Prepared Testimony of:

Scott Metzger
President
American Soybean Association

Before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Increasing Domestic Consumption of U.S.-Grown Agricultural Products

March 10, 2026

Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Klobuchar, and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. It is an honor to join you today to testify on behalf of the American Soybean Association regarding increasing domestic consumption of U.S.-grown agricultural products. My name is Scott Metzger, and I am a sixth-generation farmer from Williamsport, Ohio, where I farm soybeans, corn, and wheat alongside my family. This year, I have the privilege of serving as the president of the American Soybean Association (ASA). Our association, founded in 1920, represents U.S. soybean farmers on domestic and international policy issues important to the soybean industry. ASA has 26 affiliated state soybean associations representing nearly 500,000 farmers in the 30 primary soybean-producing states.

The U.S. soybean industry has a profound, positive impact on the U.S. economy. While we have long been U.S. agriculture's #1 export crop, half of our harvested soybeans stay at home for a variety of uses. A by-the-numbers look demonstrates the value of the soybean industry to our domestic economic health. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that over 80 million acres of soy were harvested in 2025, with production of 4.3 billion bushels. Soybean production accounts for more than $4 billion in wages and over $80 billion in economic impacts, according to a study by the United Soybean Board (USB)/Soy Checkoff and National Oilseed Processors Association (NOPA). This economic impact does not include secondary soy markets and supporting industries like biofuels, grain elevators, feed mills, ports, rail, refining, barges, etc., which bring the national total economic impact of the soybean value chain to a significant $124 billion.

However, the impact of trade uncertainty for Marketing Year (MY) 2025/2026 highlights how important strong domestic markets are for U.S. soybeans. Across the board, U.S. agriculture is facing significant challenges, which are illustrated by rapidly plunging margins for farmers. Commodity prices are down nearly 50% from highs experienced three years ago, while farmers are still facing elevated prices for land, seeds, fertilizer, and pesticides. As the U.S. soybean industry continues to diversify export markets, supporting current domestic markets for our crop while embracing the policies and systems that promote research and development for new uses is more critical than ever.

U.S. soybean growers play an essential role in feeding and fueling the world, while also providing feedstocks for over 1,000 soy-based bioproducts. When processed, soybeans are divided into protein and oil. Soybean protein or meal (approximately 80% of the bean) is used in livestock feed and plant-based foods like tofu, but is also a key ingredient in plastic composites, synthetic fibers, and more. Soybean oil (the remaining 20%) is one of the most versatile natural oils available. In addition to being a staple of heart-healthy food, its molecular structure and suitable fatty-acid profile make it ideal for a variety of applications including biomass-based diesel and countless bioproducts.

Due to rising costs of production and low crop prices, U.S. farmers have needed to turn to Congress and the administration too many times for ad hoc assistance to make ends meet over the past several years. Developing strong and growing domestic markets for our crops will support our farm economy, and we welcome the Senate Agriculture Committee's interest in exploring opportunities to support U.S. soybean farmers and the entire domestic agriculture industry.

Biofuels: The Urgency of Now

The domestic biomass-based diesel (BBD) industry was developed with the support of soybean farmers and initially helped offset losses from food use when the Food and Drug Administration started regulating trans fats in partially hydrogenated soybean oil in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Since the development of biodiesel, the renewable fuel industry has identified pathways to develop soybean oil-based renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). Soybean farmers are proud of their role in developing this industry and continue to play an integral role in domestic biofuel production.

Increased utilization of BBD over the past several years has had a marked impact on the rural economy. According to a study conducted by Clean Fuels Alliance America, domestic markets consumed over 5.3 billion gallons of BBD in 2024, which supported over 107,400 U.S. jobs – many in rural America – and created an economic impact of $42.4 billion[1]. Looking ahead, the BBD industry is poised for additional growth.

The overall growth of the BBD industry has been spurred by strong federal and state-level policies that promote increased production and utilization. Looking specifically at federal policies, the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit and annual renewable volume obligations (RVOs) set under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) are critical components of a thriving biofuel industry.

Soybean Oil and Domestic Biofuel Markets

While domestic BBD production increased in the past several years, the increase in soybean oil feedstocks was not proportional. BBD production increased from MY 2021/22 to MY 2023/24, resulting in a 65% increase in overall feedstock utilization, from approximately 22.5 billion pounds to 37.2 billion pounds. However, over the same three years, the share of virgin vegetable oils (predominantly soybean oil) in domestically produced BBD decreased from 67% to 58%.

The shift in BBD feedstocks is also reflected in rising feedstock imports. Used cooking oil (UCO) from China accounted for 7% of the feedstocks used in domestic BBD production in MY 2022/23 and increased to 13% in MY 2023/24, with over half of China's UCO exports destined

[1] GlobalData. 2025. *Economic Impact of Biodiesel on the U.S. Economy 2024.* GlobalData on behalf of Clean Fuels Alliance America.

for the United States. A similar trend occurred with animal fats: while just 10% of Brazilian tallow exports came to the U.S. in MY 2022/23, that figure jumped to 95% the following year.

Several policies unfairly disadvantaged soybean oil use in U.S. BBD production. These can be summarized in three main areas.

1. **Carbon-based biofuel programs that penalize agriculture**: Both the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit as originally enacted in the Inflation Reduction Act and state low carbon fuel standard (LCFS) programs located on the West Coast use an indirect land use change (ILUC) value when quantifying the carbon intensity of soybean oil. ILUC is a theoretical model that assigns an additional carbon intensity to soybeans and other crops based on global growing practices. Simply put, while total U.S. farmland has been in a sustained decline for over 40 years, expansion of soybean acreage in Brazil increases the ILUC penalty for U.S. soy. While UCO imports were already increasing in earnest due to LCFS incentives for the feedstock, the 2022 enactment of the IRA aligned with a surge in UCO imports. While both LCFS programs and 45Z spurred BBD production, the stacking credits created a market that heavily incentivized UCO and other non-agricultural feedstocks over soybean oil and other agricultural feedstocks.
2. **Coastal renewable diesel production:** The California LCFS program has significantly increased BBD consumption in the state and created a market for the establishment of renewable diesel production facilities on the coast—typically tied to petroleum refiners. While UCO and tallow are already the highest-value feedstock for returns in LCFS programs, there are added costs in shipping soybean oil to coastal BBD facilities, whereas UCO imports can arrive on site via ship. BBD facilities in farm country are typically located near soybean processing facilities. In turn, this improves the localized basis for soybean farmers and provides a critical market when there is trade uncertainty. Policies that support and expand soy-based BBD value chains will improve the basis, lower transportation costs, increase domestic market opportunities, and offer long-lasting stability for soybean farmers.
3. **Uncertainty in other UCO export markets:** The European Union Renewable Energy Directive (RED) II spurred an increase in UCO imports from Asia, which were on the rise until MY 2022/23. In 2023, the EU launched an investigation into potentially fraudulent UCO (virgin palm oil marketed as UCO) being imported. This investigation resulted in an even larger volume of Asian UCO exports being redirected to the U.S. and growing volumes of imported UCO feedstocks used in domestic BBD production.

However, legislative changes to 45Z and the proposed 2026-2027 RVOs from EPA offer solutions that will support the position of U.S. soy as a preferred feedstock for domestic BBD production. Federal and state biofuel policies combine to form a "credit stack" which informs the overall return for a biofuel producer based on the feedstock utilized. With each positive policy change, biofuels produced using soybean oil become more competitive, which in turn will increase domestic market demand for U.S. soy.

45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit

ASA appreciates Congress for its work to amend, improve, and extend the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Specifically, Congressional changes to 45Z included removal of the ILUC penalty on agricultural biofuel feedstocks which, as noted above arbitrarily assign agriculture with higher carbon intensity scores based on South American farming practices. Removal of agricultural ILUC penalties effectively doubles the tax credit for soy-based BBD. This puts soybeans on par with the tax credits available to biofuels from tallow and used cooking oil, which removes a disincentive to use soy. Further, the 45Z amendments prohibit both biofuels and biofuels produced using feedstocks outside of North America from utilizing the tax credit. While ASA supports feedstock diversity in biofuel production, federal biofuel policies must reflect the actions of this Congress to safeguard domestic agriculture markets by incentivizing biofuels produced using homegrown feedstocks rather than those imported from overseas.

Looking ahead, it is imperative that the U.S. Department of the Treasury move swiftly to finalize draft 45Z tax guidance released in February to ensure that the BBD industry can utilize the tax credit to help realize additional planned investments in soybean oil processing (*Figure 1*) and biofuel production. In addition to the rapid expansion in soy crush capacity that has come online over the past three years, over 140 million bushels of additional domestic crushing capacity is slated to come online for the 2026 soybean crop and can provide increased domestic demand for soy with the proper policy incentives.

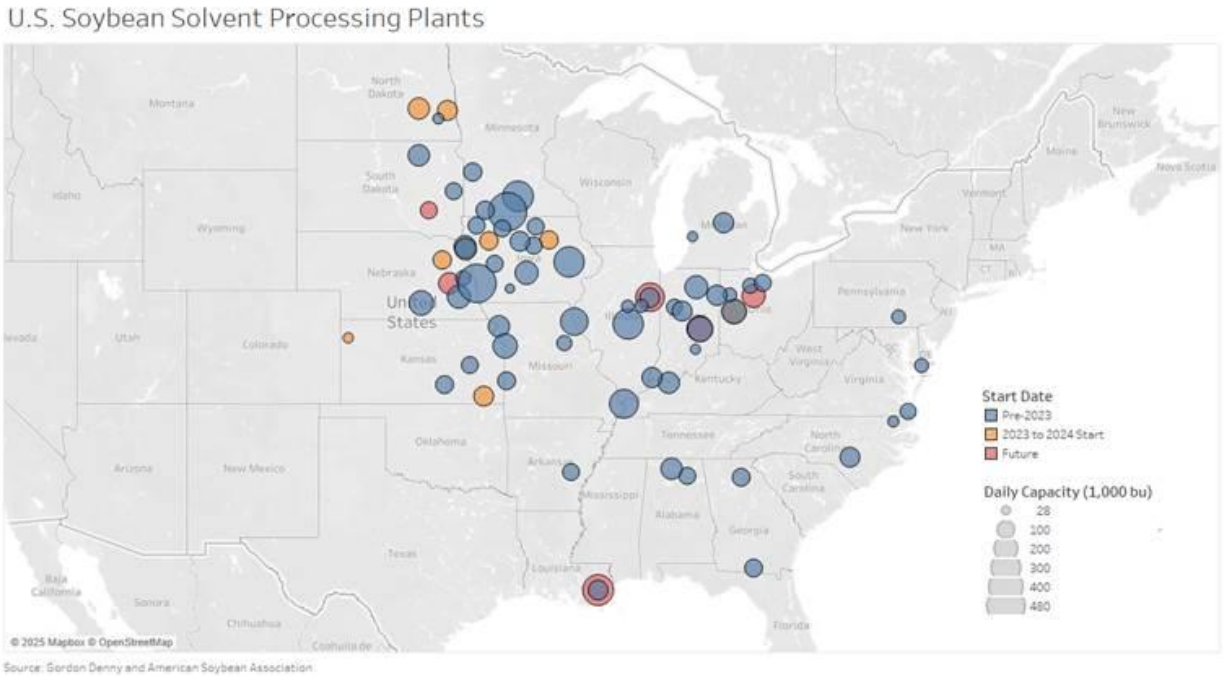

Figure 1: Current and Planned Soybean Processing Facilities

In addition, ASA encourages the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Energy, and Treasury to work in partnership to promulgate guidance for value-added farming practices included in the 45Z tax credit through the USDA Feedstock Carbon Intensity Calculator (FD-CIC). As it stands, the 45Z tax credit will support expansion of U.S. biofuel production with incentives to better position domestic feedstocks like soybean oil. However, supplemental tax guidance that utilizes the USDA FD-CIC to quantify additional credit value for farming practices like no-till and reduced tillage, cover crops, and timing of fertilizer applications creates a unique opportunity for farmers to access a new premium market and receive direct benefits from the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit. To be clear, the current statute directs Treasury to provide a stepped-up tax credit for biofuels produced using agricultural feedstocks grown using specific farming practices. While the February draft 45Z guidance states that supplemental guidance may be forthcoming, farmers are entering yet another planting season with no clarity on whether this domestic value-added market may be available by harvest. Under two presidential administrations, USDA has worked to develop the FD-CIC, soliciting feedback from key stakeholders and beta testing the calculator with farmers who produce BBD feedstocks, including ASA farmer-leaders. With Treasury currently soliciting public comments ahead of developing final 45Z tax guidance, ASA encourages the Committee to urge relevant agencies to swiftly finalize supplemental guidance for agricultural feedstock production practices to ensure U.S. farmers can access this value-added domestic market as intended by Congress.

Renewable Volume Obligations

The annual renewable volume obligations set under the RFS are perhaps the single most important driver for BBD demand in the U.S. In June 2025, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed the 2026-2027 RVOs - the most favorable draft rule that the soy-based biofuel industry has ever seen. Historically, EPA has undercut volume obligations for BBD by not accounting for imported finished biofuel and assuming fuel produced beyond the RVO category for BBD would backfill into unused conventional ethanol volumes under the RFS. This previous operating procedure at EPA in calculating RVOs stymied BBD industry expansion and stunted domestic market growth for U.S. soy. The present-day result of this is the idling of BBD facilities, specifically biodiesel plants located in farm country, and decreased domestic market opportunity for U.S. soybean oil.

Importantly, in its most recent proposal, EPA considered both domestic production and imported fuel, and increased BBD volumes to 5.61 billion gallons – a 67% increase over the 2025 RVO of 3.35 billion gallons and in line with current domestic consumption. This increase represents an acknowledgement of the ongoing and proposed investments to expand both BBD production and domestic soybean processing capacity. If the EPA proposed volumes are carried forward in the final 2026-2027 RVO, the domestic BBD industry is poised for incredible growth.

Additionally, the proposed 2026-2027 RVO rule offered a novel solution to address surging imported waste feedstocks by recommending a 50% reduction in RFS renewable identification

number (RIN) credit value for both imported biofuels and biofuels produced from imported feedstocks – similar to 45Z tax credit restrictions established by Congress. Prior to the release of the proposed RVOs, ASA had requested that EPA identify a testing standard and mechanism to ensure that UCO importers were not engaging in fraud, as anecdotal evidence suggested. The EPA "half RIN" proposal acknowledges that there is currently no efficient, nor cost-effective, method to regulate the surge of imported UCO for domestic biofuel production.

Supporting Soy-Based Biofuels Today

While the domestic biofuel industry has evolved rapidly in response to changing federal and state-level policies, ASA still sees a bright future for domestic market growth. First and foremost, Congress must protect the integrity of the Renewable Fuel Standard at all costs, including any statutory changes that seek to limit annual RVOs for BBD like mandatory RFS compliance exemptions for petroleum refiners. Second, the administration must finalize the long-delayed 45Z tax credit guidance, so the changes Congress secured in 2025 can be fully realized. In addition, the administration must follow Congressional directives to develop additional 45Z guidance for value-added farming practices.

Lastly, the delayed 2026-2027 RVOs, which are currently undergoing Office of Management & Budget review, must be finalized immediately. The biofuels industry has already lost one quarter of potential growth due to the delay, and a positive final rule would provide a market for the 2025 soybean crop that was impacted by Chinese trade retaliation. In fact, a strong RVO and continued sustained growth, paired with guardrails to support domestic biofuel and agriculture dominance, would help insulate the U.S. soybean industry from future trade uncertainty.

Perhaps White House Senior Counselor for Trade and Manufacturing Peter Navarro said it best: "Finalizing and expediting the new Renewable Fuel Standard rule is a concrete step toward ... fueling American energy, strengthening rural manufacturing, and denying Beijing one of its most effective economic weapons[2]."

Supporting Soy in the U.S. Food Supply

Soy-Based Protein

Soy provides millions of Americans with access to an affordable and domestically produced source of healthy protein. As the recently published U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) point out, foods such as tofu and tempeh are rich in protein content. Furthermore, soy is one of the few plant proteins that provide all nine essential amino acids necessary for human health. The health benefits of consuming soy are not limited to protein.

Soybean Oil

[2] Navarro, Peter. 2026. "How to disarm China's weaponized soybean purchases." *The Hill,* January 15. https://thehill.com/opinion/international/5685497-how-to-disarm-chinas-weaponized-soybean-purchases/

Today, about half of domestically produced soybean oil is used for biofuel production, while the remaining half supports a wide range of food uses. The FDA approved a qualified health claim for soybean oil that indicates it reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, supported by 160 publications. More broadly, vegetable oils or seed oils are a critical component of dietary patterns associated with lower chronic disease rates. A study published by JAMA Internal Medicine last year demonstrated that a higher intake of plant-based oils (e.g. soybean oil).[3] In its analysis, the study found that soybean oil provided substantial health benefits when substituted for butter. Beyond its health benefits, soybeans are an efficiently grown crop that produces a versatile, neutral-tasting oil that plays an important role throughout the U.S. food system – from home cooking to package foods that may be considered "ultra-processed."

ASA believes that a food's health should be based on its role in the diet and its nutritional profile rather than based on its ingredients and processing method. This is why ASA is increasingly concerned about state-level legislative efforts to related to defining and labeling "ultra-processed foods." The ever-growing threat of a patchwork of state food labeling laws will create a food affordability crisis without federal intervention. A recent economic analysis on the impact of labeling patchworks concluded that prices for consumers could rise as much as 12%[4]. The USDA Economic Research Service "Food Dollar" for 2023 – the last year with available data – noted that farm production translated to by U.S. consumers on food[5]. The remaining $0.84 is the market share—or the costs borne by consumers after the farm gate. Creating new labels for food products to satisfy state labeling laws comes at an enormous cost, which will ultimately be passed down to the consumer. Food affordability impacts consumers most acutely, but as consumers make difficult decisions to limit food purchases, downstream impacts will impact U.S. agriculture producers across the board.

Soymilk & Infant Formula

Soymilk is the only plant-based milk alternative with a nutritional profile of calories, protein content, and protein quality that is similar to that of dairy milk. Access to soymilk provides millions of people in the US and abroad with access to essential nutrients that otherwise would not be available. This is also true for soy-based infant formulas and infant formulas that contain soybean oil. Fats are an essential nutrient for development, which is why the current nutritional requirements for formulas include fat and linoleic acid.[6]

---

[3] Zhang, Yu et al. 2025. "Butter and Plant-Based Oils Intake and Mortality." JAMA Internal Medicine vol. 185,5: 549-560. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2025.0205

[4] Policy Navigation Group. 2026. *Costs of recent state nutrition laws.* Policy Navigation Group on Behalf of Americans for Ingredient Transparency. https://americansforingredienttransparency.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/COSTS-OF-RECENT-STATE-NUTRITION-LAWS.pdf

[5] USDA Economic Research Service. 2025. "Food Dollar Series." Last modified December 15. https://ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-dollar-series

[6] U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (n.d.). Title 21, § 107.100 Nutrient specifications. In Electronic Code of Federal Regulations.

Disparagement of soy products negatively affects a critical domestic market for U.S. soybean growers and ignores the overwhelming nutritional data that supports consumption of soy protein and oil. Whether consumed as soy-based products, like tofu or soybean oil, soy offers a healthy source of fatty acids and protein for humans and animals and provides soybean growers with a robust domestic market.

Soybean Meal: Feeding Livestock & Aquaculture and Beneficial Novel Uses

Livestock

Animal agriculture is the largest customer for U.S. soybean farmers, consuming 97% of domestic U.S. soybean meal. According to research conducted by the United Soybean Board (USB), 37.3 million tons of soybean meal were consumed by animal agriculture in 2024[7]. Over 50% of that consumption was comprised of broilers, while hogs, dairy, layer hens, and turkeys consumed the majority of the rest. Soybean meal is a high-density nutritional component in animal feed rations due to its amino acid profile, protein content, and ease of digestibility. Through USB and our sister organization, the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), ASA has continued to support innovations in animal feed to benefit our partners in the livestock sector domestically and abroad.

Importantly, as the soybean processing industry expands to meet growing biofuel market demands for soybean oil, the volume of soybean meal produced increases in tandem. The increased soybean meal availability lowers production costs for the livestock sector. Further, a 2022 study from Purdue University noted that a 20% increase in the volume of soybean oil produced to meet biofuel market demand results in lower retail prices for consumers on animal protein products including dairy, beef, eggs, chicken, and pork[8]. So, as one critical market for U.S. soy expands, the resulting impact is lower costs for our largest customer – the livestock industry – and in turn, lower prices at the grocery store meat counter.

Aquaculture

In addition to livestock, there is growing adoption of soybean meal as a high-quality feed source for aquaculture production around the world. Aquaculture is one of the fastest growing animal protein sectors and is expected to continue trending in that direction. However, the majority of aquaculture demand remains outside the U.S. A staggering 91% of U.S. seafood is imported, and foreign-produced aquaculture accounts for about half of those imports. According to USDA's

---

[7] Decision Innovation Solutions. 2025. *2024 Soybean Meal Demand Assessment*. Decision Innovation Solutions on behalf of the United Soybean Board. https://marketviewdb.unitedsoybean.org/uploads/SBM/SBM_Demand_Assessment_Report_U.S.Total_2024.pdf

[8] Lusk, Jayson. "Food *and* Fuel: Modeling Food System Wide Impacts of Increase in Demand for Soybean Oil." Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University, November 10, 2022.

Economic Research Service, the United States had a seafood trade deficit of $20.6 billion in 2024.

ASA sees the expansion of domestic aquaculture as another opportunity to create new markets for U.S. soybean farmers. We have endorsed the Marine Aquaculture Research for America (MARA) Act of 2025, which would authorize an Office of Aquaculture within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and establish commercial-scale demonstration projects. The projects would direct NOAA to permit offshore aquaculture, creating opportunities for the domestic aquaculture industry to grow. Thanks to research and promotion activities conducted in export markets with global aquaculture producers, we know there is a demand for U.S. soybean meal as a high-quality, high-protein feed ration for farmed fish. The moment is ripe to streamline the U.S. aquaculture regulatory system to bring new innovations to market, decrease our seafood trade deficit, and create new domestic markets for U.S. soybean meal.

However, growing the domestic aquaculture market is a long-term demand growth opportunity. At the same time, livestock production in the U.S. continues a slight downward trend that began in 2019. With soybean meal demand likely to remain even for the foreseeable future, looking outside the feed sector for new soybean meal market opportunities is increasingly important.

Novel Soybean Meal-Based Bioproducts

As noted above, increased demand for soybean oil for biofuels will create a surplus of soybean meal domestically. While our partners at USSEC and the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) continue to diversify export markets and identify new and emerging soybean meal markets abroad, smaller domestic market opportunities have emerged. Soybean meal is used in a variety of bioproducts for industrial products including plastic composites, formaldehyde-free wood adhesives, polyurethane foams, and more. As the price of soybean meal decreases, value-added bioproducts can offer scalable market opportunities.

One of the most exciting soybean meal-based bioproducts on the market today is SoyFoam™ TF 1122. Developed by Cross Plains Solution with supporting investments from the Soy Checkoff, SoyFoam is a biobased firefighting foam that does not include any per- or polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and has no detectable fluorines. PFAS is an ever-growing topic of concerns on Capitol Hill and communities around the country, as exposure to the “forever chemical” is linked to cancer and other health concerns. SoyFoam offers a solution to one of the biggest continuous PFAS polluters: firefighting suppressants.

SoyFoam is produced using soybean meal milled into flour and is USDA certified as 84% biobased – the highest percentage of any firefighting foam on the market today. It is effective on both class A burns (ordinary combustibles) and class B burns (gasoline and other flammable liquids) and boasts a biodegradable certification of 60% after 18 days and 91.6% after 180 days.

For comparison, the biodegradability requirement for conventional firefighting foam is 60% after 180 days.

When considering opportunities for identifying new domestic market opportunities for agricultural products, ASA sees significant potential with SoyFoam. However, the process for federal agency approvals is onerous and time consuming. Even after passing all nine burns on Jet A and gasoline fuels as required by the Department of Defense, this process may still take 18 months. The Wildlands Fire Chemical Systems division at the U.S. Forest Service currently has the opportunity to approve SoyFoam for their qualified products list. That process may take up to two years. After the wildfires in Los Angeles last year, reports started emerging about the environmental cleanup costs due to the significant levels of PFAS left behind from the firefighting efforts. On a mass-scale, SoyFoam creates a safe alternative, so when victims of fires begin to rebuild their lives, they have one less worry – PFAS exposure. The support of Congress can help expidite and navigate the red tape required for these critical federal approvals to bring this PFAS-free alternative to firefighting foam to the market much sooner.

Firefighters face significant PFAS exposure risk – perhaps more than any other profession. My family has a rich history of firefighting, and I am the proud brother, brother-in-law, and father of firefighters. With the support of the federal government to support greater adoption and scalability of SoyFoam, firefighters like my eldest son, Dalton, would face a significantly lower risk of PFAS exposure immediately upon switching products.

Growing Markets for Biobased Products

Beyond soybean meal, soybean oil-based bioproducts offer an additional modest, yet scalable driver to expand domestic demand for U.S. soy. Soybean oil is one of the most versatile natural oils with a molecular structure and suitable fatty-acid profile that make it suitable for many applications beyond biofuel. Through the Soy Checkoff, U.S. soybean organizations are partnering with major companies and universities to create new rapidly renewable materials made with soy. The Soy Checkoff is also partnering with major manufacturers to create demand for these new products that can meet consumer desires for high-performing sustainable products.

BioPreferred Program

According to USDA, the biomanufacturing sector employs an estimated 4 million Americans and contributes nearly $490 billion to the U.S. economy annually[9]. Through initiatives like the Biobased Markets (BioPreferred) Program, the federal government is already positioned to champion expansion of the bioproduct market to drive additional domestic demand of U.S. agricultural products. Created in the 2002 Farm Bill and expanded in 2018, BioPreferred has two

[9] USDA Rural Department BioPreferred Program. *An Economic Impact Analysis of the U.S. Biobased Products Industry.* Mr. Andrew Jermolowicz, et. al. 2023. https://www.rd.usda.gov/media/file/download/usda-rd-economic-impact-analysis-us-biobased-products-industry-2023-508.pdf

primary functions: overseeing a mandatory federal procurement program for biobased products and administering a voluntary "USDA Certified Biobased Product" label.

While BioPreferred is the cornerstone of the bioproduct industry, its authorization has been neglected. As a Farm Bill "orphan program," BioPreferred has endured years without regular funding, as its mandatory funding status must come with explicit extensions when authorization lapses for a Farm Bill, and was not included in recent extensions of the current legislation. ASA was glad to see the House Committee on Agriculture favorably report the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026, which included the reauthorization of the Biobased Markets (BioPreferred) Program and urges the Senate Agriculture Committee to renew authorization for BioPreferred when it considers 2026 Farm Bill legislation in the near future.

Soy-Based Bioproducts in Infrastructure Projects

Soy-based bioproducts are increasingly utilized as part of state and local roadway projects. One longtime soy-based product with a proven track record is PoreShield™, a revolutionary soy-based concrete protector that was first developed through a partnership between Purdue University, the Indiana Department of Transportation, and the Indiana Soybean Alliance to address the growing need to extend the lifespan of concrete highways. In addition to providing long-lasting concrete protection, PoreShield™ is nontoxic and requires no personal protective equipment for workers while applying. Recently, Crafco, Inc. acquired PoreShield™, offering global market potential for this soy-based, 100% American-made product.

For asphalt-based roads, Soylei, an innovative company born from a partnership between Iowa State University and the Iowa Soybean Association, has developed a soybean –oil-based rejuvenator for asphalt. These soy-based rejuvenators produced by Soylei restore the flexibility and binder quality of reclaimed asphalt pavement. This technology allows for higher percentages of recycled asphat to be used in new, durable pavement construction.

Unlike agencies like the U.S. Forest Service, the Federal Highway Administration relies on state-administered qualified products lists rather than a national list, which inhibits widespread adoption of bioproducts for major construction projects. To support increased utilization of soy-based materials in federal transportation projects, ASA is exploring a federal pilot program concept that would provide a federal qualified products list for bioproducts with proven success in multiple state transportation projects.

The Value of Farmer-Driven Development of Soy Products & Markets

Over 30 years ago, Congress passed the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act, creating the United Soybean Board (USB)—an agricultural research and promotion program funded and managed directly by soybean farmers under the oversight of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. Through direct farmer investment, this program, also referred to as the Soy Checkoff, finances research, promotion, and education initiatives, all of which are aimed at improving yield, sustainability, and demand for U.S. soy products.

Checkoff-driven initiatives have brought a return on investment—$12.30 for every farmer dollar invested in the checkoff—to growers like me, who are then better able to support our families, employees, and rural communities. Many of the innovations highlighted today in my testimony are a direct result of checkoff-funded research. From partnerships with animal nutritionists to study animal feed rations for livestock production to research into biobased products to grow non-agricultural uses for U.S. soybeans, to the inception of the U.S. biomass-based diesel industry, the Soy Checkoff has supported farmers by supporting research and furthering demand both here and abroad. The success of the American soybean farmer and the U.S. soy value chain would not be as robust as it is today, were it not for the Soy Checkoff.

Farmers are overwhelmingly supportive of the Soy Checkoff. During the last USDA-led Request for Referendum in 2024, only 0.06% of eligible soybean farmers called for a referendum – far short of the 10% required by statute to reconsider the structure of the checkoff. It is clear the Soy Checkoff is overwhelmingly supported by farmers, and as this Committee considers an updated farm bill, ASA strongly urges this committee to recognize the important role checkoffs play and to protect them from unnecessary and harmful amendments.

Conclusion

It is no secret that the U.S. soybean industry is facing unprecedented economic distress. The losses faced on our 2025 soybean crop were so profound that even with the support provided to farmers through the USDA Farmer Bridge Assistance Program, U.S. soybean farmers are still facing an average of $73/acre in uncovered losses.

During every trade conflict that has impacted U.S. soybean farmers, you have heard our leadership echo a united refrain: “Farmers want markets, not handouts.” That holds true today, just as it did in 2018 and 2025. Farm assistance has become a necessary lifeline to ensure we can survive through the next planting season, and we sincerely appreciate the work of Congress to pass prior economic assistance packages, and for our champions on this Committee who are leaving no stone unturned as they continue to pursue additional avenues to help farmers keep their legacies – their land – alive for the next generation.

As I close, I want to reemphasize the five key topics I identified to support domestic markets for U.S. soy:

1. **Biofuels:** Finalizing the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit and supplemental USDA FD-CIC and the 2026-2027 RVOs will provide the U.S. soybean value chain – from farmers to processors, to BBD producers – with both immediate and long-term benefits. Supporting federal policies that reward North American biofuel feedstocks while removing arbitrary penalties on agriculture will create domestic biofuel market certainty for U.S. soy while supporting American energy dominance.
2. **Soy Foods:** While ASA supports the goals of this administration to improve health outcomes for Americans, policies must be backed by sound science and not arbitrarily

malign soybean oil and seed oils more broadly. The safety and health benefits of soy foods are backed by a longstanding FDA heart health claim and countless studies, and preserving this market for U.S. soy is imperative.

3. **Soybean Meal:** U.S. soy has enjoyed consistent domestic soybean meal markets, thanks to our partners in the livestock industry. As soybean processing expands to meet additional domestic soybean oil demand, prices for meal will continue to decrease, supporting lower protein costs for consumers. Additional uses for soybean meal like SoyFoam demonstrate untapped market potential for U.S. soy.
4. **Bioproducts:** Soybean farmers are proud of the variety of bioproducts that are being made using our crop. Identifying policies that cut through the red tape for federal approvals and supporting a reauthorization of the BioPreferred Program are just two ways to support the bioeconomy fueled by U.S. agriculture.
5. **Farmer Investments in Soy:** The Soy Checkoff plays an integral role in our ability to identify new markets and develop novel uses for U.S. soy. Soybean growers are immensely proud of their investments, which help open markets, develop new uses, and improve the farm economy for our industry.

Thank you, Chairman Boozman and Ranking Member Klobuchar for holding this critically important hearing to explore a variety of options to expand existing domestic markets and develop new markets to support U.S. agriculture. As I sit here today, the ASA Board of Directors is receiving a briefing a few blocks away to prepare for their visits with Congressional offices tomorrow. This Committee's unwavering focus on improving the economic viability of U.S. farmers is not lost on a single one of those farmers who took the time to come to D.C. this week.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the Senate Agriculture Committee today. I look forward to your questions and continuing this dialogue regarding our shared goal of expanding domestic markets for U.S. agriculture.