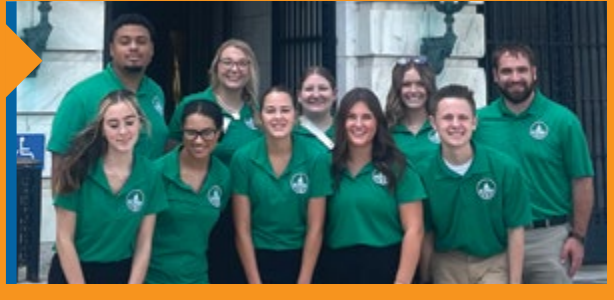
ASA in action

ASA ON THE HILL

Soy leaders from across the country convened in Washington, D.C., for ASA's annual July board meeting, which also included outreach to lawmakers and administration officials on Capitol Hill. ASA directors and staff, joined by state affiliates, met with legislators to advocate for key agricultural policy priorities on behalf of U.S. soybean farmers.

AG VOICES

A select group of 10 college students recently completed the Ag Voices of the Future program in Washington, D.C. The program sponsored by Valent USA and ASA gives college students an inside look at how agricultural policies are made in Washington and careers that impact ag policy. The following students were selected for this year's class: Makena Blalock, University of Georgia; Megan Collins, Texas Tech University; Maggie Fulton, Cornell University; Nadia Kreft, Florida A&M University; Madisyn Raymond, South Dakota State University; Isaac Stromberg, University of Nebraska – Lincoln; Kylie Temple, Kansas State University; Jescey Thompson, University of Wisconsin – River Falls; Aristotle Verrios, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University; and Emma Whitaker, Iowa State University.



FARM PROGRESS

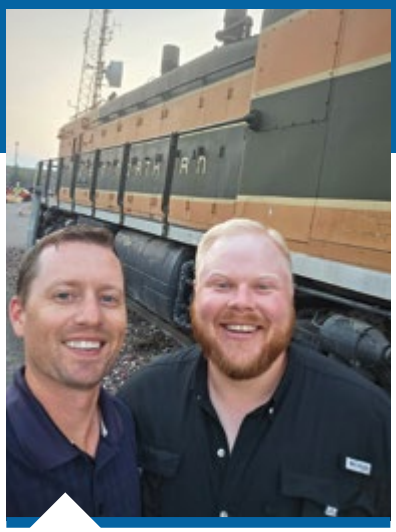
At the annual Farm Progress Show in Decatur, IL, ASA leaders and staff were busy connecting with media, industry partners, other growers, and both state and national leaders, including USDA Deputy Secretary Stephen Vaden. Pictured from left: ASA CEO Stephen Censky, USDA Secretary Vaden, ASA Vice President Scott Metzger (OH), and ASA President Caleb Ragland (KY).

SOY CONNEXT

ASA President Caleb Ragland (right) sits on the "Fresh from the Field" grower-leader panel at USSEC's Soy Connext along with USSEC Chair/ASA Director Janna Fritz (left). Not pictured: USSEC Managing Director Rosalind Leeck, USSEC Vice Chair Mike McCranie and USB Chair Philip Good also participated in the panel.

FIELD TO HILL

While in D.C. for a USSEC Taiwan event in September, ASA Chairman Josh Gackle (ND) spent time with lawmakers talking soybean policy. Pictured here with Rep. Julie Fedorchak (R-ND).



BNSF

ASA Directors Jordan Scott (SD) and Tanner Johnson (WI) stop for a photo during the BNSF Ag Business Council meeting in Whitefish, MT. The group meets twice a year to discuss issues that intersect agriculture and the freight rail industries.

TESTIMONY

In July, ASA Secretary Dave Walton (IA) testified before the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities, Risk Management and Credit on the value of the U.S. Grain Standards Act and the need for an on-time reauthorization of its expiring provisions.

U.S. GRAIN STANDARDS ACT

ASA Director Brandon Wipf (SD) testified before the Senate Agriculture Committee in July during a hearing on reauthorization of the U.S. Grain Standards Act. Wipf highlighted the vital role the law plays in supporting U.S. agricultural exports and protecting the nation's reputation as a reliable supplier of quality soybeans.

FARMER FORUM 2025

In August, ASA hosted its second annual ASA Farmer Forum in Illinois ahead of the Farm Progress Show. The forum, titled "Building Your Conservation Program and Profit Potential," provided an opportunity for farmers and industry professionals from throughout the soy value chain to discuss the latest conservation trends, policy concerns and opportunities for soybean producers in the landscape of the many private, state and federal conservation programs available to farmers. Lead sponsors of the event were the United Soybean Board/Soy Checkoff, ADM and the Walton Family Foundation.

ASA in action

ASAAP

In August, ASA President Caleb Ragland (KY) welcomed ASA Action Partnership (ASAAP) members to the summer ASAAP meeting in his home state of Kentucky. The annual summer meeting provided national and state soybean growers, industry partners and staff the opportunity to explore "Winning the Race in Uncertain Times," through discussions and sessions focused on the soy industry's current priorities.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FMC

FMC PANEL

ASA President Caleb Ragland (KY) (far right) shares insights on the state of the industry on a panel at FMC's National Sales Meeting.

YOUNG LEADER THIRD PHASE

Members of the 41st Class of ASA Corteva Agriscience Young Leader program participated in a third phase of training in Washington, D.C. in July. The program included participation in ASA's July board meeting and Soybean Issues Forum, as well as Hill visits with their state delegations. Training participants in D.C. included Jason & Anna Unruh (KS); Grant Mackey (KY); Rhonda & Orland Oesch (MO); Travis Runge (NE); Mark Knutson (ND); Austi Eaddy (SC); Blake Foxley (SD) and Tyler Robertson (CAN).

I2M

ASA's Innovation to Market Work Group recently met in St. Louis to address current challenges impacting the pesticide and biotechnology industries. Soybean grower-leaders and industry partners engaged in discussions about broader issues affecting access to these critical tools and product-specific developments through one-on-one consultations with developers and registrants.

THE 2026 SOY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION IS OPEN!

Do you know of a high school senior planning to study agriculture in college? They may be eligible for the Soy Scholarship, a **$7,000 one-time award** presented by the American Soybean Association (ASA) through a grant from BASF Corporation! Here's what to know:

- Open to **high school seniors** planning to pursue a degree in agriculture at an accredited college or university.
- Applicants **must** be the child or grandchild of an ASA member. Visit SoyGrowers.com to find out ways to become a member.
- Awarded in two $3,500 installments (one per semester) for the upcoming school year. Recipients must maintain academic progress and good standing to receive the full amount.

Applications are open now through December 31, 2025, and can be submitted online. Visit SoyGrowers.com for full details and to access the application.

Have questions? Contact Farris Haley at fhaley@soy.org.

SOY SCHOLARSHIP

ISSUE update

By Jacquie Holland, ASA Economist

The Soybean Export Gap Hurting U.S. Farms

Farmers can't afford casual trade policies when China walks away from U.S. soy

China's 20% retaliatory tariff on U.S. soybeans has caused major problems for producers this fall. Historically, China is the top buyer of global and U.S. soybeans, and the rest of the competition is not even close. In Marketing Year 2023/24, the U.S. shipped nearly 25 MMT of soybeans to China while the European Union – the next largest buyer of U.S. soybeans – can barely buy one-fifth (4.9MMT) of China's soybean purchases.

Soybean producers in the U.S. had not recovered from the 2018 trade war fallout when a new set of retaliatory tariffs were imposed by China in 2025. The added tariff costs generally pushed Brazilian soybean costs lower than U.S. prices when the tariff was factored in during the trade war.

As a result, China's soybean purchases from Brazil ballooned while its imports of U.S. soybeans declined. As China's soybean purchases from Brazil grew, low production costs, favorable currency exchange rates, and additional infrastructure investments from China expanded profits for Brazilian producers, pushing more soybean acres into production in Brazil.

With the addition of China's 20% retaliatory tariffs, U.S. soybean prices are more expensive to China than South American prices, even though market prices for U.S. beans are currently quoted below their South American counterparts. Additionally, China has signaled that soybean purchases are conditional on tariff removal by the United States. This issue has led China to not purchase any U.S. soybeans to be harvested during the current 2025/26 marketing year through early October.

Through the early weeks of U.S. harvest season, there was little evidence to indicate China could be convinced to buy U.S. soybeans. Brazil continued shipping monthly

> **...China has signaled that soybean purchases are conditional on tariff removal by the United States. This issue has led China to not purchase any U.S. soybeans to be harvested during the current 2025/26 marketing year through early October.**

record volumes of soybeans through the late summer months, primarily to China, following a record crop. Economic turmoil concurrent with a U.S. Treasury bailout in Argentina led to an "export tax holiday," which resulted in China buying $5.6 billion worth of Argentine soy products in late September. Plus, China has also been courting soybean sellers in Uruguay, Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

The window for potential U.S. soybean exports to go to China narrowed this fall while China remained absent from the U.S. market. Through early October, it was estimated China had secured enough soybean supplies for its domestic crush markets through at least early December. Historically, China would rely heavily on U.S. soybeans between October to February before turning to cheaper Brazilian supplies, which hit export markets by March. That means without other suppliers, China may only book U.S. soybean exports through part of December and January.

The discounted U.S. prices could boost purchase volumes from other countries, though the purchase volumes would not fully offset Chinese purchases. Additionally, the extra supplies could be partially – though not fully – consumed by the growing crush industry if EPA finalizes biofuels policies in a manner which would favor increased soybean oil consumption for renewable diesel production. However, that is a long-term market development play and does not solve the short-term issue posed by the lack of sales to China.

These opportunities should be met with a degree of nuance. No other end user can consume the same volume of U.S. soybeans as Chinese export purchases. Ideally, U.S. soybean farmers would receive much higher prices from all end users with China's presence in U.S. markets, not its absence.

U.S. soybean growers are stuck between a rock and a hard place as harvest winds down this fall. The wide current futures price spread suggests few international buyers are interested in freshly harvested U.S. soybeans this fall.

Higher prices for future delivery months are currently being quoted by the market and incentivizing farmers to store soybeans at harvest. But without the certainty of a trade deal, farmers could still end up earning cash prices in spring and summer delivery months below the cost of production while also incurring steep storage expenses in the continued absence of Chinese demand.

BY THE END OF SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR,

ABOUT 8.0 MMT OF U.S. SOYBEANS WERE SOLD TO CHINA.

THIS YEAR? ZERO.

HIGHLIGHTS AND HURDLES

ASA Celebrates Important Wins in 2025, Focuses on Challenges Ahead

By Allison Jenkins

As the calendar moves through its final months of 2025, countdowns are everywhere—top songs, best moments, biggest headlines. For the American Soybean Association, the countdown for its 105th anniversary year looks a little different: it's about the advocacy achievements that mattered most to farmers and the unfinished business left to address. Thanks to grassroots engagement and the active presence of ASA members and staff on Capitol Hill, several long-time policy battles ended with clear victories. Yet, many important issues remain unresolved, setting the stage for continued advocacy in 2026 and beyond.

"Our farmer-leaders have really stepped up," said Alexa Combelic, ASA's executive director of government affairs. "Their support is a big reason why we achieved so many successes this year. But there's a lot left to do. Our industry has some real challenges ahead."

In honor of ASA's century-plus-five milestone, here are five highlights in soy advocacy this year and five hurdles to tackle next.

Highlights

1. Boosting Biofuel Demand

For soybeans, renewable fuels are a strong source of demand, and 2025 delivered major victories in this sector. At the top of the list is the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed 2026-27 Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs), which exceeded ASA's expectations and if finalized, will raise biomass-based diesel levels to 5.61 billion gallons for 2026.

"President Trump wants to establish American energy dominance, and there is a huge opportunity in biofuels," Combelic said. "If that industry is doing well, it goes beyond just the farm gate. It's the entire value chain."

The RVO proposal also prioritizes domestic feedstocks by halving the Renewable Identification Number (RIN) credits for imports, such as Chinese used cooking oil and Brazilian tallow that cannibalized market share U.S. products like soy.

"We asked that EPA do more oversight and testing of what was coming in, and they realized how many resources it would take to do that," Combelic said. "Instead, they opted to create a program that doesn't incentivize those imports. It's actually quite elegant in its simplicity."

Likewise, the newly updated 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit included in the federal budget reconciliation legislation, known as the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," requires the use of North American feedstocks. In addition, the revisions to 45Z eliminate indirect land use

Photo courtesy of North Dakota Soybean Processors

change penalties for agricultural feedstocks, which had lowered biofuel production tax credits for fuels made with soy.

"When Congress started working on this tax legislation, ASA had two big goals: eliminate the indirect land use change penalty and make the tax credit applicable only to domestic feedstocks," said Stephen Censky, ASA CEO. "People said we would never achieve it. Guess what? We succeeded on both fronts, and that's a big win long term for soybean farmers."

2. Passing Farm Priorities

ASA's advocacy also helped secure other agricultural wins in the reconciliation bill, including an increase in the soybean reference price from $8.40 to $10 per bushel, a change that will ripple through future baselines. Additionally, provisions like the permanent extension of the Section 199 pass-through deduction and the $15 million estate tax exemption add stability for farm families.

"These are needs ASA has been championing for years," Combelic said. "In a time when farmers are facing economic uncertainty, they can rely on the fact that these tax provisions were made permanent and will support their operations."

3. Expanding Trade Promotion

In another hard-fought victory, ASA celebrated a more than two-fold increase in funding for international market development, also included in the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act."

Funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Market Access Program (MAP), which supports U.S. exporters in developing markets abroad, and Foreign Market Development (FMD), which works to build demand for American farm products, had been stagnant for decades. But beginning in 2027, a new Supplemental Agricultural Trade Promotion Program will allocate between $268 million and $285 million annually for similar activities.

Existing MAP and FMD allocations will remain unchanged—$200 million and $35 million respectively—but the supplemental program will run parallel, more than doubling those dollars for activities such as market research, consumer outreach and trade facilitation.

"This equips us to expand markets globally," Combelic said. "While China remains unfinished business, stronger promotion funding means we can continue market expansion everywhere else."

4. Debunking MAHA Myths

When the draft "Make America Healthy Again" (MAHA) strategy attacked pesticides and seed oils, ASA went to bat—building strong bipartisan support, mobilizing farmer voices and educating lawmakers. The final report, released in September, retracted those claims.

"ASA led the coalition of over 300 ag groups to push back on the first MAHA report," Censky said. "We had more than eight meetings with top White House personnel, and we were successful in getting corrections made in the second report. I'm really proud of that."

A key strategy was reminding policymakers that EPA's science-based review process already ensures the safety of crop protection products.

In May, ASA President Caleb Ragland (KY) testified before the U.S. Senate Finance Committee during a hearing on "Trade in Critical Supply Chains."

In March, ASA leaders and staff visited the White House to discuss championing U.S. agriculture. From left: Alexa Combelic, ASA executive director of government affairs; Scott Metzger, ASA vice president; Josh Gackle, ASA chairman; Caleb Ragland, ASA president; and Virginia Houston, ASA director of government affairs.

"In the initial report, critical crop protection tools were blamed for a lot of health concerns, even though science doesn't back that up," said Madelyn Derks, ASA director of government affairs. "There's already a rigorous registration system through EPA, and that's something we wanted to highlight in our advocacy."

5. Delivering on Dicamba

The future of another key crop protection tool, dicamba, has also been in question over the past few years, but EPA proposed the registration of three over-the-top products in 2025: Engenia, XtendiMax and Tavium. The decision was welcomed by ASA farmer-members who rely on this technology to control broadleaf weeds in dicamba-tolerant soybeans.

"I think the most important thing is that the EPA is moving on this," Derks said. "Weeds can easily steal more than 50% of a soybean crop's yield, so we need a dicamba label that's usable, workable and cost-effective."

Previous over-the-top dicamba labels were vacated in February 2024 by a federal court, and the products were unavailable to growers during the 2025 growing season. The re-registration is pending while EPA wades through the vast number of submissions made through a public comment period that ended Sept. 6, but Derks says she's hopeful for a positive outcome.

"ASA submitted comments after talking with our growers and our regulatory team to learn their perspective," she said. "We know that EPA has their work cut out for them, but we want them to take those comments into consideration and make the necessary changes."

Hurdles

1. Securing Soy in Trade

Despite strong advocacy by ASA and its members, in early October soybeans still have been left out of trade negotiations between the U.S. and China in 2025. The omission underscores the stakes of maintaining market access to the world's top soybean buyer.

"This is the second time we've seen what happens when conflict disrupts trade—we lose a huge portion of our market," Combelic said. "Soybean growers pride themselves on producing the largest export commodity, and we need that China market to do it."

Among ASA's efforts is a high-profile media presence that spotlights the issue well beyond the agricultural stage, Censky said.

"We initiated a major campaign to lift up the message that any trade deal with China has to include soybeans," he said. "I think we've been massively successful. We're hearing from the administration that soy will be part of a deal, but the proof of the pudding will be in the tasting."

In his Feb. 5 testimony before the Senate Agriculture Committee, ASA Chairman Josh Gackle (ND) emphasized the need for a comprehensive five-year farm bill and urgent action on economic challenges facing U.S. soybean farmers. He warned that potential tariffs and trade uncertainty, particularly with key export partners, threaten global market access.

2. Completing the Farm Bill

While many essential agricultural provisions were included in the reconciliation package, ASA continues to push for a so-called "Farm Bill 2.0" to finish the job. Conservation programs, crop insurance and priorities such as the Ag Labeling Uniformity Act are among the pieces that remain on the table.

"We're partway there, but we still need a full farm bill to provide authorizations for key programs and ensure the farm safety net remains functioning," Combelic said. "ASA continues to engage with our agriculture champions in congress to make sure our priorities are known. Still, we likely will need to work through another extension before congress has ample time to deliberate a larger package next year."

3. Dialing in Dicamba

While soybean farmers welcomed EPA's movement toward a new dicamba label, some parts of the proposal could seriously limit its use. For example, cutoffs above 95 degrees and limits on tank mixes would hamstring growers fighting resistant weeds.

"The devil's in the details," Derks said. "As we dug into the new label, we noticed that there were restrictions that would essentially make dicamba unusable in a lot of our southern states. We'll continue to have conversations with EPA about providing additional flexibility."

4. Protecting Soy's Image

Soy oil remains a lightning rod in food and health debates, from infant formula reviews to emerging definitions of "ultra-processed foods." ASA is working to protect soy's food-manufacturing market, which accounts for half of domestic demand.

"ASA wants to ensure that soy oil is not inappropriately maligned in updated dietary guidelines for Americans," Combelic said.

During ASA Hill visits in July, Iowa soybean leaders met with Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA). Photo courtesy of the Iowa Soybean Association

ASA Executive Director of Government Affairs Alexa Combelic (far right) joined Shannon Campagna with Portfolio Strategies and Brian Ronholm with Consumer Reports on a panel to discuss the Make America Healthy Again Commission and potential impacts to agriculture. The panel was part of the North American Agricultural Journalists annual meeting and was moderated by Helena Bottemiller Evich of Food Fix.

"We have to keep reminding policymakers and the public that soybean oil is healthy, affordable and essential in countless food products."

ASA is anticipating more localized efforts to impose warning labels or restrictions on seed oils and pesticides, requiring strong coordination across the organization.

"Increasingly, we're seeing the MAHA movement at the state level where they're trying to require disclosure for seed oils on packaging and warnings about pesticides that aren't supported by science," Censky said. "We'll be working very closely with our state associations and other allies to try to prevent that from happening."

5. Relieving Farm Stress

Soybean farmers continue to be squeezed by the loss of Chinese demand and the rising cost of crop inputs. A strong soybean harvest is expected, but per-bushel market prices for this year's beans are less than the per-bushel cost to produce them.

"The ag industry is in a world of hurt right now," Combelic said. "All of these things will shape the narrative as we advocate for policies to help put growers in a better financial position."

Ultimately, ASA and its farmer-members want to see solid, long-term solutions, not just a temporary bailout, but Censky said he and his team have been in conversations with Congress and USDA about a program to "bridge the gap."

"We've been active behind the scenes working on some sort of assistance to help farmers stay in business as we wait on improved markets," Censky said.

SPOTLIGHT on Soy Policy

By Jordan Bright, ASA Director of Social & Digital Media

How ASA Shapes the Future of Farming

From shifting markets to uncontrollable weather, soybean farmers juggle challenges at home and abroad while producing the food and fuel the world relies on. While they navigate these unpredictable landscapes, the American Soybean Association makes sure their voices are heard on policy and trade in Washington, D.C.

Throughout 2025, each *American Soybean* magazine has broken down ASA's main priority policy issues and why advocating for them is so important. This final quarter, we explore transportation and infrastructure; sustainability and conservation; and appropriations.

Transportation & Infrastructure

When U.S. farmers have harvested the last soybean for the season and the grain hoppers are full, soybeans begin their long journey from field to market. The U.S. soybean industry relies on a multimodal transportation network including truck, rail and waterways to move its products to exports or domestic feed, fuel and biobased markets.

U.S. infrastructure is historically one of the largest advantages American soybean farmers have over competitors abroad, and a modernized infrastructure that supports reliable transportation is imperative to U.S. soy's continued success.

"Throughout all areas of policy, a strong farmer voice provides important perspective and helps move the needle. Infrastructure efficiency improves basis. Educating lawmakers about the need for infrastructure investments for farmers, whether or not that key infrastructure is within a specific Congressional district, helps drive broader geographic support for major projects," said ASA Executive Director of Government Affairs Alexa Combelic.

To ensure soybeans can move seamlessly to market, ASA advocates on Capitol Hill for directing federal infrastructure funding toward improving transportation systems, including crumbling locks and dams, rural roads and bridges.

The U.S. inland waterways system includes nearly 12,000 miles of navigable waters and hundreds of aging locks and dams—the majority of which have exceeded their originally engineered 50-year lifespans, including those on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Despite its outdated infrastructure, inland waterways systems remain the most cost-effective and efficient way to transport agricultural products to export terminals.

While several legislative wins over the past several years have helped secure new and increased funding to upgrade the U.S. inland waterways system,

much of the infrastructure remains outdated and requires continued advocacy to secure the funding and authorizations needed to address the construction backlog.

Much like the locks and dams on the inland waterways system, aging roads and bridges can also hinder the ability of soybean growers to move their products to market in a cost-effective manner. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provided new and expanded funding for highway and road repair projects across the country. Additionally, it included funding for a pilot project that seeks to support bioproducts like soy-based transportation related construction materials.

Sustainability & Conservation

U.S. soybean farmers have long been committed to efforts that support sustainability, which includes environmental, economic and social pillars, along with conservation.

Sustainability policy in Washington, D.C. is ever evolving. Through executive orders, rulemaking and legislation, ASA must be prepared to help shape and react to a variety of proposals. ASA farmer-leaders appreciate the opportunity to be engaged in legislative, regulatory, and most importantly, on-farm efforts that will preserve the future of farming and the future world at large.

"Policy conversations are increasingly placing sustainability and conservation at the forefront of human and soil health," said ASA Policy Manager Carson Fort. "Our growers understand what it takes to protect their most vital resource—the land—and they work every day to ensure their practices preserve it. ASA advocates to ensure they have access to the tools, whether technical assistance or advanced technology, that enable them to produce more while using fewer resources."

ASA follows a set of sustainability policy principles intended to help guide its advocacy efforts. The topline principles include supporting policies that will maintain and improve economic sustainability of soybean farmers across its 30 soybean-producing states; there is no "one size fits all" solution to on-farm sustainability; supporting voluntary and incentive-based approaches and opposing sustainability programs that include mandates and penalties or that remove valuable agricultural land from production.

Soybean producers are already employing sustainability practices on their farms, and ASA helps advocate for future policies to include both retroactive support and prospective incentives.

Appropriations

Every U.S. government agency relies on appropriations—the bills lawmakers must pass to allocate resources—to fund specific programs and projects.

"More urgently than ever, farmers need clarity as their financial stresses approach disaster," said ASA Policy Manager Joe Prosser. "Programmatic assistance and market expansion efforts work to provide certainty as producers attempt to navigate low commodity prices, record inflation and historically high input prices."

ASA advocates for increased government funding for programs and agency operations benefiting soybean farmers, including additional resources for EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, increased funding for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredging operations and capital improvement projects, and agriculture marketing and research initiatives. When needed, ASA can also use the appropriations process to push for critical financial assistance programs to support farmers after economic or environmental disasters.

"All of ASA's appropriations priorities can be traced back to advocating for increased demand, effective production and efficient delivery," Prosser said.

GROWING POPULATIONS DRIVE DEMAND FOR PROTEIN

U.S. Soy Protein Goes Global with WISHH

ASA American Soybean Association

WISHH 25 YEARS

SOY CHECKOFF™

wishh.org

How Flooding Soybeans in Early Reproductive Stages Impacts Yield, Seed Composition

By John Lovett

University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture
Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station

With an increasing frequency and intensity of flooding events and an eye to capitalize on a common rice production technique, soybean breeders are on a quest to develop varieties with flood tolerance at any stage in the plant's development.

Caio Vieira, assistant professor of soybean breeding and a researcher for the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture's research arm, is the lead author of a study offering more insight into how soybean plants respond to flooding in the critical early reproductive stage. The study, "Impact of flooding at the early reproductive growth stage on soybean yield and seed composition," was published in the journal *Crop Science*.

"Flooding research has focused on the early reproductive stage simply because it is when the stress is most pronounced and causes the greatest yield loss," Vieira said. "Across the mid-South, soybeans are most susceptible to flooding at the R1 stage."

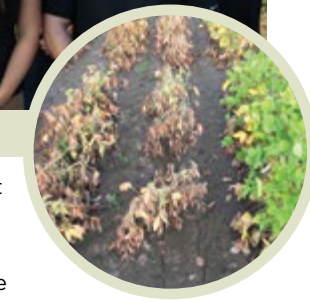
Vieira said that temperature changes in the United States have allowed earlier soybean planting dates so that shifting rain patterns are also resulting in additional stress on the soybean plants.

"The intensity and frequency of rain has been shifting to earlier in the season," he added. "We're pretty much getting the potential for flooding throughout the season."

Typically, soybeans in Arkansas are planted from early April to mid-May, which puts the R1 stage in late June to early July. As growers see the benefits of earlier planting, Vieira said, naturally, the early reproductive stage would also shift.

While grain yield losses from flooding stress have been well documented, Vieira said there has been a gap in literature on the impact of flooding on soybean seed composition. The study compared 31 soybean genotypes over the 2019 and 2020 growing seasons. The plants were exposed to non-flooded and flooded conditions to look at yield and seed composition. A surprising discovery, Vieira said, was that four-day flooding in the early reproductive stage did not significantly alter the soybean seed composition of any of the varieties tested compared to the non-flooded control group.

Arkansas Soybean Breeding Team



Visual inspection of flood-damaged soybeans has been useful, Vieira noted, but it doesn't tell the whole story. The study found that some genotypes visually classified as "moderately tolerant" to flooding had higher yields than those classified as "tolerant." On average, for each unit increase in flood damage score, the study showed that grain yield decreased by 17.4%. Tolerant genotypes experienced roughly 33% yield losses between flooding and non-flooding treatments, while "moderately" tolerant and "susceptible" genotypes experienced 44% and 51% yield losses, respectively.

Vieira said the study will help his team identify and incorporate flood-tolerant characteristics into future soybean genetics.

In a recent update to the study, Vieira said they have developed a model using molecular markers that can accurately identify tolerant/susceptible genotypes before reaching the field. This work has been accepted at The Plant Genome.

Co-authors of the study included Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station program associates Chengjun Wu, Liliana Florez-Palacios, Andrea Acuna, and Derrick Harrison; program technician Daniel Rogers; former experiment station faculty member Leandro Mozzoni; and John Carlin, director of the Arkansas Crop Variety Improvement Program. Henry Nguyen and Grover Shannon of the University of Missouri Plant Science and Technology department were also co-authors.

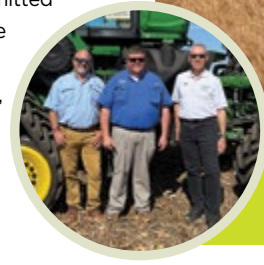
The study was supported by funding from the United Soybean Board and the Mid-South Soybean Board.

INDUSTRY perspective

John Deere Announces B30 Biodiesel Compatibility Across Engine Portfolio

John Deere recently announced the approval of B30 biodiesel use across its entire portfolio of Tier 4 John Deere engines. This increases the previous approval of blends up to B20.

"At John Deere, we're committed to supporting and growing the use of renewable fuels in our equipment," said Pierre Guyot, senior vice president of John Deere Power Systems. "We believe strongly in the role that renewable fuels play in supporting the agriculture economy and are excited to offer our customers – including those who grow the very crops used to make renewable fuels – the opportunity to leverage higher blends of fuels like biodiesel in their own equipment."



(From left) ASA Vice President Scott Metzger (OH), ASA President Caleb Ragland (KY) and ASA CEO Stephen Censky celebrated John Deere's B30 announcement at the annual Farm Progress Show.

John Deere has long supported renewable fuel use in its equipment. Until now, Tier 4 engines were cleared for B20 biodiesel and RD100 renewable diesel, while Tier 3/ Stage IIIA and older models could use biodiesel blends up to B100. The company's spark-ignition turf and utility machines are already approved for E10, and engineers are even testing a concept 9.0-liter ethanol engine that runs on E98. Customers looking to move to higher renewable fuel blends, including B30, should check with their fuel supplier.

"This is a win-win situation for U.S. soybean farmers and rural communities," said Caleb Ragland, Kentucky soybean farmer and president of the American Soybean Association. "Higher blends of biodiesel mean greater demand for the soybeans we grow and cleaner-burning fuel for equipment in the field. John Deere's leadership in approving the utilization of B30 in their machinery helps move renewable fuels forward while directly supporting the farmers who help produce them."

"John Deere's approval of B30 demonstrates true leadership in supporting America's farmers and advancing sustainable fuels," said Scott Fenwick, technical director for Clean Fuels Alliance America. "Biodiesel is engineered to deliver the performance fleets and equipment owners expect, while exceeding ASTM quality specifications. By embracing higher blends, John Deere is assuring customers they can rely on a clean, homegrown fuel that reduces carbon emissions and strengthens rural economies."

John Deere is committed to expanding the production and use of renewable fuels across all modes of transportation to support farmers, consumers, and the rural economy while also helping reduce emissions.

To learn more about John Deere's work to advance renewable fuels, visit JohnDeere.com/renewablefuels.

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CALEB RAGLAND

American Soybean Association President & Kentucky Soybean Farmer

THE POWER OF YOUR SOY INVESTMENT

UNITED SOYBEAN BOARD

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

1B *bushels*

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

AT LEAST 4.5-TO-1 RETURN ACROSS FOUR CATEGORIES:

1. *Export market development*
2. *Domestic demand-enhancing research*
3. *On-farm production research*
4. *Soybean promotion*

Learn more at 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.

BEYOND THE BUSHEL

Soy Checkoff Returns on Farmer-Driven Innovation

CHAIR PHILIP GOOD (MS)

Every soybean grown tells a bigger story, one of innovation, market growth, and strong returns for farmers. This year, checkoff investments have taken soy to new places, creating demand that will pay off well beyond harvest.

The soy you harvest today isn't just headed to the elevator — it's powering ships, fueling transportation, feeding livestock, and replacing petroleum in everyday products. Each bushel now carries more value than ever before.

Soy Checkoff farmer-leaders — Chair Philip Good (MS), Vice Chair Brent Gatton (KY), Treasurer Matt Gast (ND), and Secretary Susan Watkins (VA) — reflect the geographic diversity and shared commitment driving this momentum, ensuring farmer dollars grow demand, spur innovation, build resilience, and deliver real returns.

FEEDING THE ANIMALS THAT FEED US

For Chair Philip Good, a Mississippi farmer who raises soybeans, corn, cotton, cattle and catfish, the value of soy in animal nutrition remains foundational.

"Soy-based feed remains one of the strongest and most reliable demand drivers for U.S. Soy," Good says. "Whether it's poultry, hogs, dairy, or aquaculture, soy meal continues to deliver the protein, energy, and digestibility that livestock producers count on."

This year, USB invested in research and promotion to strengthen U.S. Soy's reputation for quality and performance in feed markets worldwide. Efforts included feeding trials, outreach to key trading partners, and launching the U.S. Soy Center for Animal Nutrition and Health as a resource for nutritionists, veterinarians, and scientists — investments that protect and grow this vital market.

"Animal agriculture continues to evolve, and we want to make sure soy is always part of that conversation," Good adds. "That's what our investments are doing, keeping us relevant and reliable in a changing world."

TREASURER MATT GAST (ND)

BIOFUELS TAKE OFF — ON LAND, SEA, AND SKY

While soy-based biodiesel is already well established in trucking fleets across the country, the Soy Checkoff is helping open new doors in harder-to-decarbonize sectors like marine, rail, and aviation. North Dakota farmer and USB Treasurer Matt Gast says this expansion is not just a technical achievement, it's a major opportunity.

"Biobased fuels are a solution helping our environment that's scalable now," Gast says. "We're seeing more interest than ever from railroads, maritime shipping companies, and even the aviation industry. It's exciting, and the pace of adoption is accelerating in ways that could transform these sectors sooner than anyone expected."

Gast points to recent investments in infrastructure, noting checkoff efforts in securing all six Class 1 railroads to expand their use of soy-based biofuels in 2025. "Every gallon of soy-based fuel used in a barge or locomotive means more soybean oil put to work," he says. "That's direct ROI for farmers through new markets, new demand, and a growing reputation as clean energy."

VICE CHAIR BRENT GATTON (KY)

INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION: FROM SOYFOAM TO SYNLAWN

Innovation in soy-based materials has long been a USB priority, and this year brought new visibility to products that are both practical and sustainable. Kentucky farmer and USB Vice Chair Brent Gatton has seen it firsthand. He installed a soy-based artificial turf SYNLawn putting green in his own yard. "We're seeing soybean products move from the lab to the lawn to the loading dock and lumberyard," Gatton says. "SYNLawn is just one example of soy as a renewable replacement in everyday materials."

Gatton also highlights SoyFoam, a soy-based firefighting foam and alternative to PFAS (or forever chemicals), which grabbed national headlines this year for its environmental and safety benefits. "Biobased products aren't just good for the planet. They create real markets for soybean oil," Gatton says. "As a farmer, it feels good knowing the product I grow is showing up in new, unexpected ways."

These innovations are made possible by the checkoff's strategic investments in R&D, technical certifications, and partnership development, all aimed at unlocking long-term value and demand.

SECRETARY SUSAN WATKINS (VA)

COOKING UP DEMAND AND MEASURING THE RETURN

USB Secretary and Demand Chair Susan Watkins, a Virginia farmer, knows the conversation around food and health is changing — and soy has a central role. "There's a lot of confusion about seed oils," Watkins says. "We're making sure people know the facts: soybean oil supports heart health, it's versatile in the kitchen, and it's grown right here in the U.S."

USB teamed up with the Soy Nutrition Institute Global on research with corn and canola partners to prove those health benefits, while also engaging influencers and health professionals to clarify the science. In addition, Watkins points to a joint United Soybean Board and American Soybean Association study showing that removing seed oils from the U.S. food supply would not only threaten farmers' edible oils market but also raise consumer grocery costs by $7.7 billion annually*.

"This study is a perfect example of how farmer dollars are working on multiple fronts," Watkins says. "We're protecting soy's place in the food supply and showing that it saves consumers billions — a return every farmer can be proud of."

PLANTING THE NEXT BIG WINS

As we turn the page on this season, U.S. soybean farmers can feel confident that their checkoff investments generate real-world impact, whether in feed rations, fuel blends, turf fields, or kitchen pantries. USB's diverse leadership across 30+ states is focused on turning farmer ideas into actionable outcomes and ensuring that soy's future stays as bright as its past successes.

SOY CHECKOFF™

* Source: soygrowers.com/news-releases/soybean-industry-releases-timely-seed-oil-study-simple-summary-a-ban-would-not-bode-well-for-soy-or-consumers

Potential Public Health Risks of Avoiding Seed Oils

Scientific evidence supports the role of seed oils in reducing chronic disease risk, improving cardiovascular health, and providing essential fatty acids and nutrients. Avoiding seed oils could lead to negative public health implications.

Deficient in Fatty Acids Needed for Bodily Function

Seed oils are a primary source of the polyunsaturated fatty acids **linoleic acid (omega-6) and alpha-linolenic acid (omega-3)**, both essential for human health. Humans need to consume fat (along with carbohydrates and protein) daily to support bodily function. Seed oil helps us consume the fatty acids that we need.[1]

Increased Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Risk

Scientific evidence supports the replacement of saturated fats with **polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs)**, which lower LDL cholesterol and reduce heart disease risk.[2] The U.S. **FDA recognizes canola, corn, soybean, and olive oils**[3] for their heart-protective benefits. Studies show that **consuming linoleic acid can decrease risk of coronary heart disease by 29%.**[4]

Higher Type 2 Diabetes Risk

Research suggests that linoleic acid improves **insulin sensitivity** and reduces **insulin resistance**, lowers risk of type 2 diabetes.[5-11] Studies suggest as linoleic acid intake increases, the risk of developing diabetes decreases.[12]

Loss of Essential Nutrients

Seed oils provide vital **vitamin E**, an antioxidant crucial for **immune function, vision, brain health, and skin protection.**[13] Avoiding seed oils may lead to deficiencies in this essential nutrient.

Eliminating seed oils could result in higher cholesterol levels, increased CVD and diabetes risk, and essential fatty acid and vitamin E deficiencies. Maintaining a balanced intake of healthy fats, including polyunsaturated fats, is crucial for long-term health.

For a deeper dive into the scientific evidence, scan this QR code or visit www.SNIGlobal.org/seedoils.

The Soy Checkoff, in partnership with Soy Nutrition Institute, utilizes these fact sheets for outreach with consumers and health professionals. A seed oil economic impact study conducted by the Soy Checkoff and American Soybean Association found a seed oil ban would decrease demand for soy, lower farm income, increase food costs, and potentially limit consumer choice.

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SNI GLOBAL | SOY

WISHH Celebrates 25 Years of Expanding Global Markets for U.S. Soy

Twenty-five years ago, a group of visionary U.S. soybean grower-leaders recognized the need to diversify the use of their crops with new markets around the globe. Their forward-thinking led to the creation of the American Soybean Association's World Initiative for Soy in Human Health program. This year, WISHH celebrates a quarter century of impact building long-term demand for U.S. soy in developing and emerging markets through trade, development and food security partnerships.

"We were supporting a program that would help provide a good source of protein for regions around the world," recalled Illinois soybean grower CW Gaffner, a founding farmer of WISHH whose son, Scott, now serves as vice-chair of WISHH's executive committee. "And I thought we could do that with U.S. soy right from our farms."

From its earliest years, WISHH began bringing that vision to life with projects designed to create long-term markets for U.S. soy. WISHH's farmer leaders' methodical approach has seen U.S. soy introduced in worldwide food and feed markets.

"We farmers are used to obtaining immediate results," Scott said. "But WISHH's model is designated for longer commitments with the hope for continued demand as the years increase."

That long-term commitment has seen WISHH introduce high-quality protein to new markets in 28 countries across Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa.

Across these regions, WISHH works with business leaders, farmers, local governments and even academic institutions to build new value chains for U.S. soy. In Latin America, WISHH has supported food manufacturers in developing innovative soy-based products that respond to evolving consumer preferences for nutritious, affordable protein. In sub-Saharan Africa, WISHH has helped strengthen aquaculture and poultry industries through training programs and technical assistance that highlight the value of U.S. soybean meal in animal feed. In Asia, the initiative has been instrumental in advancing both food and feed applications, including aquaculture development.

WISHH marks 25 years of finding new markets for soybean growers across Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, including in Cambodia, where WISHH introduced high-quality U.S. soy for fish feed.

A standout example is Cambodia where the USDA-funded Commercialization of Aquaculture for Sustainable Trade Cambodia project helped transform the country's aquaculture sector. By introducing new technology and practices, CAST increased production of high-demand freshwater fish while highlighting the reliability and quality of U.S. soy in feed. In 2025, U.S. soybean farmers visited the country to see CAST's progress.

"It's been very rewarding to see the success of WISHH in places like Cambodia over the last 25 years," said WISHH Committee Chair Morey Hill. "And I feel excited that our partners such as USDA have entrusted the WISHH team to continue its work blazing a trail for U.S. soy in Cambodia and other regions around the world."

These projects serve as models for other WISHH regions as well. WISHH continues to build aquaculture projects in multiple countries in Africa.

Today, WISHH leverages U.S. Department of Agriculture funding with support from Qualified State Soybean Boards and the United Soybean Board to create partnerships on three different continents, creating long-lasting trade relationships.

"As WISHH celebrates its 25th anniversary, its global footprint and the demand for U.S. soy continues to expand and so does its partnerships," concluded WISHH Executive Director Gena Perry. "I think that's something the farmers and staff who began at WISHH a quarter century ago can be proud of."

YEARS

A QUARTER CENTURY OF IMPACT

Thanks to Your Support of WISHH,
U.S. Soy Protein Goes Global

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STRESS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ONE OF THEM.

HELP IS AVAILABLE.

ASA offers resources at *soygrowers.com/soyhelp-national-resources-info/*.

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SoyFORWARD

The Unsaturated Advantage: How Seed Oils Became the Quiet Hero of Heart Health

By Sophia Sackleh,
National Oilseed Processors Association

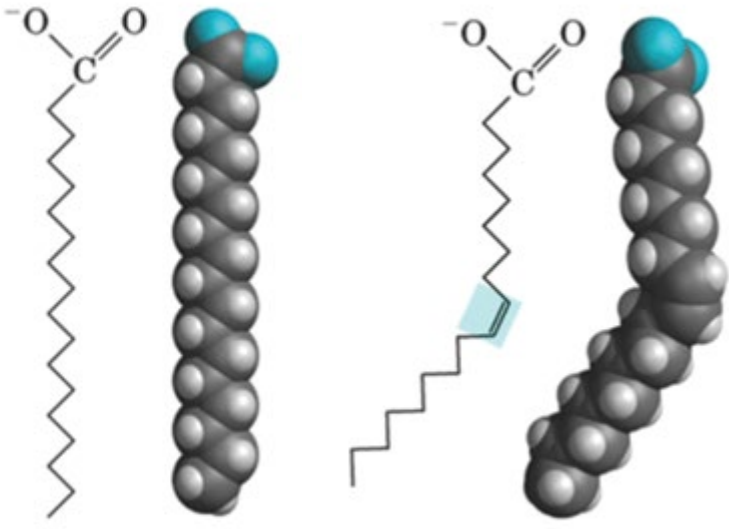
We use vegetable oils every day—whether we are cooking dinner, preparing snacks, or feeding infants with formula. Also known as seed oils, this group includes soybean, canola, sunflower, cottonseed, and others. Despite the recent attention they've received, vegetable oils are hardly new to our diets. Archeological evidence shows that humans have used oils such as soy, sesame, and sunflower for thousands of years. Soy oil, for example, was produced by East Asian cultures as early as 1,000 A.D. From the ancient world to today's kitchens, vegetable oils have played an essential role in human diets, and science continues to highlight their benefits.

Nutritionally, vegetable oils are prized for their high levels of polyunsaturated fatty acids, or PUFAs. These include omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids—both deemed "essential" because our bodies can't make them on their own and therefore must get them from our diets. Their benefits to human health are both wide-ranging and vital to improving rates of chronic disease.

Omega-6 fatty acids, for instance, are critical for neural and visual development in infants and children, which is why vegetable oils are a common ingredient in infant formula. In adults, omega-6 fatty acids are crucial to lowering harmful low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, raise protective high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, and improve insulin sensitivity—all which help reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as type-2 diabetes.

Decades of research back up these findings. For example, a 2019 American Heart Association analysis of 30 prospective studies from 13 different countries found that higher levels of linoleic acid, the main fatty acid in omega-6s, were strongly associated with lower risks of cardiovascular disease, cardiovascular mortality, and ischemic stroke. Similarly, a 2018 study found that higher intake of linoleic acid was linked with lower cardiovascular mortality, reinforcing dietary recommendations to include more PUFAs in the diet.

The health benefits are especially clear when vegetable oils replace dietary saturated fat sources, such as butter or tallow. For example, according to an article in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* titled "Saturated Fats Compared With Unsaturated Fats and Sources of Carbohydrates in Relation to Risk of Coronary Heart Disease," replacing just 5% of daily energy intake from saturated fats with PUFAs is associated with a 25% reduction in risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). Another long-term cohort study of 200,000 adults performed over the course of 33 years found that those who replaced a tablespoon of butter a day with a tablespoon of vegetable



Saturated **Unsaturated**

"Choosing vegetable oils in place of saturated fats is one of the easiest ways to support long-term health..."

oil had a 17% lower risk of death from cancer.

This shift from animal-based fats to vegetable oils has been one of the most impactful dietary changes of the past century. When products like Crisco were introduced in the 1930s, Americans began swapping out butter and lard for heart healthy oils. The result was striking: between 1940 and 1996, U.S. deaths from heart disease fell by 56%, as published in the article "Decline in Cardiovascular Mortality" from *Circulation Research*.

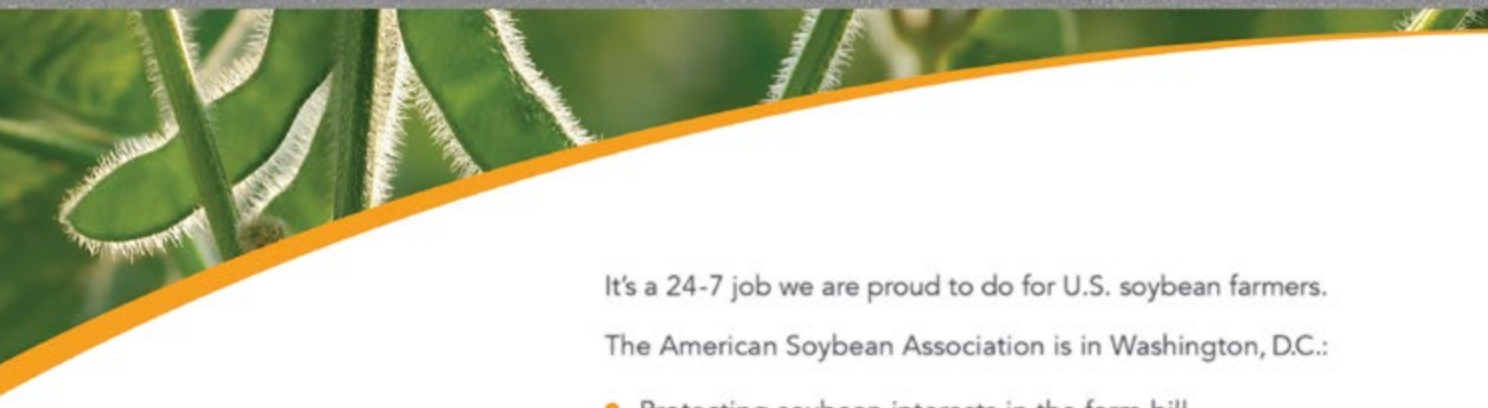
The reason for this change in health outcomes comes down to basic chemistry. Saturated fat molecules are straight, allowing them to pack tightly in the bloodstream and contribute to cholesterol plaque buildup—a major driver of high blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes. Unsaturated fats, by contrast, are kinked and move more freely through the bloodstream, reducing plaque formation and supporting heart health.

Still, vegetable oils face criticism. Some claim that eating too many omega-6 fatty acids can interfere with omega-3 absorption. Yet research shows that omega-6 consumption does not inhibit the body's ability to absorb omega-3s, and the real issue is that the American diet is chronically low in omega-3s. Rather than cutting back on omega-6s, nutrition experts recommend adding more omega-3s to the diet to reach the daily recommended intake.

Another concern involves arachidonic acid (ARA), which some argue is inflammatory. While linoleic acid can convert to ARA in the body, studies show the amount converted is minimal. In fact, according to Harvard Health, ARA has been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties, and overall, omega-6 consumption has been shown to reduce—not increase—markers of inflammation.

Nutrition can sometimes feel overwhelming, with new trends and advice popping up all the time. Yet one takeaway remains clear: balance matters. Choosing vegetable oils in place of saturated fats is one of the easiest ways to support long-term health—helping our hearts, reducing risk of chronic disease, and giving our bodies the essential nutrients they need. It's a simple swap that makes a lasting difference, proving that everyday choices in the kitchen really can add up.

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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