

AMERICAN SPRING 2026 soybean

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A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION









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by Vanessa Hunt



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

For soybean farmers who belong to associations, advocacy isn't just something we talk about; it's something we do every day. From the fields we manage to the policies we help shape, our voices matter. Over the past several weeks, that commitment to advocacy has been on full display across our industry.

“In my testimony, I emphasized the importance of expanding market opportunities, strengthening domestic demand, and ensuring farmers have the tools we need to remain competitive.”

At Commodity Classic 2026, soybean farmers from across the country came together not only to connect and learn, but to set the direction for our organization. Through our Voting Delegate session, we adopted a strong set of policy resolutions that reflect the priorities of soybean growers nationwide. These farmer-driven

policies are the foundation of everything we do at the American Soybean Association, and they ensure our advocacy is grounded in real-world needs on the farm.

We carried that momentum directly into our March Board Meeting in Washington, where ASA leaders gathered to further refine our strategy and prepare for one of the most important advocacy efforts of the year, our spring fly-in to Capitol Hill. Equipped with clear priorities and a unified message, soybean farmers and state leaders met face-to-face with lawmakers and administration officials to share the challenges we're facing and the solutions we need.

Those conversations are more important than ever. Farmers are navigating a difficult economic environment, with rising input costs, ongoing market uncertainty, and increasing global competition. Fertilizer prices, fuel costs, and other essential inputs continue to put pressure on farm operations, while trade disruptions and tariffs create additional headwinds. These issues directly impact the decisions we make on our farms every day.

That's why it was an honor to recently testify before the Senate Agriculture Committee on behalf of soybean farmers. In my testimony, I emphasized the importance of expanding market opportunities, strengthening domestic demand, and ensuring farmers have the tools we need to

Scott METZGER



Scott Metzger, ASA President

remain competitive. This includes support for the soybean checkoff, which plays a critical role in driving innovation, developing new markets, and promoting the value of U.S. soy both at home and abroad.

Biofuels remain a key part of that conversation. Strong, consistent biofuel policies not only support rural economies, but also create reliable demand for soybeans and contribute to our nation's energy security. At the same time, we must ensure that farmers have access to affordable inputs and a stable trade environment that allows us to compete globally.

Advocacy is not a one-time event; it is an ongoing effort that requires engagement at every level. Whether it's participating in ASA activities, sharing your story with policymakers, or staying informed on the issues that affect your operation, every farmer has a role to play.

Pesticide Conversations Continue on Farms & in D.C.

While picking up some groceries, I noticed the label “glyphosate-free” on several packaged goods, namely, an avocado oil spray. I was instantly annoyed by the misleading nature of this label, but it reminded me that for some consumers, this branding is an indication of “safe” or “healthy” for themselves and their families. Meanwhile, for the American farmer, pesticides like glyphosate represent an essential step in producing a healthy yield and protecting their crops from destructive pests and weeds. With farmers well into the spring planting season, crop protection tools are at the forefront of conversations in the agriculture community. The pesticide conversation continues in Washington, D.C., as well.

On Feb. 6, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a new dicamba label for over-the-top (OTT) use on dicamba-tolerant soybeans and cotton for the next two growing seasons. A new label means certainty for soybean and cotton growers who were hoping to utilize these products in 2026. This label came right in the nick of time for planting. However, several mitigation requirements like temperature restrictions and downwind buffer requirements, among others, will make it challenging for growers to effectively manage weeds during appropriate spraying times. This is why it is of the utmost importance for farmers to have access to every tool in the toolbox to



decide what products work best for their operations, their land, and their crops.

Unfortunately, there are several new active ingredients and new uses for existing products that have been awaiting final approval from EPA for several weeks into months now. As input costs continue to rise, it is now more important than ever that EPA prioritize moving crop protection product registrations through approval processes in a timely manner. In fact, as farmers face rising input costs, pesticides are impacted the most by tariffs with an average effective tariff rate of 12%. When you add in the fact that the average time to market for new crop protection products has increased from 11.3 years to 12.3 years, it is increasingly concerning that the backlog at EPA appears to keep growing.

The American Soybean Association has led several advocacy efforts

to ensure relevant agency officials and stakeholders understand the importance of EPA’s science and risk-based process and the need for grower certainty and access to pesticides. The disconnect on these vital issues has been most evident within the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement. However, access to affordable and nutritious food for American families is a goal shared by both the MAHA strategy released in September and the American farmer. With these shared goals in mind, EPA should strive to ensure new and innovative pesticide and crop protection products are readily available to growers. Additional delays in registration approvals only put the United States further behind other countries in a time where competitiveness is everything. Pesticides are an integral part of growing a healthy and sustainable food supply, regardless of where you farm or the choices you make in the grocery store.

Farmers Recognized at ASA's Annual Awards Celebration

ASA held its annual Awards Celebration in San Antonio, Texas, at Commodity Classic.

This celebration of the soybean industry acknowledges excellence in volunteer achievement and inspirational leadership. The awards recognize state association volunteerism, top leadership achievements of five years or more, and significant, long-lasting contributions to the soybean industry over a lifetime. The nomination period is typically open from June through the end of October and then a judging committee makes final selections.

Dave Walton (IA), Outstanding State Volunteer

ASA honored Iowa farmer Dave Walton with its Outstanding State Volunteer Award. This award recognizes the dedication and exemplary contributions of volunteers with at least three



years of volunteer service in any area of their state association's operation.

For over a decade, Dave has dedicated his time and leadership to advancing soybean farmers' interests, serving in key roles on the Iowa Soybean Association board, the ASA Executive Committee, the Iowa Biodiesel Board, and the Clean Fuels Alliance America board.

He has strengthened the soybean industry by building connections with policymakers, industry leaders, and fellow soybean farmers. Dave consistently goes above and beyond in advocacy, playing a key role in shaping his state's biodiesel priorities.

During his acceptance speech, Dave acknowledged that it was a team effort with his wife and his eldest son, allowing him to take the time to do volunteer work over the years. He also thanked the directors he has served with who challenged him, making him a better leader and person.

Dave currently serves as the vice president of ASA, positioning him to serve as president in 2027. "I have a couple years left at the national level, and I have a lot more things to accomplish here in the next few years, so I got to get going," he concluded. "It's going to go fast, but we have a lot of work to do and I have a good team around me, both at the director's level and the staff



level, so we're going to get some things done in the next two years. I'm looking forward to it."

Monte Peterson (ND), Distinguished Leadership Award

The ASA Distinguished Leadership Award recognizes a soybean grower or association staff leader who has shown a high level of dedication and successfully led others to meet goals and achieve successes to benefit soybean farmers. ASA recognized North Dakota farmer Monte Peterson with its Distinguished Leadership Award.

Monte has been an advocate for soybean farmers since 2006, when he joined the North Dakota Soybean Council board. He also served on the American Soybean Association board from 2014 until 2023.

During his time with ASA, Monte chaired the Trade Policy & International Affairs Committee.

He was known for breaking down complicated topics, such as the China trade dispute, and guiding efforts to eliminate trade barriers and expand markets.

Monte served on the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) board from 2017 to 2023, including terms as vice chair, chair, and past chair. As chair of the USSEC board, he led them through the COVID-19 pandemic, participating in hundreds of virtual meetings, continuing to strengthen key trade relationships, and reinforcing that U.S. soy is a reliable, high-quality product.

Through the ASA Corteva Young Leader Program, Monte spent time with new farmer leaders, encouraging them to take on committee work and guiding them through how national policy connects back to their farms.

As Monte accepted his award, he spoke of the opportunities he has had to work alongside the strong leadership and dedicated board members of ASA, USSEC, and North Dakota Soybean Growers Association whose guidance and commitment continue to elevate the soybean industry.

"Any leadership that I've shown has been the result of standing shoulder to shoulder with individuals who bring insight, who bring energy and integrity to the work that we do. If I've managed to look like a leader at all, it's only because I've been surrounded by people who lift me up, that keep me on track, and occasionally remind me where I'm supposed to be next. Thank you for this recognition and for your confidence in me," he said.

Richard Wilkins (DE), Pinnacle Award, ASA's Highest Honor

ASA recognized the late Richard Wilkins, of Greenwood, Delaware,

with its top honor, the Pinnacle Award. This is an industrywide recognition of a lifetime of work that demonstrates the highest level of contribution and leadership within the soybean family and industry.

During his 53 years of service, Richard consistently demonstrated innovative leadership that strengthened the sustainability and unity of the soybean industry. He held many roles as a soybean farmer advocate, including being a member of the Mid-Atlantic Soybean Association, former ASA president, and former state executive director of the Farm Service Agency for Delaware.

Richard began farming in 1972 with only three acres of soybeans on rented ground, expanding to 65 acres by the time he graduated from high school in 1976. His early experiences instilled a lifelong respect for hard work, innovation, and the importance of producer-led leadership – principles that guided his contributions at every level of the soybean family.

At the state level, Richard served on the Delaware Water Infrastructure Advisory Council, representing farmers amid the increasing complexity of nutrient management mandates. In this capacity, he promoted science-based, practical solutions that helped producers comply with environmental regulations without sacrificing yield or economic viability.

In 2015, Richard was elected ASA president and led the organization through major national policy debates, most notably during the proposed Vermont GMO labeling law crisis. Under his leadership, ASA mobilized farmers and stakeholders to educate policymakers, resulting in a uniform



national food labeling standard that avoided confusion, protected consumers, and preserved market stability.

During the Awards Celebration, Richard's wife, Donna, and his nephew, Chris, accepted the award on his behalf. Donna spoke of Richard's passion in life, which was to continue educating the public, mentoring the next generation, and protecting the future of ag. She also read a letter Richard wrote to the ASA board in 2010 when he decided to run for ASA vice president. Richard wrote, "It is incumbent upon us as farmer leaders to advocate for policies that achieve societal wishes for a clean and safe food supply, but let's also allow the American agribusiness industry to grow and prosper... I am driven by a passion to serve the industry that I have been a part of my entire life."

Richard will be remembered for his role in ensuring fair and equitable representation for smaller soybean-producing states within the American Soybean Association. His enduring impact will be measured not only by the policies he helped shape and the markets he expanded, but also by the leaders he mentored.



ASA in action

Commodity Classic 2026 Breaks Records for Second Consecutive Year

More than 12,000 farmers, exhibitors, industry stakeholders, and media gathered in San Antonio from Feb. 25-27 for the 2026 Commodity Classic, marking the second consecutive year of record-setting attendance. Over 5,100 farmers attended the event at the Henry B. González Convention Center, accounting for nearly 43% of total attendance and representing a significant concentration of farm decision-makers. This strong farmer presence reinforces Commodity Classic's value as a high-impact event for connecting directly with agricultural leaders.



GRAND OPENING

United Soybean Board (USB) Chair Brent Gatton (center) joins 2026 Commodity Classic Co-Chairs Brian Thalmann (left) and Rob Shaffer (right) for a ribbon cutting ceremony to open the trade show floor.



AGRICULTURE LEADER ROUNDTABLE

ASA President Scott Metzger (second from right) discusses top soy policy priorities, including biofuels, farm bill, and trade during the Agriculture Leader Roundtable at General Session.



GENERAL SESSION

USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins delivers the keynote address during General Session.



ASA USDA PANEL

ASA hosts its annual USDA Policy Outlook, a town hall-style session with top D.C. officials. The panelists included (from left): USDA Risk Management Agency Administrator Pat Swanson; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Aubrey J.D. Bettencourt; USDA Farm Service Agency Administrator William "Bill" Beam; and USDA Farm Production and Conservation Under Secretary Richard Fordyce.



ASA BOOTH

Attendees visit Booth #1537 for another round on ASA's Pickleball Court and the opportunity to connect with soy policy leaders.



AGRICULTURE LEADERS

House Ag Committee Chair Glenn "GT" Thompson (left) stops by ASA's booth to chat with Ohio soybean farmer and ASA President Scott Metzger (OH).



VOTING DELEGATES

Voting delegates meet for the session that will lay the roadmap for soy policy over the next year.



PRESS CONFERENCE

From left: ASA President Scott Metzger (OH), Vice President Dave Walton (IA), and Chairman Caleb Ragland (KY) discuss biofuel, trade agreements, farm bill, and other top soybean policies at ASA's press conference.



AWARDS CELEBRATION

ASA President Scott Metzger (OH) welcomes the crowd to the 2026 ASA Awards Celebration.



USMCA PANEL

The Agricultural Coalition for USMCA hosts an outlook panel to discuss USMCA's importance as a trilateral partnership and the agricultural sector's efforts ahead of its review period. Panelists included: (from left) Mateo Diego-Fernandez Andrade, Agon; Mac Ross, Canada Grains Council; Dave Walton, ASA; Chris Tanner, National Association of Wheat Growers; and Stu Swanson, Iowa Corn chair.



SOYPAC AUCTION

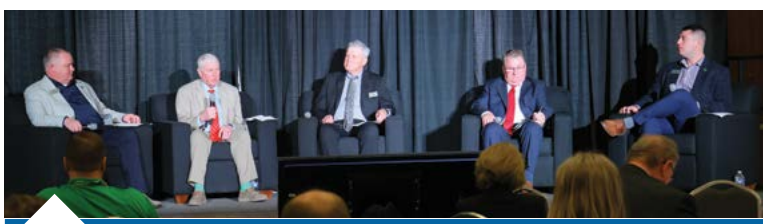
Spotters/ASA directors Bryan Severs (IL), Tanner Johnson (WI), and Andrew Moore (GA) call out a bid as past president Johnny Dodson (TN) gets serious about his offer at ASA's annual SoyPAC auction.

ASA Ringmen get their heads in the game to spot bidders for the SoyPAC "Tailgating in San Antonio" auction.



LEARNING SESSION

During a Learning Center session, ASA Chief Economist Scott Gerlt and other leading agricultural economists discuss the ag outlook and what it means for crop and livestock prices, input costs, and government payments over the next several years.



WISHH PANEL

ASA's World Initiative for Soy in Human Health program and the United Soybean Board hosted export partners for a panel on collaborative export initiatives that drive value back to U.S. soybean farmers. From left: Tom Frisch, USB Secretary who moderated the panel; WISHH Chair Morey Hill; Mike McCranie, U.S. Soybean Export Council; John Hinners, U.S. Meat Export Federation; and Tony Mellenthin of the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council.



U.S. SOY

ASA President Scott Metzger, USB Chair Brent Gatton, and USSEC Chair Mike McCranie chat U.S. Soy with AgriTalk's Chip Flory on the trade show floor.





ASA in action



ASA & SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

ASA's Executive Committee, CEO Stephen Censky, and members of the South Dakota Soybean Association meet with Senate Majority Leader John Thune in March.



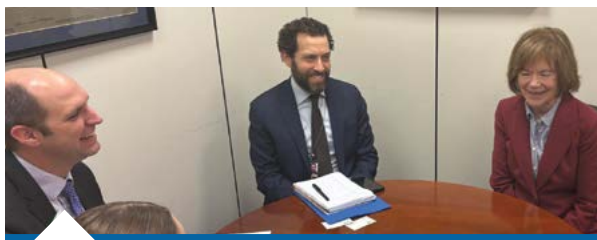
ASA WITH USDA

While in D.C. for the March board meeting, the ASA Executive Committee and CEO Stephen Censky meet with U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Stephen Vaden to discuss soybean policy.



ND WITH SEN. HOEVEN

North Dakota soybean leaders meet with Sen. John Hoeven during March Hill visits. Photo credit: North Dakota Soybean Growers Association



MN WITH SEN. SMITH

ASA Directors Jeffrey Sorenson and Jamie Beyer speak with Sen. Tina Smith. Photo credit: Minnesota Soybean Growers Association



SENATE AG COMMITTEE CHAIR

ASA Director Derek Helms (AR) and Arkansas Soybean Director Johnathon Morris meet with Senate Ag Committee Chair John Boozman. Photo credit: Arkansas Soybean Association



IA ON THE HILL

ASA Director Summer Ory (IA) at the U.S. Capitol.



NEBRASKA AT CAPITOL

ASA Directors Geoff Ruth and Dennis Fujan with Nebraska Soybean Association Executive Director Chandra Blase on Capitol Hill. Photo credit: Geoff Ruth



OH HILL VISITS

Ohio soybean leaders visit Washington, D.C., to meet with the offices of Reps. Mike Carey, Jim Jordan, Bob Latta, Marcy Kaptur, Dave Joyce, Greg Landsman, Dave Taylor, as well as Sens. Jon Husted and Bernie Moreno. Photo credit: Ohio Soybean Association



KY WITH SEN. PAUL

Kentucky soybean leaders meet with Sen. Rand Paul. Photo credit: Kentucky Soybean Association



IL HILL VISITS

ASA and Illinois Soybean Association directors advocate for farmers on Capitol Hill. Photo credit: Charles Miller



WI WITH REP. VAN ORDEN

Wisconsin Soybean Association Directors Sara Stelter and Doug Rebut with ASA Director Steve Trzebiatowski in the office of Rep. Derrick Van Orden.



MI ON THE HILL

ASA Directors Janna Fritz and Heather Feuerstein (MI) outside the office of Rep. Shri Thanedar.



SENATE AG TESTIMONY

ASA President Scott Metzger (OH) testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry regarding the importance of strengthening domestic markets for U.S.-grown agricultural products. Pictured: Metzger greets Senate Ag Committee Ranking Member Amy Klobuchar before his testimony in March.



SOY INDUSTRY RECEPTION

ASA and the National Oilseed Processors Association hosted a reception at the Hart Senate Office Building in D.C. The lively, well-attended event provided an exceptional opportunity for soybean, canola and oilseed leaders and staff, industry partners, media, and valued legislators and Hill staff to connect.



USB MEETING

ASA leaders and staff participated in the United Soybean Board meeting in February. ASA President Scott Metzger (OH) briefed meeting attendees on current policy priorities that ASA is working on for farmers, including issue updates related to the farm economy, trade, biofuels, regulatory challenges, and nutrition and dietary guidelines.



SOYBEAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Nearly 100 soybean grower leaders and staff gathered in Bonita Springs, Florida, for the annual Soybean Leadership Academy. The meeting featured a strong lineup of industry leading speakers, engaging training, and fellowship with other grower leaders and soybean staff from across the country.



AG ECONOMY

ASA Director Corey Goodhue (IA) joined USDA Under Secretary for Trade & Foreign Agricultural Affairs Luke Lindberg for a discussion in Iowa on the ag economy. Goodhue talked about the importance of trade diversification for farmers, the impact of countervailing duties on phosphate, and the need to finalize a strong RVO. Photo credit: Iowa Soybean Association



ASAAP

Members of the ASA Action Partnership (ASAAP) met in Washington, D.C. in March for discussions on issues impacting the soybean industry. Founders of AgriData Coop, Kyle Courtney and Eric Mukenhirm, presented on AI in agriculture and farmer ownership of data. ASA Chief Economist Scott Gerlt provided a snapshot on current issues facing the soybean industry. ASA's Government Affairs Manager Carson Fort moderated a panel discussion focused on MAHA which featured Samantha Buchalter, The Russell Group; Kellie Adesina, Kraft Heinz Company; and Matthew Grill. SNAC International rounded out the meeting.



I2M

Due to extreme weather conditions, the ASA Innovation to Market (I2M) Work Group quickly shifted its plans to a virtual meeting in January. The group's mission is to facilitate the domestic and international introduction, commercialization and market acceptance of new innovations in seed and crop protection products. I2M Work Group members include manufacturers of seed and crop protection products and farmer leaders and staff from ASA, USB, USSEC, and state soy organizations.



LAIB

The 2026 Leadership At Its Best program, sponsored by Syngenta, was held Jan. 19-23 in Washington, D.C. ASA members who attended were Daryl Obermeyer (NE); Grant Mackey (KY); Tom Woelmer (MD); Brady Holst (IL); Ross Tschetter (SD); John Pracht (KS); and Lee Brooke (IA).

FARMING & LEADING: MEET THE 2026 ADVOCACY TEAM CHAIRS

By Vanessa Hunt, ASA Director of Publications & Visuals

The American Soybean Association is first and foremost a farmer-led organization. It is powered by farmers who volunteer their time as directors and step up to lead the next generation of soybean leaders.

For every agriculture policy win, there are countless hours of work and numerous people behind the scenes who are consistently advocating for soybean farmers. Within the board of directors, ASA's bylaws establish advocacy teams to help soy leaders share that load and sharpen their focus. Advocacy teams (ATs) monitor and analyze policy actions, develop advocacy action plans, and provide leadership in specific policy areas. Each of these advocacy teams is chaired by an ASA director. Check out the Q&A below to learn more about ASA's Advocacy Team chairs, why leadership matters to them, and the priorities they have for their team in 2026.

FARM POLICY ADVOCACY TEAM

The Farm Policy Advocacy Team addresses economic sustainability and financial services-related issues. **ASA Director Geoff Ruth** from Rising City, Nebraska, is the chair for the Farm Policy AT. Ruth is a seventh-generation farmer and produces soybeans, corn, and cover crop rye. He is no stranger to leadership roles, having served on numerous boards, including Shelby-Rising City Public School's Board of Education, Nebraska Soybean Association, Nebraska Farm Service Agency, and various committees within his local community.

What are your priorities/goals for 2026 as chair of this advocacy team?

Ruth: There is no shortage of issues facing soybean farmers and agriculture as a whole in 2026. It is important for



Farm Policy AT Chair Geoff Ruth and Nebraska soybean leaders Dennis Fujan and Chandra Blase meet with Sen. Deb Fischer during spring Hill visits.



me as chair of the Farm Policy Advocacy Team to stay engaged and focused on the challenges and opportunities that lie before us in the soybean industry. This mindfulness of the issues has led me to set a few goals for myself and our AT this year. At the top of the list of priorities is encouraging Congress to pass a farm bill. We are long overdue for an updated farm bill, and continued extensions of the previous farm bills are not the security and stabilization that agriculture needs in these uncertain times. The issues change weekly, daily, hourly, and sometimes down to the minute. It is a goal of our AT to be timely in evaluation and response to proposed legislative policy and regulatory changes. We have implemented a few things to get information into our directors' hands quicker, and in doing so, we get timelier responses from members to the issue of the day. I believe these small changes have made us a more effective advocacy team.

What inspired you to take on a leadership role? How did you get started?

Ruth: It is an honor to serve as chair of the Farm Policy AT. I have always enjoyed serving people, whether

that be as the current president of my local board of education, church council leadership, Nebraska Soybean Association, the Farm Service Agency as a member of the State Board, or even as a youth basketball/football/softball coach. As much as I enjoy being involved in these endeavors, I certainly didn't have leading the Farm Policy AT as chair on my 2026 bingo card. I am thankful to members of the ASA Executive Committee who encouraged me to take on this role and further my involvement in ASA. Their guidance and leadership have helped me realize the importance of our soybean farmer-led organization and the impact we have on domestic policy that can directly drive global demand of soybeans. These first few months as the Farm Policy AT chair have been a rewarding experience and have certainly helped me gain a greater understanding of how relentlessly our ASA staff and directors work on behalf of soybean farmers.

What advice do you have for those who want to get into leadership?

Ruth: For those who have an interest in leadership, be willing to do the hard thing. Saying "yes" and being outside your comfort zone is one of

the hardest first steps when it comes to leadership. There are very few things in leadership that are easy, and leadership positions within an influential organization, such as ASA, often lead you to have the hard conversation with your nationally elected officials. We in agriculture today need all the leaders we can get. Our voices continue to shrink in number, which makes the need for those voices that speak on behalf of agriculture to get louder and carry more weight.

Can you talk about the impact of ASA and why it's important as an organization established over 100 years ago, as well as why it's critical for soybean farmers to get involved?

Ruth: The American Soybean Association's impact for more than 100 years is astonishing. It truly is the premier trade organization. We, as soybean farmers, have benefited from wonderful farmer leaders and amazing staff who always put what is best for the soybean industry above all else. Knowing that we have a team that is continually engaged in the issues and the impacts those policies have on our way of life is extremely encouraging and gives us, as farmers, the freedom to go about our daily work. However, as our industry continues to shrink in the number of people it employs, it is critical that we get all soybean farmers to be a part of ASA. Taking our issues to Capitol Hill with a unified voice makes us stronger. Membership within ASA has been a very rewarding experience for me as someone who is very involved within the organization, but it should also be viewed as rewarding to those who simply pay their dues to their state organization. The work that ASA does has a direct impact on our bottom line.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your advocacy team?

Ruth: I would like to thank all those who are a part of the Farm Policy AT. At Commodity Classic, ASA voting delegates passed their policy manual during the voting delegate session. This process started months ago and required many meetings from

our AT members. Their diligence and willingness to work through the process made a great group of policies that we will use in 2026 to guide our national advocacy work. It truly is an honor to serve as the Farm Policy AT chair, and I look forward to working with our AT members to create the best possible outcome for soybean farmers nationwide.

CONSERVATION & PRECISION AG ADVOCACY TEAM

The Conservation & Precision Ag Advocacy Team addresses issues relating to conservation, ag tech, checkoff and agricultural research, soy foods and nutrition, biobased consumer goods, livestock, and labor.

ASA Director Denise Scarborough

from LaCrosse, Indiana, is the chair for the Conservation & Precision Ag AT. She farms with her husband, Mark, and they produce soybeans, commercial corn, seed corn, and wheat. The couple also owns an excavating business, and Scarborough has an off-farm job with the First National Bank of Monterey as a commercial and agricultural lender. Scarborough is involved in the Indiana Farm Bureau and has served not only locally, but also on state and national committees. She volunteers with 4-H, Purdue Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching, youth sports, and her church. Since 2017, Scarborough has been an Indiana Soybean Alliance director, serving in various leadership roles on the board.

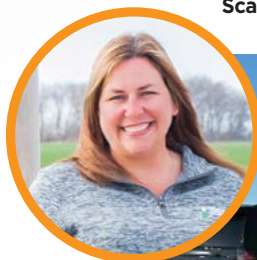
What are your priorities/goals for 2026 as chair of this advocacy team?

Scarborough: I think some of

the personal goals are to be proactive instead of reactive. When President Trump took office for the second time, we didn't know what to fully expect, and it caused us to be reactive to what was happening. The goals were 180 degrees from what we were assuming when he came into office. We couldn't be prepared for the political changes. When the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) report came out, we didn't imagine that we would have to defend the soybean as much as we are. In Indiana, we are the number one grower of high oleic soybeans. They are heart-healthy. We have worked hard to get high oleic soybeans into major venues in Indiana. We didn't think we would have to combat healthy eating and ultra-processed foods as much as we have. There have been several conservation topics that have come up that weren't on our radar as farmers. We now have a better understanding of MAHA and precision ag changes. For 2026 and going into 2027, I want us to be more proactive than 2025 as that was more of a reactive year.

What inspired you to take on a leadership role? How did you get started?

Scarborough: I am wrapping up my last year as a director for ISA. I have been on the board for nine years. When I started, there was a lot of strong leadership, and I've seen a lot of organizational changes. Throughout that, there has been continual strong leadership coming onto the board. I believe that the best person for the job should always fill the role for what is needed for the organization. I also had mentors who had more board



Conservation & Precision Ag AT Chair Denise Scarborough (IN) spoke about the importance of trade to Indiana farmers during a roundtable with USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins in the fall. Pictured from left: Scarborough, Rollins, and Indiana Soybean Alliance CEO Courtney Kingery.

experience that took me under their wing and explained about external organizations I could get involved in. I have a passion for policy. My goal was to not start with ASA until I was done with my time on the board at ISA as I was on a leadership track. However, there was an ASA director who was not able to fulfill their term. Board members asked me to join the ASA board, so I took on the challenge. The last two years have been challenging between being an ISA director and an ASA director while having a full-time job, being a mom to two teenage kids, and juggling farm and excavating business responsibilities. Not everyone has time to leave their family for the betterment of agriculture. It's a gift I've been given. I am fortunate to have a supportive husband and kids and a job that allows me to leave and speak for the betterment of ag, promote ag, and fight the battles.

What advice do you have for those who want to get into leadership?

Scarborough: I feel like when you join an organization, you have to start at the beginning and understand the organization before you jump into a leadership role. Spend time learning their goals and see if you are aligned with them. However, don't be afraid to step up. I have had to get outside of my comfort zone, which has allowed me to become a better leader. I've accomplished a lot of things for where I am right now, and a lot of that has come from having the support of other people who have encouraged me to take on leadership roles. Don't be afraid, take the challenge. Even if it's one little challenge, it can grow into something else. If we don't stand up for ourselves, someone else will speak for us and it might not be the right message. Stand up and give the right message for agriculture.

Can you talk about the impact of ASA and why it's important as an organization established over 100 years ago, as well as why it's critical for soybean farmers to get involved?

Scarborough: The last year is a true testament of ASA. Our executive committee has participated in an astronomical number of interviews. There has been more news and media about U.S. soybeans in the last 12 months



Biofuels & Infrastructure Advocacy AT Chair Drew Peterson (SD) visits lawmakers on the Hill with fellow South Dakota ASA directors. Pictured from left: Jordan Scott, Brandon Wipf, and Peterson.



than there has ever been in my lifetime. Sometimes as farmers we get stuck

in our heads of what's going on in our state, but our soybeans don't just stay in our local area. They get exported. If somebody isn't in D.C. looking for new exports/markets, purchasers are going to look at other countries. We need to continue to find new places for our soybeans to go. ASA has been the leader of the pack this last year with the efforts in Washington D.C., and all of agriculture, not just soybeans. Testimonies, interviews, and amazing spotlights all show the success ASA has had.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your advocacy team?

Scarborough: The Conservation & Precision Ag AT has the most diverse portfolio of all the AT teams. It's interesting because when I first came onto the Conservation & Precision Ag Advocacy Team and was then asked to be chair, I didn't understand all of the things that fell into it. That's the fun part; there is so much diversity. It keeps you on your toes. We are continuing to combat Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS), making sure it doesn't come back in the future. There are so many things in ag at the national level that may not affect me, but it is for the betterment of all agriculture. It gives you a wider aspect of making decisions for the greater good of soybean farmers and all farmers, especially when it comes to conservation and agricultural issues going forward.

BIOFUELS & INFRASTRUCTURE ADVOCACY TEAM

The Biofuels & Infrastructure

Advocacy Team addresses energy issues, focusing on policies related to biodiesel, renewable diesel, and sustainable aviation fuel; infrastructure issues related to ocean shipping, inland waterways, railways, roads, broadband, and industrial biobased products; and transportation issues, including vehicle emissions, biofuel utilization, and fuel taxes. **ASA Director Drew Peterson** from Salem, South Dakota, is the chair for the Biofuels & Infrastructure AT. Peterson is a fifth-generation family farmer, and he and his wife, Lauren, and their two young children raise soybeans and corn and run a cow-calf and cattle feeding operation alongside his father, Steve.

Peterson joined the South Dakota Soybean Association as a Corteva Young Leader in 2019 and served as vice president of the board the last three years. In addition, he serves on the South Dakota Ag Foundation and has been a state legislator for the last four years.

What are your priorities/goals for 2026 as chair of this advocacy team?

Peterson: Coming into 2026, my main goal was to get finalized Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs) in the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and Clean Fuel Production Credit (45Z) guidance in place. Not only would this certainty be good for soybean producers, but it will also help our country with energy security in a volatile geopolitical climate across the globe. The announcement at the end of March regarding RVOs was a great step forward in that regard, and I want to commend our board and ASA staff for the years-long efforts that got us to this point. The proposed 45Z tax guidance is good

- we just need to get them finalized. This is the win soybean producers have needed after years of tight or negative margins.

Regarding infrastructure, continued investment in inland waterways and rail improvements are needed to keep our transportation infrastructure resilient, no matter where our whole bean and soybean byproducts need to be transported. With the increased domestic demand, the direction our products are transported may change significantly. Our infrastructure must be ready for the new opportunities.

What inspired you to take on a leadership role? How did you get started?

Peterson: I care deeply about the future of the family farm. Strong biofuel policy will help create reliable, long-term markets for the soybeans we grow that will allow our generations of producers and those who follow to continue to sustainably and profitably raise and market soybeans.

The opportunity to serve as chair of the Biofuels & Infrastructure Advocacy Team likely started when I offered to the executive team my assistance wherever I could be useful when I officially joined ASA in December 2025. I have been active in ASA activities as VP of the South Dakota Soybean Association for many years and was fortunate to know and learn from our past and present ASA leadership over the last six years. I visited with many of our leaders and staff about the biofuels industry and my policy experience in the biobased diesel and ethanol spaces. Shortly after some of these conversations in December, the invitation to serve on the B&I AT and request to be chair followed, and to be honest, I was a little apprehensive if I was ready. ASA Vice President Dave Walton, Government Affairs Executive Director Alexa Combelic, B&I AT Vice Chair Bob Worth, and the rest of the ASA biofuels staff, and I quickly started working through resolutions. That caught me up to speed on the ins and outs of the industry at the federal level, the opportunities and challenges that may exist between objectives of various industry organizations, and what we needed to do today to move forward.

What advice do you have for those who want to get into leadership?

Peterson: Get to know ASA leadership and staff, read up on policy areas that interest you, attend meetings and conferences that you want to be active in, and offer your assistance where it can be most useful. Everyone I have met through ASA enjoys the work they do and the role they play, and that is critical for having an organization that can serve the American soybean farmer as well as ASA does.

Can you talk about the impact of ASA and why it's important as an organization established over 100 years ago, as well as why it's critical for soybean farmers to get involved?

Peterson: ASA is a voice for the American soybean farmer, and it's our responsibility to play a role in that effort. If we don't tell our story, someone else will and we might not like what they have to say about us. The soybean industry has evolved immensely from a forage crop to the "everything bean" we know today. I cannot thank the industry leaders enough who have come before us for their role in getting us here today where our meal is the premium protein feed and our oil is used for cooking and fuel production. It's an exciting time to be a soybean grower.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your advocacy team?

Peterson: Every day, I learn new things about farming, and the same can be said for the soybean industry. We must continue to work towards progress in our

industry and continue to advocate to policymakers in D.C., both elected and appointed decision makers. The other exciting thing is getting to meet new friends on our AT and the ASA board who are leaders in their home states as well as D.C. and St. Louis. I learn so much as far as knowledge from ASA, but I also learn how to communicate, advocate, and ultimately make positive change in our industry from my fellow directors and staff. Additionally, I've always believed that likeminded groups in our industry are better off working together toward common goals than working apart. I think that has been proven this year.

REGULATORY ADVOCACY TEAM

The Regulatory Advocacy Team addresses issues relating to biotechnology, crop protection and pesticidal tools, and other regulatory activity. **ASA Director Andrew Moore** from Dalton, Georgia, is the chair for the Regulatory AT. Moore farms with his father and uncle in Northwest Georgia. Through a double crop production, the Moores raise nine different row crops or cereal grains on a five-year crop rotation. In 2008, they decided to add value per acre through vertical integration. They constructed an Expeller Press™ oilseed processing facility and a pellet mill manufacturing all classes of animal feeds. Moore advocates strongly on behalf of the industry, stressing responsible financial and sustainable production practices that are both conventional and unconventional.



Regulatory AT Chair Andrew Moore (GA) brings his son, Joseph, along for Hill visits to discuss soybean policy issues.

What are your priorities/goals for 2026 as chair of this advocacy team?

Moore: As chair of the advocacy team in 2026, my priorities are to further strengthen our soy team members' capacity to advocate effectively on near-term regulatory issues impacting soy farmers. This includes identifying and defining emerging regulatory challenges that are moving through the pipeline and are likely to affect farmers in the future. In addition, I aim to develop clear tools and resources that empower farmers to confidently communicate the safe and responsible use of pesticides and their essential role in modern agriculture.

What inspired you to take on a leadership role?

How did you get started?

Moore: I've always believed in having a seat at the table, regardless of the situation. Over the past decade, regulatory issues and challenges have been a constant, both personally and professionally. On our farm, our production practices and location make it essential to have access to a full range of safe and effective pesticide tools. The challenges we face aren't unique—they closely mirror those experienced by farmers across the country—which motivated me to step into a leadership role and help advocate for practical, farmer-focused solutions.

What advice do you have for those who want to get into leadership?

Moore: Say yes to opportunities, commit to learning something new, and don't be afraid to ask questions. Be honest when you don't know something—but be willing to find the answer. Getting involved matters because participation makes our voices stronger and ensures they are heard.

Can you talk about the impact of ASA and why it's important as an organization established over 100 years ago, as well as why it's critical for soybean farmers to get involved?

Moore: Developing strong voices and leadership to advocate for farmer interests has been the cornerstone of the American Soybean Association's century of success. Most farmers I



Trade Policy & International Affairs AT Chair Josh Gackle (ND) testifies during a Senate Appropriations Committee subcommittee field hearing.

know are honest and operate with a high level of integrity. The responsibility of providing food for families and friends, caring for livestock, and supplying feedstock for industry is a daunting task. Having farmers from across the United States aligned around this shared mission is lifegiving. Only farmers can truly advocate for farmers.

TRADE POLICY & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ADVOCACY TEAM

The Trade Policy & International Affairs Advocacy Team (TPIA) addresses issues relating to trade, market access, tariff and non-tariff trade barriers, international food aid, aquaculture, federal grain standards, fertilizer, and tax. **ASA Director Josh Gackle** from Kulm, North Dakota, is the chair for TPIA. He farms 2,800 acres of soybeans and also produces corn, wheat, and barley. Gackle began his service on ASA's board of directors in late 2017 and served as ASA president in 2024. He has served as a director on the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association board and has been an active member of NDSGA's legislative and membership committees. He is also on the Kulm City Council.

What are your priorities/goals for 2026 as chair of this advocacy team?

Gackle: TPIA plays a key role in maintaining and increasing existing demand and building new demand for U.S. soybean farmers' international markets. The AT works closely with the state soybean associations, WISHH, USSEC, and USB to build on these priorities, and we will continue to work together to accomplish these goals for U.S. soybean farmers.

What inspired you to take on a leadership role?

How did you get started?

Gackle: Having been involved with public policy before coming back to the family farm, I know the importance of farm organizations like ASA and all our state and national partners. I was also encouraged by fellow board directors to put that experience to work and advocate for farmers across the country.

What advice do you have for those who want to get into leadership?

Gackle: Get involved with your state and national farm organizations. Tell your story as a farmer to legislators and policymakers, whether at the local, state, or national level. Our voice makes a difference.

Can you talk about the impact of ASA and why it's important as an organization established over 100 years ago, as well as why it's critical for soybean farmers to get involved?

Gackle: ASA is one of the most impactful organizations when it comes to government policy that affects our farm and business operations. There is power in numbers, and our organizations make sure our voice as farmers and rural America are heard by decision makers at the local, state, and national level.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your advocacy team?

Gackle: For TPIA in particular, the AT will continue to advocate for strong international markets. U.S. soybean farmers provide a high-quality and reliable supply of soy products. We as producers, and our customers as well, benefit from that relationship.



FOR SOY FARMERS

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

12 WAYS TO ENGAGE AND ADVOCATE

- 1 Write letters
- 2 Post on social media
- 3 Attend Hill visits
- 4 Use the Soy Action Center
- 5 Speak up at town hall meetings
- 6 Take part in listening sessions
- 7 Give to SoyPAC
- 8 Host farm visits
- 9 Participate in congressional hearings
- 10 Be a resource on farm issues
- 11 Tell your farm story
- 12 Build relationships

Rooted in Stewardship: Farmers Honored for Conservation Leadership



Winners Jessica & James Baxter, Katherine & Alex Forsbach, Jon & Cathy Nelson, and Lewis & Carrie Unruh with ASA President Scott Metzger (OH), USB Chair Brent Gatton (KY), Christine Tew from Valent, and Samantha Davis from Bayer.

For many soybean farmers, conservation is not a new idea or a trend driven by outside pressure. It is a mindset shaped over generations, rooted in the understanding that the land they farm today must be cared for tomorrow.

That spirit was on full display as the American Soybean Association recognized its 2026 Conservation Legacy Award winners at Commodity Classic, where farmers from across the country gathered to celebrate not only innovation and productivity, but stewardship.

This year's honorees included four regional winners and one national winner, each representing a different part of the country and a shared commitment to strengthening their farms through conservation.

South Region & National Winner: Alex Forsbach, Tennessee

In Tennessee, Alex Forsbach has spent more than a decade building a conservation system rooted in patience, consistency, and long-term thinking. That work earned him both the 2026 South region Conservation Legacy

Award and national honors.

Forsbach's operation centers on no-till and cover crops, practices that have gradually transformed his soil. Over time, he has seen improvements in organic matter, structure, and moisture retention.

"It doesn't happen overnight," Forsbach said. "You have to stay consistent and trust the process."

That steady approach has helped his farm become more resilient while improving efficiency and productivity.

As the national winner, Forsbach represents a broader mindset among conservation leaders, one focused on continuous

improvement and a willingness to share what works.

"If we want to keep farming strong into the future, we have to be willing to learn and help others along the way," he said.

Midwest Region Winner: Lewis Unruh, Kansas

For Kansas farmer Lewis Unruh, conservation is something passed down through generations. Named the 2026 Midwest region winner, Unruh continues a family legacy that began with contour farming to reduce erosion.

Today, his operation has evolved into a system built on no-till, cover crops, and improved water management.



Alex Forsbach and his wife, Katherine, accept the South Region ASA Conservation Award from ASA President Scott Metzger.



Lewis Unruh and his wife, Carrie, accept the Midwest Region ASA Conservation Award from ASA President Scott Metzger.

“We’ve always believed that if you take care of the soil, it will take care of you,” Unruh said.

That philosophy guides his approach as input costs rise and margins tighten. By improving soil structure and water infiltration, Unruh has created a system that supports both sustainability and long-term profitability.

“Across the country, soybean farmers are proving that stewardship is not just part of their story. It is the foundation of what comes next.”

For Unruh, conservation is not a single practice. It is a commitment to ensuring the land remains productive for the next generation.

Upper Midwest Region Winners: Jon & Cathy Nelson, South Dakota

Jon and Cathy Nelson were named the 2026 Upper Midwest region winners, recognized for an operation built on adaptability and continuous learning.

Their farm incorporates no-till, diverse crop rotations, and practices designed to build soil health over time. In a region defined by weather variability, those efforts have created resilience.

“You have to be willing to try things, learn from them, and keep adapting,” Jon Nelson said.



Jon and Cathy Nelson accept the Upper Midwest Region ASA Conservation Award from ASA President Scott Metzger.

Healthier soils have helped the Nelsons better manage both drought and excess moisture, strengthening their operation.

For the couple, conservation also means sharing their experiences.

“If something works for us, we want to share it,” Cathy Nelson said. “That’s how agriculture moves forward.”

Northeast Region Winner: James “Jay” Baxter, Delaware

Jay Baxter, named the 2026 Northeast region winner, farms in a landscape where conservation decisions extend beyond the field.

In Delaware, protecting water quality is a constant consideration. Baxter’s use of no-till, cover crops, and nutrient management helps reduce runoff while improving soil health.

“This isn’t just about our farm, it’s about our community and the resources we all share,” Baxter said.

His approach reflects the connection between farming and the surrounding environment.

“At the end of the day, we want to leave this land better than we found it,” he said.

A Program That Elevates Farmer Leadership

The Conservation Legacy Awards program was created to recognize farmers who improve their operations while protecting the resources they depend on.

The program is supported by ASA and industry partners, including BASF, Bayer, Nutrien, Valent USA, and the United Soybean Board through the soy checkoff.



James Baxter and his wife, Jessica, accept the Northeast Region ASA Conservation Award from ASA President Scott Metzger.

A national selection committee made up of farmers, conservationists, agronomists, and natural resource professionals evaluates applicants.

Each year, the program highlights regional leaders and one national winner whose operation reflects excellence in conservation.

Conservation in Practice

Across all four winning operations, common themes emerge.

Soil health is central, supported by no-till and cover crops that reduce erosion and improve structure. Water management plays a key role, whether through contour farming or nutrient stewardship. Precision tools help farmers apply inputs efficiently.

Just as important as the practices themselves is the mindset behind them. These farmers are building systems that evolve over time.

Looking Ahead

As agriculture faces tight margins, rising input costs, and increased expectations around sustainability, these farmers offer a clear message.

Conservation is not separate from productivity. It is part of it.

For the 2026 Conservation Legacy Award winners, recognition at Commodity Classic marked an important milestone. But their work continues in the field, season after season.

Across the country, soybean farmers are proving that stewardship is not just part of their story. It is the foundation of what comes next.

soy LEADERS

By Erin Glarner, ASA Director of Industry Relations

Growing the Next Generation of Soy Leaders

Founded in 1984, the ASA Corteva Agriscience Young Leader program serves as a benchmark for leadership development in agriculture and continues to set the bar on identifying and training new, innovative, and engaged growers to serve as the voice of the American farmer. Young Leaders, ASA's longest-running leadership program, has equipped more than 1,000 Young Leaders with the skills and perspective needed to represent American farmers effectively, while strengthening leadership capacity at both the state and national levels.

The Young Leader program strengthens participants' leadership, communication, and issue-awareness skills while fostering a strong peer network that supports success in their operations and communities. Through interactive, hands-on training, the program develops leaders who contribute to both the soybean sector and the broader agricultural industry.

As a selection-based program, soybean growers, both individuals and couples, are encouraged to apply, even if not employed full-time on the farm, which is a unique differentiator of this key leadership program. Open to individuals age 21 or older, the program requires full participation in two training sessions, one in December and one held in conjunction with the annual Commodity Classic tradeshow and conference.

Each year, ASA and Corteva collaborate with the 26 state affiliates and the Grain Farmers of Ontario to identify and select the



The 42nd class of ASA Corteva Agriscience Leaders attends The World Food Prize in Des Moines, IA.



ASA President Scott Metzger

leading producers to represent their states as part of this program. The partnership with the states is central to the program's success, as many graduates advance to leadership roles on their respective state soybean boards or other areas of industry collaboration.

"Partnering with the American Soybean Association on the Young Leader program is an investment in the future of agriculture," said Debbie Ellis, executive director, Kentucky Soybean Association. "By equipping the next generation of soybean farmers with leadership skills, policy knowledge, and industry connections, we're strengthening rural communities and ensuring that producers have a strong voice at both the state and national level. Programs like this are essential to keeping American agriculture competitive and resilient for years to come."

ASA is thankful to Corteva Agriscience for its longstanding commitment to the future of agriculture and values the ongoing partnership through this key leadership development program.

"It's so important that growers have a strong voice in the policy decisions that impact the future of their businesses and their livelihoods, which is why we're so proud to continue investing in the next generation of farmer advocates through the Young Leaders program," said Matt Rekeweg, U.S. industry relations lead for Corteva Agriscience. "The program also fosters valuable connections among industry professionals and forward-thinking farmers committed to creating opportunities for future generations."

This year represents the 42nd year of the ASA Corteva Agriscience Young Leader program. The 2026 Young Leaders began their leadership journey in December 2025 at Corteva's Global Business

Center in Johnston, Iowa. The group participated in DiSC® and communications training, toured the Corteva greenhouses, and received updates on soybean industry advancements. The Young Leaders also toured the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates in Des Moines. The second phase of training took place Feb. 23-26 during the 2026 Commodity Classic tradeshow.

While in San Antonio, the Young Leaders participated in training focused on leadership development, industry updates, and the importance of advocacy. Members were also recognized at ASA's annual Awards Celebration and participated in the annual Young Leader Alumni Reception. There, they heard from ASA President Scott Metzger, former Young Leader from the class of 2012.

The 2026 Class of Young Leaders includes: Austin Anderson (IL); Eric Lindauer (IN); Lucas Windell (IN); Jackson & Amanda Drost (IA); Katey & Deven Foster (KS); Levi & Teresa Manche (KS); Kean Schnieber (KY); Paul & Bailee Saathoff (MD); Brady Brown & Samantha Gierman (MI); Andrew Mages (MN); James & Caroline Roberts (MS); Rex Meyr (MO); Jonathon Meis (NE); Hunter & Sarah Grace Lee (NC); Chase & Abigail Johnson (NC); Brandon Dale & Kristine Hankins (ND); Jonathan & Alyssa Zucker (OH); Chris Diedrich (SD); Paine Keiser (TN); Jayson Gill (VA); Eric & Jaclyn Wuthrich (WI); Jake & Lindsay Elgersma (CAN); and



Luke & Naomi Hannam (CAN).

A selection-based phase III of the ASA Corteva Agriscience Young Leader program will

take place in conjunction with the ASA July Board of Directors meeting and is available to 10 members of the current class of Young Leaders. Couples or individuals may apply to attend. The program includes additional soybean issues training through ASA's Board of Directors meeting and participation in the Soy Issues Forum. Activities also include a training session at Corteva and Hill visits with the state delegation.

Many graduates of this training program will assume leadership roles with their state and national soybean associations. This year, six of nine ASA Executive Committee members are former Young Leaders, further highlighting the value and impact of the program.

"The Young Leader program has significantly strengthened the

soybean industry by developing farmers committed to leadership and advocacy," said Metzger. "By delivering high-quality training, the program cultivates knowledgeable, connected leaders who drive industry success. Many alumni now serve in key leadership roles, including on ASA's Executive Committee. We appreciate Corteva's more than 40 years of continued support for this program."

As the agriculture industry evolves, leadership development programs like the Young Leader program play a critical role in equipping aspiring leaders for the future. The leadership development and expanded peer network gained through the program provides lasting value to participants and makes a meaningful impact on both individuals and the broader soybean and agricultural industries.

For more information about the ASA Corteva Agriscience Young Leader program, visit soygrowers.com and click on the "Education and Resources" tab. The application period for the 2027 program will open in late June.



SOY FORWARD

Taking U.S. Soy Global

By Blair Shipp, ASA State Policy Communications Coordinator

For ASA directors, stepping off the farm and into global markets offers a whole new perspective on the soy they grow every day. Through travel with the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), U.S. farmer leaders are meeting customers, seeing their product in action, and building relationships that stretch far beyond their own fields. Whether it's sitting down with international buyers, touring facilities, or participating in global events, these experiences bring the full soybean value chain to life.

More than just travel, these opportunities highlight the direct connection between U.S. farms and global demand. They offer a chance to share the story of how soy is grown, while gaining a deeper understanding of the people and markets who rely on it. For many directors, it's a powerful reminder that the work done at home plays a role far beyond their own operation.



Janna Fritz – Tokyo, Japan

Janna Fritz (MI) participated in the Soy Sustainability Symposium in Tokyo, where global partners gathered to discuss sustainability, innovation, and the future of soy. The experience provided an opportunity to share how U.S. farmers are meeting evolving expectations while delivering a high-quality, responsibly produced product to customers around the world.

Photos courtesy of USSEC





Ryan Frieders – Jakarta, Indonesia

Ryan Frieders (IL) participated in a USDA-led Agricultural Trade Mission to Jakarta with USSEC, engaging with customers and industry leaders in one of Southeast Asia’s key growth markets. The visit focused on strengthening relationships and reinforcing the value of U.S. soy through direct, on-the-ground conversations with partners across the region.



Justin Sherlock – Bangkok, Thailand

Justin Sherlock (ND) traveled across Asia with USSEC, engaging with customers and industry partners from more than 20 countries during the Southeast Asia U.S. Agricultural Cooperators Conference in Bangkok. The experience emphasized the importance of building relationships, understanding customer needs, and reinforcing the value U.S. soy brings to global markets.

“What really sets U.S. soy apart is that when customers buy from us, they’re not just buying a commodity – they’re buying a partnership and a support system.”



Scott Gaffner – Pakistan & Saudi Arabia

Scott Gaffner (IL) traveled to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia with USSEC and ASA, engaging with partners to strengthen relationships and better understand opportunities for U.S. soy. The visit highlighted both the strength of existing markets, like Pakistan, and the growth potential in emerging markets such as Saudi Arabia, where interest in U.S. soy continues to build.

“These in-person engagements matter because they build trust, reinforce the value of U.S. farmers in global markets, and open doors for expanded demand that ultimately benefits producers back home.”



WORLD

soy

Successes from WISHH's CAST Project Pave Way for Future of U.S. Soy in Cambodia

Through USDA's Food for Progress program, ASA's World Initiative for Soy in Human Health program helped strengthen Cambodia's aquaculture sector while building lasting commercial ties that support demand for U.S. soybean meal. Although the Commercialization of Aquaculture for Sustainable Trade (CAST) Cambodia project has concluded, its results continue to shape the country's aquaculture industry, while also helping U.S. soy venture into other sectors. That success means WISHH is continuing its work in Cambodia by leveraging both USDA and checkoff funds.

Early Success

Recognizing that Cambodia receives nearly 76% of its protein intake from fish, WISHH saw there was an opportunity in linking trade to a stronger aquaculture value chain that could increasingly rely on U.S. soy for feed. Through CAST training programs, fish producers adopted more structured feeding practices, better pond construction, and increased yield while reducing fish loss. These improvements help fish farmers achieve better growth rates and production efficiency while reinforcing the value of high-quality feeds formulated with soybean meal.

CAST also introduced new technology to the country. For example, solar drying domes helped reduce food waste. Typically, fish are dried outside on tables where they are exposed to the sun and food safety hazards. Solar drying domes reduce food spoilage and waste while protecting fish from the elements during Cambodia's rainy season. Additionally, floating cages and in-pond raceway systems improved fish health and enhanced efficiency. Ten feed-selling companies were trained in proper aquaculture practices, emphasizing the role of quality feeds in fish performance. The project also helped launch the Cambodian Aquaculturist Association, which now brings together more than 1,300 producers, feed companies, and other stakeholders to advance modern aquaculture practices and industry collaboration.

As training expanded, adoption of improved production practices accelerated. Prior to the project, only about 3% of fish producers obtained certificates of Good Aquaculture Practices (GAQP), which enable producers to sell into premium markets. Through CAST, that figure rose to 51%, with 63 producers earning GAQP certification.

U.S. Soy's Continued Role in Cambodia

CAST also helped build new institutional demand for fish through partnerships with the USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition



Cambodian Aquaculturist Association Director of Operations observes M's PIG's soybean meal that is ready for feed formulation.

Program, implemented by the World Food Programme and partners. Cambodian government purchases of fish for school nutrition programs are helping establish long-term markets for aquaculture production, reinforcing demand for the quality feeds needed to sustain it.

Feed producers who procure U.S. soy now play a key role in the country. Manufacturers such as AgriMaster Feed Mill are purchasing U.S. soybean meal to produce feeds sold across Cambodia. Major feed producer M's PIG has also expanded into aquaculture while continuing to grow its feed production capacity, illustrating the broader opportunities emerging across Cambodia's livestock and feed industries.

"Projects like CAST show how strategic partnerships can build lasting markets for U.S. soybean farmers," said WISHH Executive Director Gena Perry. "By helping farmers and feed companies adopt better practices and high-quality feeds, we're creating demand that benefits producers overseas and soybean growers here at home."

WISHH's work is now extending into other sectors in the country. Kirisu Dairy, Cambodia's first modern dairy operation, uses 120 tons of soybean meal to feed its dairy cows. In a similar progression to its aquaculture industry, as the country begins to increasingly consume milk, its reliance on U.S. soy for dairy feed may grow. WISHH will be there every step of the way. It has already worked with employee Senghong Khlit to provide insights into feed management and quality. As aquaculture continues to boom, dairy could provide the next frontier of trade in the country for U.S. soybean farmers.

With ongoing support from USDA programs and soybean checkoff investments, WISHH is continuing to collaborate with Cambodian aquaculture, dairy, and poultry industry leaders to expand production, strengthen feed systems, and deepen the commercial ties for U.S. soy.



FROM YOUR FIELDS TO

FIREFIGHTERS' HANDS

The more we discover about soybeans, the more valuable they become. One innovative product, SoyFoam™, creates a new, sustainable use for your crop that protects firefighters and the planet.

See how your Soy Checkoff is unlocking new markets for soybeans at unitedsoybean.org



SOY Checkoff



Soy Checkoff Investments Grow Demand – and Farmer Returns



Mike McCranie, USB director and USSEC Chair for 2026-27, is a fourth-generation farmer from South Dakota.

Soy checkoff investments, funded by U.S. farmers, continue to grow demand in global markets. That matters because about two-thirds of the U.S. soybean crop is exported.

Beyond direct export work, the Soy Checkoff also invests in building demand for U.S. meat, poultry, and eggs overseas. When those industries grow, they pull more U.S. soybean meal into domestic livestock rations – supporting demand and prices back on the farm.

Exports Don't Happen by Accident

The buyers who keep this industry viable are largely overseas – and reaching them requires sustained, coordinated investment that no individual farmer or state organization could do alone.

Those markets don't happen by accident. They take farmers knocking on doors. They take partners keeping trade doors open. They take years of relationship-building before the first bushel ever moves.

A Team Approach to Market Growth

A number of the Soy Checkoff's partner organizations, including the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health, U.S. Soybean Export Council, U.S. Meat Export Federation, and USA Poultry & Egg Export Council, work together to build these relationships on behalf of U.S. soybean farmers.

Each group plays a different role. WISHH focuses on developing and early emerging markets – building awareness, opening first sales, and helping buyers develop the infrastructure needed to import soy. Once a market reaches about 150,000 metric tons, it transitions to USSEC for long-term commercial development. USMEF and USAPEEC work indirectly by expanding demand for soy-fed pork and poultry overseas, which increases soybean meal demand here at home. Together, these efforts multiply impact.

Most of What We Grow Depends on Global Demand

Exports aren't a side business for U.S. soy – they are the business. Today, 58% of U.S. soybeans, soybean meal, and soybean oil are exported. When you factor in poultry and meat exports that rely on U.S. soybean meal, 7 out of every 10 rows of soybeans grown in the U.S. are tied to international markets.

That demand doesn't happen on its own. USSEC works in more than 90 countries, with staff located around the world. These teams work directly with feed mills, crushers, integrators, and buyers to keep U.S. soy competitive and preferred.

For farmers, the global opportunity is clear. "I traveled extensively when I was younger, backpacking around the world," notes South Dakota farmer Mike McCranie. "Now I go on trade missions for USSEC – and it's obvious that 97% of the world's population lives outside the United States. That's 97% potential customers for U.S. Soy."

To capture that opportunity, USSEC focuses on three core strategies: market access, differentiation, and elevation. Together, those strategies help ensure global demand continues to support U.S. soybean farmers' bottom lines.

Building Markets That Last

"In Pakistan, WISHH worked heavily in aquaculture and was the face of U.S. Soy," says Iowa farmer Brent Renner. "When the market took off, customers already knew U.S. Soy, which made the transition to USSEC seamless."

That handoff is intentional – and critical for long-term growth.

Meat Exports Support Meal Demand

When USMEF builds demand for U.S. pork in Japan or the Philippines, those hogs are fed on U.S. soybean meal domestically. “Thirty percent of U.S. pork production is exported – and \$67 of every \$200 per hog comes from export markets, almost entirely from cuts U.S. consumers don’t buy,” says Indiana farmer Jim Douglas. Without those exports, the economics of pork production shift fast – and meal demand drops with it.

USAPEEC’s work generated the equivalent of 126.4 million bushels of soybean demand through poultry and egg exports in 2024 alone. “USAPEEC creates value-added demand stream for your revenue channel for your soybeans through meat demand,” explains Tom Griffiths, an Indiana farmer.

When we build livestock industries overseas, we’re building demand for meal at home.

Staying Competitive in Feed Markets

On a recent USSEC trade mission to Malaysia, Iowa farmer Robb Ewoldt met with feed buyers who import more than 90% of their ingredients.¹

“When you start talking about digestibility, energy, and consistency, it changes how they look at cost and performance,” Ewoldt says. “You don’t move markets with one visit – but showing up and staying engaged is how you change buying behavior.”

Relationships Pay Off

“Egypt is a huge success story for U.S. Soy,” says Arkansas farmer Robert Petter. What began years ago with a small aquaculture research



A farmer carries soy-based feed through an aquaculture pond in Cambodia.



See For Yourself participants learn about U.S. soy-based feed in Egypt.

center has grown into one of the top five markets for the U.S. soy complex. In marketing year 2024/25, Egypt imported 3.3 million metric tons of U.S. soy valued at \$1.4 billion.² Checkoff-funded science and education are helping build both the industry and long-term demand.

Exports Deliver ROI

Farmer-funded checkoff investments deliver results. A 2024 Cornell University study found the Soy Checkoff returns \$12.30 for every dollar invested overall. When you dig

into that investment figure, export market development delivers the highest return – \$14.26 per dollar.

USB’s \$28 million export investment isn’t an expense. It’s the checkoff’s highest-returning asset – working every day to keep U.S. soybeans competitive and farmers profitable.

¹ ussoy.org/articles/us-soy-trade-mission-targets-new-growth-in-malysias-feed-market

² unitedsoybean.org/hopper/u-s-soy-exports-continued-to-grow-in-marketing-year-2024-25/



Robb Ewoldt, a farmer leader from Iowa, traveled to Malaysia during a USDA Trade Reciprocity for U.S. Manufacturers and Producers mission earlier this year.

THE POWER OF YOUR SOY INVESTMENT



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


CREATED JOBS AND
GROWN THE ECONOMY

\$9.8B

added to the U.S. GDP

~\$1B

generated in tax revenue
in 2023 alone

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


30,932
U.S. jobs created

***\$2.6B**

in U.S.
employment
income

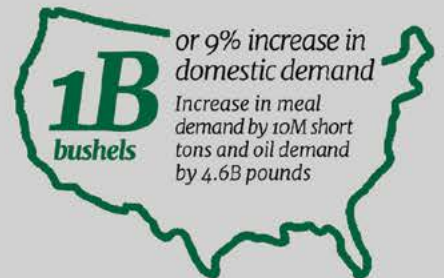


DRIVEN DEMAND FOR U.S. SOY

***1.8B**
bushels



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


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.

DIFFERENT ROLES, COMPLEMENTARY MISSIONS ALL FOCUSED ON DRIVING VALUE BACK TO THE U.S. SOYBEAN FARMER.



INDUSTRY

perspective

CRISPR and the Future of Soybean Breeding

By Emily Negrin, Inari Vice President, Corporate Communications

Farmers have always relied on seed improvements to stay productive in ever-changing environments. From the advent of plant breeding to modern practices, each leap forward has helped manage risk, protect yields, and make better use of resources. Today, one of the most important advances in breeding techniques is the use of gene editing, a biological tool capable of unlocking improvements with unmatched speed and precision.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BREEDING

Gene editing is a crucial step forward in the 12,000-year history of breeding. To recognize the impact of this technology, it is important to understand what came before.

Breeding 1.0: Humans chose and crossed plants with specific features they liked. This incidental approach—effective, but also incredibly slow and painstaking—covered the first 10,000 years of breeding.

Breeding 2.0: After Gregor Mendel's discovery of the law of genetic inheritance in the late 19th century, humans began to improve selection efforts through statistics and experiments. This work eventually led to breeder Norman Borlaug receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for increasing wheat yields by 70%.

Breeding 3.0: After the discovery of DNA's structure, breeders started to use genetic and genomic data to support and further accelerate breeding decisions. Markers enabled the ability to detect desired traits and predict the genetic value of untested plant populations.

Breeding 4.0: Today, the convergence of AI, genomics, and gene editing make it possible to understand and address some of crop systems' most complex characteristics – opening the door to significant beneficial enhancements.

One of the most advanced technologies to perform gene editing—and perhaps the best known—is the CRISPR-Cas (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) system, which allows scientists to make extremely precise changes to plant and animal DNA. Acting essentially like a pair of scissors guided by a molecular GPS, a CRISPR-Cas molecule finds a specific location in the plant's DNA and makes a precise cut. This engages the plant's own natural repair process, which can be used to produce a desired range of changes.

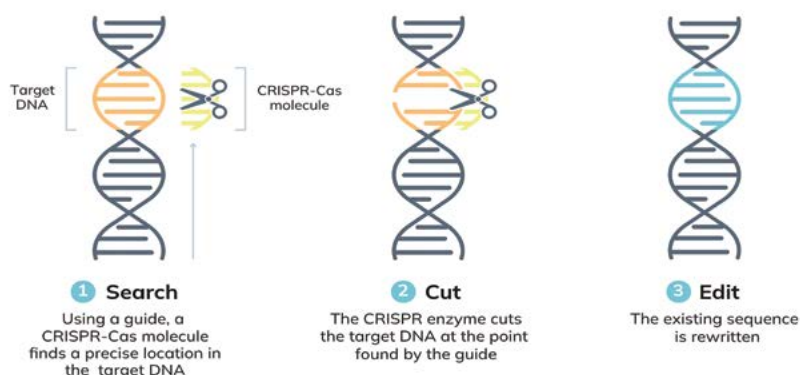
Another way to think of CRISPR-Cas is as a word processor for DNA. Scientists can now delete or replace individual “letters” in the genetic code. Notably, this process works within the plant's own natural DNA, acting as a breeding accelerator that operates in tandem with traditional breeding and other biotechnologies.

Enabled by the convergence of major technological advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and genomic research, gene editing accelerates outcomes that previously would have taken as long as a decade to achieve. The kinds of changes made through CRISPR-Cas are like those that could occur naturally or through

conventional breeding—just faster and more exact. Some genes may be turned off, others dialed up, down, or improved in their functionality.

Still, unlocking the full potential of seed requires more than science. As a globally traded commodity, grain is subject to unique policies established by each importing nation. The seed industry advocates for regulations worldwide based on sound science that enables innovation by eliminating unnecessary oversight. Great progress is being made, with ever more countries recognizing gene editing as a new breeding technique exempt from onerous GMO regulations, instead, opting for a regulatory consultation process.

As farmers look ahead, the pressure to produce more with fewer inputs will only increase. While there are no silver bullet solutions, gene editing represents a major step forward, building on thousands of years of breeding knowledge with modern tools and capabilities designed to help overcome today's challenges. This next generation of seed innovations will enable stronger performance, better efficiency, and greater resilience in the face of an increasingly demanding farming environment.



BUILDING DEMAND FOR TRADE FOR U.S. SOY IN NEW AND DEVELOPING MARKETS FOR FEED AND FOOD



POLICYMAKERS **Take Notice** OF ASA.



The American Soybean Association is in Washington, D.C.:

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

That's why ASA matters.

